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# THE EFFECT OF SMALL-SIDED GAMES TRAINING ON THE DRIBBLING ABILITY OF SOCCER EXTRACURRICULAR STUDENTS AT SMP IT INSAN KAMIL KOTA BIMA

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**Kata kunci:**
Small Sided Games, Dribbling, Sepak Bola.

**Abstrak**

Kemampuan dribbling merupakan salah satu keterampilan dasar yang sangat penting dalam permainan sepak bola, namun penguasaannya pada siswa peserta ekstrakurikuler masih tergolong belum optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh penerapan metode latihan Small-Sided Games terhadap peningkatan kemampuan dribbling siswa yang mengikuti kegiatan ekstrakurikuler sepak bola di SMP IT Insan Kamil Kota Bima. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain eksperimen semu (quasi-experimental) berupa one-group pretest-posttest design. Sampel penelitian terdiri atas 25 siswa yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan menggunakan tes kemampuan dribbling serta angket untuk mengetahui respons siswa terhadap metode latihan yang diterapkan. Data dianalisis dengan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas Shapiro–Wilk, dan uji hipotesis menggunakan Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. Penggunaan uji Wilcoxon didasarkan pada jumlah sampel yang kurang dari 50 responden dan disesuaikan dengan hasil uji normalitas data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kemampuan dribbling setelah pemberian perlakuan, yang terlihat dari kenaikan nilai rata-rata siswa dari 67,24 pada pretest menjadi 81,16 pada posttest. Hasil pengujian hipotesis memperoleh nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,000 ($p < 0,05$), sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa metode latihan Small-Sided Games memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap peningkatan kemampuan dribbling siswa. Selain itu, hasil angket menunjukkan bahwa siswa memberikan respons yang positif terhadap pelaksanaan metode latihan tersebut. Dengan demikian, Small-Sided Games dapat dijadikan sebagai salah satu alternatif metode latihan yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan dribbling dalam kegiatan ekstrakurikuler sepak bola.

***Keywords:***
*Small Sided Games, Dribbling, Football*

***Abstract***

*Dribbling is one of the fundamental skills in soccer that has not been optimally mastered by students participating in extracurricular soccer activities. This study aimed to examine the effect of the Small-Sided*

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*Games training method on improving the dribbling ability of students involved in the soccer extracurricular program at SMP IT Insan Kamil Kota Bima. A quantitative approach was employed using a quasi-experimental method with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The research sample consisted of 25 students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a dribbling skill test and a student response questionnaire. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, the Shapiro–Wilk normality test, and hypothesis testing using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The Wilcoxon test was applied because the sample size was fewer than 50 participants and the inferential analysis was adjusted according to the results of the normality test. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' dribbling ability, as indicated by an increase in the mean score from 67.24 in the pretest to 81.16 in the posttest. Furthermore, the hypothesis test produced a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the Small-Sided Games training method had a significant effect on improving students' dribbling skills. The questionnaire results also showed positive responses from students regarding the implemented training method. In conclusion, the Small-Sided Games training method can be considered an effective approach for enhancing students' dribbling ability in soccer extracurricular activities.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Soccer has become one of the most widely participated sports among junior high school students and serves as an important component of extracurricular activities in schools. (Lindell-Postigo et al. 2023). Successful performance in soccer depends on the mastery of fundamental techniques, physical conditioning, tactical competence, and decision-making skills in dynamic and unpredictable game environments (Puertas-Molero, Cristina Villodrés, and Caracuel-Cáliz 2024). Dribbling is a fundamental soccer skill that enables players to maintain ball possession, evade opponents, and create attacking opportunities. Effective dribbling ability plays a crucial role in enhancing both individual performance and overall team effectiveness during a match (Kaisar and Gazali 2025). Recent evidence has shown that the implementation of Small-Sided Games contributes to improvements in both technical and tactical performance, particularly in dribbling proficiency and decision-making skills among soccer players (Parasutama, Nurjaya, and Nurcahya 2025).

Initial observations carried out during soccer extracurricular activities at SMP IT Insan Kamil Kota Bima revealed several key issues. Students frequently experienced difficulties in maintaining ball control while dribbling, demonstrated limited ability to bypass opponents, and showed suboptimal coordination and dribbling speed. In addition, participation levels during training sessions were not evenly distributed among students. The preliminary assessment (pretest) indicated that students' dribbling performance was at a moderate level, with a mean score of 67.24 and a standard deviation of 7.12, reflecting considerable variation in skill

levels. These findings suggest that students' technical proficiency has not yet reached the expected standard and highlight the need for a more effective and game-oriented training approach to enhance dribbling performance (Wang et al. 2024; Yan et al. 2022).

These issues may be attributed to the continued use of conventional training approaches that primarily emphasize isolated technical drills rather than integrating skills within actual game contexts (Gabbett, Jenkins, and Abernethy 2009). As a result, this approach provides limited opportunities for students to develop decision-making skills and adapt effectively to the pressures encountered during actual game situations (Renshaw et al. 2019). Furthermore, repetitive and less engaging training activities may diminish students' motivation and reduce their active participation throughout the training process (Zhou and Colomer 2024).

A growing body of research has demonstrated that game-based training approaches, particularly Small-Sided Games (SSG), can effectively enhance both technical execution and tactical performance in soccer. Amory and Satria (2025) reported a significant improvement in dribbling ability after the implementation of SSG. Sarmento et al. (2018) found that SSG increased the frequency of ball touches and player involvement during games. In addition, earlier studies have highlighted that SSG contributes to greater technical effectiveness while promoting faster and more accurate decision-making in match-related situations (Davids et al. 2013). From an international perspective Hill-Haas et al. (2011) explained that SSG can simultaneously improve physiological, technical, and tactical aspects, while Irawan (2024) emphasized that SSG provides high training intensity while improving game-specific skills.

Small-Sided Games (SSG) are a modified soccer format characterized by fewer players and a reduced playing area, enabling players to engage more frequently with the ball and participate more actively in game situations (Vilar et al. 2014). As a result, players perform technical actions, such as dribbling, more frequently and develop a better capacity to adjust to the demands and dynamics of real-game situations (Hammami et al. 2018). Consequently, SSG contributes not only to the improvement of technical performance but also to the development of cognitive functions, such as decision-making, and affective attributes, including motivation and engagement. Drawing upon the identified problems and findings from previous research, this study proposes the structured and systematic application of the Small-Sided Games training method as an alternative approach to address these challenges (Bujalance-Moreno, Latorre-Román, and García-Pinillos 2019). This training method is anticipated to improve students' dribbling proficiency, ball control, movement coordination, and speed, while simultaneously promoting higher levels of motivation and active participation during training sessions (Hayati, Juliantine, and Sucipto 2025).

The novelty of this research is reflected in its dual focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the Small-Sided Games method in enhancing students' dribbling

skills while simultaneously analyzing students' responses to its implementation in a junior high school soccer extracurricular setting. In addition, this study provides empirical evidence from SMP IT Insan Kamil Kota Bima, a research context that has rarely been explored in previous studies, thereby contributing new insights to the application of game-based training methods in school sports programs..

Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the effect of the Small-Sided Games training method on the improvement of dribbling skills among students participating in the soccer extracurricular program at SMP IT Insan Kamil Kota Bima. The findings are expected to offer practical insights for physical education teachers and soccer coaches in identifying and implementing effective training strategies. In addition, this study is anticipated to serve as a valuable scientific reference for future research related to sports education and game-based training approaches.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative approach and employed a quasi-experimental method using a one-group pretest-posttest design. The selected design enabled the researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of the Small-Sided Games training method by examining differences in students' dribbling performance before and after the intervention was administered.

The target population of this study included all students participating in the soccer extracurricular program at SMP IT Insan Kamil Kota Bima, consisting of 25 individuals. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, whereby all students who met the established research criteria were recruited as the study sample.

Data were collected using two instruments: a dribbling skill test and a student response questionnaire. The dribbling test was administered to assess students' ability to maneuver the ball through a series of cones within a predetermined time limit. The evaluation focused on several performance indicators, including dribbling speed, ball control, and movement accuracy. In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to examine students' perceptions of the Small-Sided Games training method. The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Detailed information regarding the research instruments is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Research Instruments

| No | Instrument | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dribbling Test | Measures students' dribbling ability through cone dribbling tests based on speed, ball control, and movement accuracy |
| 2 | Questionnaire | Measures students' responses toward the Small-Sided Games training method using a Likert scale |

The dribbling test instrument referred to standardized soccer skill tests, while the questionnaire was developed based on indicators of motivation, enjoyment,

participation, and students' interest in training activities (Arikunto, 2010). Prior to use, the questionnaire instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure its feasibility as a measurement tool.

Table 2.
Questionnaire Indicators

| No | Indicator | Statement Example |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Training Interest | The Small-Sided Games training method makes practice more interesting. |
| 2 | Enjoyment | I feel happy and enthusiastic during training sessions. |
| 3 | Motivation | The training method increases my motivation to practice soccer. |
| 4 | Skill Improvement | The Small-Sided Games method helps improve my dribbling ability. |
| 5 | Participation | I become more active during soccer training sessions. |

The study was carried out in three sequential stages. First, a pretest was administered to assess students' baseline dribbling performance. Second, participants underwent a training intervention consisting of 12 Small-Sided Games sessions. Third, a posttest was conducted to evaluate changes in dribbling ability following the intervention, and a questionnaire was subsequently distributed to collect students' responses to the training program. The data analysis procedures employed in this study are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3.
Data Analysis Techniques

| No | Type of Analysis | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Descriptive Statistics | To determine mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation values |
| 2 | Shapiro–Wilk Normality Test | To determine data distribution because the sample size was fewer than 50 participants |
| 3 | Paired Sample t-test | Used if the data were normally distributed |
| 4 | Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test | Used if the data were not normally distributed |
| 5 | Percentage Analysis | To determine students' responses from the questionnaire |

Data analysis was initiated by conducting the Shapiro–Wilk normality test, considering that the study involved a sample of only 25 students. Data were considered normally distributed when the significance value exceeded 0.05, in which case the paired-samples t-test was employed to test the research hypothesis. Conversely, when the significance value was below 0.05, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used as a non-parametric alternative. In addition, questionnaire responses were analyzed using percentage calculations for each indicator to describe students' perceptions of the training method. All statistical analyses were carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25, with a significance level set at 0.05.

## RESULTH AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that students' dribbling ability was relatively low, as reflected in the pretest results and supported by initial observations conducted prior to the intervention. Many students experienced difficulties in maintaining ball control, showed limited confidence when confronting opponents, and struggled to execute effective dribbling during game situations. These findings suggest that the training methods previously implemented were not sufficiently effective in facilitating the optimal development of students' technical skills. Consequently, there was a need for a more contextual training approach that could provide students with greater exposure to realistic game situations and meaningful learning experiences.

Table 4.
Descriptive Statistics of Students' Dribbling Ability (Pretest and Posttest)

| Variable | Pretest | Posttest |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Samples | 25 | 25 |
| Minimum Score | 55 | 68 |
| Maximum Score | 82 | 95 |
| Mean | 67.24 | 81.16 |
| Standard Deviation | 7.12 | 6.45 |

As presented in Table 1, students demonstrated a noticeable improvement in dribbling performance following the implementation of the Small-Sided Games training program. The average score increased from 67.24 on the pretest to 81.16 on the posttest, reflecting a gain of 13.92 points. Similar improvements were observed in the minimum and maximum scores, which increased from 55 to 68 and from 82 to 95, respectively. These results suggest that the majority of participants benefited from the training intervention and achieved better dribbling performance. Furthermore, the standard deviation decreased from 7.12 to 6.45, indicating a reduction in performance variability among students. This finding implies that the training program not only enhanced overall dribbling ability but also contributed to a more consistent level of skill development across participants, thereby narrowing the differences in performance within the group.

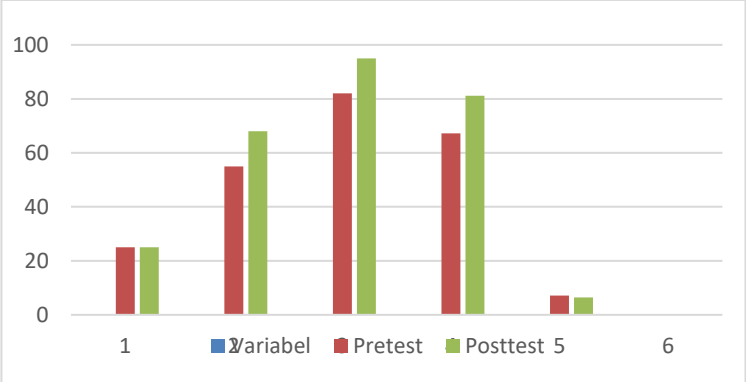


Figure 1.
Comparison Graph of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Figure 1 illustrates a noticeable difference between the pretest and posttest results, with students achieving higher scores after participating in the Small-Sided Games training program. The graphical representation clearly demonstrates an upward trend in dribbling performance following the intervention. These findings provide additional evidence that the Small-Sided Games training method contributed positively to the enhancement of students' dribbling ability.

The observed improvement in students' dribbling performance can be attributed to the distinctive characteristics of the Small-Sided Games method, which increases players' opportunities to engage directly with the ball during training activities. By involving fewer players within a restricted playing area, this training format encourages greater movement intensity, more frequent dribbling actions, and faster decision-making in game-related situations. As a result, students continuously practice essential skills such as ball control, agility, and reaction speed in a realistic playing environment. These findings support the principles of game-based learning, which emphasize active participation and the acquisition of skills through meaningful and context-rich learning experiences (Davids et al. 2013).

The improvement in students' dribbling ability can also be explained from a motor learning perspective, which emphasizes that practice performed in authentic and context-specific game situations facilitates more effective skill acquisition and transfer to competitive match environments (Schmidt and Wrisberg 2008). Small-Sided Games provide a dynamic and interactive learning environment that allows students to develop not only their technical abilities but also cognitive skills, including decision-making and tactical awareness. Continuous exposure to authentic game situations encourages students to adapt more effectively to changing playing conditions, resulting in improved movement coordination and greater mastery of technical skills. As students engage more frequently in game-based activities, their ability to respond to tactical challenges and execute appropriate technical actions becomes increasingly refined.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous national research, which has reported that the implementation of Small-Sided Games contributes significantly to the improvement of students' dribbling performance (Amory and Satria 2025). In addition, earlier research has demonstrated that game-based training methods provide players with more frequent ball interactions and encourage higher levels of participation during training sessions (Zach, Shoval, and Shulruf 2023). Furthermore, earlier studies have also emphasized that Small-Sided Games effectively enhance fundamental technical abilities by allowing players to repeatedly perform and refine skills within game-like conditions that reflect the demands of real competition (Mulyana, Suherman, and Juliantine 2025).

Similarly, evidence from international studies has consistently shown that the implementation of Small-Sided Games plays a significant role in improving players' technical proficiency and overall soccer performance across different levels of

participation (Irawan 2024). Furthermore, earlier studies have demonstrated that modifying player numbers and field dimensions in game-based training environments can effectively promote the development of dribbling skills and decision-making capacity in youth soccer players (Hammami et al. 2018). In addition, (Sarmento et al. 2018) Previous studies have also emphasized that the Small-Sided Games approach contributes not only to the development of technical skills but also to simultaneous improvements in players' physical performance and tactical understanding.

Table 5.
Results of Normality and Homogeneity Tests

| Type of Test | Data | Sig. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| Normality | Pretest | 0.118 | Normal |
| Normality | Posttest | 0.101 | Normal |
| Homogeneity | Pretest-Posttest | 0.214 | Homogeneous |

As shown in Table 2, the normality test results yielded significance values of 0.118 for the pretest and 0.101 for the posttest, both exceeding the threshold of 0.05. These results indicate that the data followed a normal distribution. Furthermore, the homogeneity test produced a significance value of 0.214, which was also greater than 0.05, confirming that the data were homogeneous. Since the assumptions of normality and homogeneity were satisfied, the paired-samples t-test was considered appropriate for testing the research hypothesis.

Table 6.
Results of Hypothesis Testing (Paired Sample t-test)

| Variable | Sig. (2-tailed) | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Pretest-Posttest | 0.000 | Significant |

The results presented in Table 3 showed a significance value of 0.000, which was lower than the predetermined significance level of 0.05. This finding indicates that the Small-Sided Games training method had a statistically significant effect on students' dribbling performance. Consequently, the research hypothesis proposing that the implementation of Small-Sided Games improves students' dribbling ability was supported and accepted.

Table 7.
Students' Questionnaire Responses toward the Small-Sided Games Method

| Indicator | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Training is more interesting | 88% |
| Training is more enjoyable | 92% |
| Increases motivation | 90% |
| Improves ability | 94% |

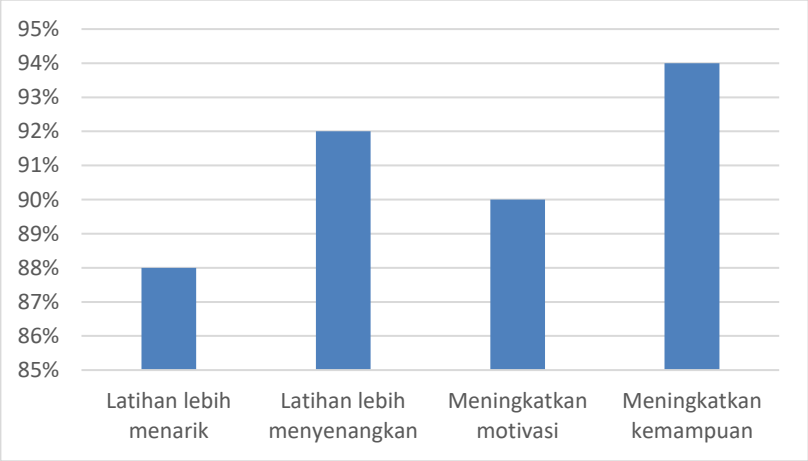


Figure 3.

Students' Responses toward Small-Sided Games

Beyond the improvement in technical performance, the questionnaire findings revealed that students responded very positively to the training method implemented in this study. As presented in Table 4 and Figure 2, all response indicators were classified within the high category. The highest score was recorded for the "improves ability" indicator (94%), followed by "training is more enjoyable" (92%), "increases motivation" (90%), and "training is more interesting" (88%). These findings suggest that the Small-Sided Games method fosters a more engaging, enjoyable, and interactive training environment. As a result, students demonstrated higher levels of intrinsic motivation and were more actively involved in the training process (Ikhsan and Ridwan 2025).

These results are in accordance with the principles of game-based learning, which emphasize that enjoyable and student-centered learning activities can enhance motivation, engagement, and participation in physical education and sports settings (Light 2012). In soccer training environments, enhanced motivation plays an important role in promoting sustained attention, active engagement, and greater dedication to the development of fundamental technical skills, such as dribbling (Pan, Huang, and Hsu 2023).

Overall, the results suggest that the Small-Sided Games method effectively improves students' dribbling ability and simultaneously supports the development of motivational and participatory aspects, making it a valuable approach for soccer training in educational settings (Pop et al. 2022). The success of this training method appears to be largely influenced by the combination of context-based practice and a positive learning atmosphere, both of which facilitated greater student engagement and contributed to improved learning outcomes (Firmana et al. 2023).

Despite the positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study did not include a control group, which limited the ability to compare the effectiveness of the intervention with other training approaches. Second, the

relatively small sample size may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Therefore, future research is encouraged to employ more rigorous experimental designs, such as the inclusion of control groups, and to involve larger and more diverse samples in order to strengthen the validity and generalizability of the results.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Small-Sided Games training method had a significant positive effect on improving the dribbling ability of students participating in the soccer extracurricular program at SMP IT Insan Kamil Kota Bima. This conclusion is supported by the increase in the mean dribbling score from the pretest to the posttest, as well as the results of statistical analysis, which confirmed a significant difference following the intervention. Furthermore, students demonstrated positive perceptions of the training method, indicating that the activities were more engaging, enjoyable, and motivating compared to conventional training approaches. These findings suggest that the Small-Sided Games method is an effective training strategy for enhancing fundamental soccer skills, particularly dribbling, while simultaneously promoting greater student participation and motivation during training sessions.

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