# Optimization of Islamic education learning through educational game methods: adjustment to development stages

a,1Widya Faridhatul Jannah, a,2Wantini, c,3Suyoto

a Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia
c Elementary Teacher Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo, Indonesia

1 idhawfj@gmail.com; 2 wantini@mpai.uad.ac.id; 3 suyoto.ump@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Educational games are games that are specifically designed for the benefit of the learning process. Educative games are activities that involve special actions guided by certain rules regulated by the teacher, with the aim of achieving cognitive, emotional, and educational development. Some teachers have had difficulty teaching educational materials according to the child's development. Some teachers find it difficult to obtain references related to educational games, especially when the games need to be adapted specifically to a particular subject. Learning methods need to be adapted to the child's developmental stage. The study aims to find out how learning methods should be adapted to the child's developmental stage. This research is a literature study with a qualitative approach. This research involves using literary sources as a basis for obtaining research data. Various literature sources are collected, then processed structured to get a final conclusion. In this study, the researchers used qualitative descriptive methods. The results of this study show that it is important to identify appropriate learning methods, through the use of educational games, to support the effectiveness of learning Islamic Education according to the developmental stage of children. Application of learning methods that correspond to the child's stage of development is able to make the transfer of science go smoothly, the child understands well the material delivered by the teacher as well as in its implementation the child enjoys the learning process of teaching in the classroom.

## Introduction

Islamic education for children does not only rely on the transfer of knowledge, but also requires effective learning methods in accordance with their developmental stages. According to the

Indonesian dictionary, the method can be understood as "an organized approach to facilitating implementation in order to a set out result." In other words, a method is a systematic approach used to a specific goal. According to Siti Maesaroh (2023) the use of learning methods serves as a means of change in the learning process, with the aim of achieving the desired competence can be realized. With high motivation, progress in learning performance can be enhanced (Siti Maesaroh, 2013). Khoirul Budi Utomo argues that success in learning cannot be separated from the use of strategies and methods, because to a goal, success cannot stand by itself, but requires other elements that support it (Khoirul Budi Utomo, 2018b).

The method of education is very important, one of which is the method of Islamic education. Muhammad Khoiruzaddi (2021) stated that the ideal method of education according to Piaget's theory of knowledge highlights the importance of the active involvement of a student in the process of building knowledge (Muhammad Khoiruzzadi & Tiyas Prasetya, 2021). In general, such methods can be well implemented in the learning process of Islamic education including various approaches such as lectures, questions, discussions, assignments, experiments, demonstrations, tutorials, and problem-solving. (pemecahan masalah). In this context, Nur Ahyat (2017) writes that Omar Muhammad Al-Thoumy Al-Saibany states that the method of Islamic education has several benefits, among others: (1) Helps students to develop their knowledge, experience, skills, especially in scientific thinking and forming an integrated attitude. (2) Encourages the habit of thinking healthy, diligent, patient, and thorough in the learning process. (3) Facilitates the achievement of learning goals effectively and efficiently. (4) Creates a conducive and communicative learning environment, so that it can improve the motivation of pupils (Nur Ahyat, 2017). The diversity of learning methods Islamic education provides benefits for both educators and learners, not only in the context of

learning but also in veryday life, even for the future.

Learning activities should encourage learners to express their ideas, with teachers acting as facilitators responsible for creating situations that stimulate initiative, motivation, and learning responsibility. Cognitive development aims to enrich children's thinking abilities, enable them to find alternative solutions to problems, as well as sharpen grouping and careful thinking skills (Pahenra, 2020). Learning through games gives children the opportunity to explore, repeat, discover on their own, conduct experiments, and understand concepts. In this process, the child is actively involved in the activities of the game and makes optimal use of the entire pan of his mind.

The use of educational games can be a solution to boosting a child's learning spirit. This type of game is not only meant to entertain, but also to present knowledge to its users. Educational games have the potential to invite users to learn in a fun way through play activities. However, there are still some teachers who find it difficult to obtain references related to such matters, especially when educational games need to be adapted specifically to specific subjects.

A lot of research has been done on the methods of Islamic learning. Triana Asih (2018) states that some problems arising in the background of a number of problems can be caused by the lack of accuracy of the learning methods applied by teachers. This leads to learning results that do not meet the Minimum Compliance Criteria (KKM). One factor is the use of methods that do not fully optimize the student's thinking skills according to their age level (Triana Asih, 2018). In accordance with that, Nurul (2023) researched the development of comic book media using canva with the results of observations carried out by researchers against students of the 7th grade in MTs Qur'an Scope indicates weakness in the mastery of Arabic language. In interviews with students, researchers found that the most fundamental factor causing their reluctance to use Arabic is the lack of attractive media to enhance motivation in memorizing sentences in Arabic conversations (Nurul Aisyah Salsabila Panjaitan & Harun Al Rasyid, 2023). Vina Muthmainna Rianto (2017) investigates student problem-solving skills. After conducting an unstructured interview with the students concerned about the difficulties they encountered, it was found that the difficulty experienced by the students was due to several factors, namely that the tested material had been passed, so that the students had little memory related to the material, and since the beginning of the presentation, most students understood the matter, which continued until the student ascended to the next class (Vina Muthmainna Rianto et al., 2017). In accordance with that, Chairunnisa (2020) stated that children at Assalam II Sukarame Bandar Lampung faced several problems, including lack of understanding of the concept of numbers, lack of comprehension and literacy, as well as difficulties in socializing with peers (Chairunnisa, 2020). The use of learning methods is not free of various factors, in accordance with the development of the child. Some factors that influence the use of learning methods, especially in early childhood, include: Sacred Retma Novela (2019) in her research stated that the characteristic factors of this child include their learning ability, interests, and learning style. When choosing a learning method, it is worth noting that each child is unique (Suci Retma Novela, 2019). In addition, the teacher's understanding of the child's development and its aspects can influence their learning strategy choices (Fitriyah Ningrum et al., 2015).

The use of methods is not independent of the child's development. This is in line with John Dewey's emphasis that learning methods need to be adapted to a child's developmental stage. He stated that children should learn through real and active experience, so that they can understand concepts and relationships both theoretically and practically (Hasbullah, 2020). Dewey also introduced the term "Experiential learning" as an approach to learning that focuses on the active involvement of children in the learning process (Ria Novianti et al., 2022). According to Dewey, education should support the development of critical, creative, and self-reliant thinking skills in children, while preparing them to adapt to life in a democratic society (Wasitohadi, 2014). The use of appropriate learning methods can help children develop their ability to think critically,

creatively, and independently, as well as prepare them for life in a democratic society.

From some previous studies, it is suggested that the current focus of research is more likely to be how learning methods should be adapted to the child's developmental stage. Thus, the research entitled Optimization of Learning of Islamic Education Through Educational Game Methods: Adaptation to the Developmental Stage is important to do.

## Method

This research is a literature study with a qualitative approach. Literary research is a series of research activities that focus on accurate methods and procedures to obtain information from studies, record, record and compile summaries of analysed studies. This research involves the use of literary sources as a basis for obtaining research data (Muhmmad DH, 2020). In this study, the researchers used qualitative descriptive methods. Critical descriptive methods emphasize the skills of data analysis and the use of relevant sources in accordance with existing texts and theories, based on written foundations leading to discussion. The foundation comes from the work of a competent intellectual. According to Dr. Muhammad Ramdhan, qualitative research is descriptive and tends to use analysis. Processes and meanings are more displayed. The theoretical pathway is used as a guide to focus research according to the facts in the field (Lukas S. Musianto, 2002). The research was conducted by observing and linking various components between educational games in Islamic education with the stages of child development.

The data collection carried out in this study of the library began from the identification of some key terms used in the process of searching for literature, then conducted searches to find various literary sources consisting of books as well as journal articles in indexed publications that contain about educational games in Islamic education according to the stage of child development. This article was conducted by researchers through discourse analysis to avoid overlap. After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed it to reach conclusions, using descriptive analysis techniques (Sibrani R, 2015).

## Result and Discussion

Islamic education became an important foundation in the formation of character and religious understanding in future generations. Islamic education has an urgent role in the lives of Muslims. Religion is the guide in achieving meaningful, quiet, and valuable life. Aware of the importance of religion in human life, religious values have become a necessity to be taught through various educational paths. (Khoirul Budi Utomo, 2018a)  said that the education of Islamic values in children of early age is a very important religious foundation for building persistent individuals in

worship (Bina Fitriah Ardiansari & Dimyati, 2022). In developing Islamic education, it is important to understand that children are undergoing complex development. Understanding the stages of child development becomes an important foundation in ensuring the effectiveness of the delivery of religious values. The use of appropriate learning methods adapted to the child's developmental stages will result in increased effectiveness in religious teaching.

## Child developmental stages

In general, growth and development have the same notion of change. Development according to Ani Hidayati (2016) explains that development can be characterized as a result of changes in the level of maturity and physical readiness, which brings the potential to perform an activity, so that a person has experienced an experience (Wardatul Asfiyah & Lailul Ilham, 2019). is described as a regular, continuous, and progressive transformation in the life of an individual, beginning from birth to the end of life. (Wardatul Asfiyah & Lailul Ilham, 2019). In this context, these aspects of development have a certain meaning. "Systematic" refers to the development that follows the normal stages and sequence, "progressive" indicates the change or journey of an individual towards an optimal condition, and "continuous" indicate the consistency of the process or stage of development that continues to reach the optimal level that can be achieved. According to Jean Piaget, written by John W. Santrock (2007), each individual experiences four stages of development related to their age, and each stage has a distinctive and unique pattern of thinking. The way we understand different worlds makes one stage more advanced than the other. In other words, the way children think at one stage is different from the way they think at another, the stage of cognitive development according to Jean Piaget is sensomotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational (John W Santrock, 2007).

First, the sensoromotor phase lasts from birth to less than 2 years of age. At this stage, babies build up worldly experiences by coordinating sensory experiences using physical perceptions. For example, they begin to develop an understanding of fixed objects, realize cause-effect relationships, and understand the concept of permanent objects. (objek tetap ada meskipun tidak terlihat). Language development begins with body language and sensory.

Second, preoperative is a phase when children begin to use symbols and representations, such as language and images, to describe objects and events. Although their imagination is strong, they tend to think egocentrically, which means they find it difficult to see the world from another person's perspective. Moreover, they may be challenged to understand the concept of conservation, that is, to realize that the number of an object is constant, even though its shape changes.

Third, concrete operational is the phase when children begin to sharpen their ability to think more logically and systematically. They are able to understand the concept of conservation and

begin to apply logical rules to concrete situations. Although their thinking processes are still focused on physical objects and real events, they tend to interpret information in a concrete and real way.

Fourthly, formal operational In this phase, children begin to acquire the ability to think abstractly and hypothetically. They are able to deal with complex problems, develop theoretical ideas, and understand abstract concepts. Their ability to think becomes more logical and flexible, allowing them to predict the outcome of alternative decisions and actions. It can then be concluded that child development, especially in the cognitive sphere, is strongly influenced by child development. So an educator must be able to use effective methods for students. In a learning process, a teacher is claimed to have the ability to determine the method of education that is appropriate to the child's development.

Child development can be linked to the principles of Islamic education through various elements, such as approaches, methods, and purposes of education. Understanding of the education of children in Islam includes aspects of purpose, principles, approaches, and methods, which can be found in the guidance of the Qur'an and Al-Hadits (Moh Faishol Khusni, 2018). Some of the basic principles of Islamic education include universal, universal, balanced, and dynamic (Alfian Khairani, 2013). Not only that, the stage of child development from a psychological point of view is similar to the Islamic view, although the fundamentals come from different sources. Therefore, Islamic education can integrate these principles into the learning process to understand and educate children according to their stage of development. So the methods used are able to make the cognitive transfer go well.

### Basic Principles of Islamic Religious Education

The theory of Islamic education for children involves basic principles and appropriate approaches to ensure the child's spiritual, moral, and ethical development in its entirety. Some basic principles and appropriate approaches include the cultivation of Aqidah, the formation of noble morals, the actualization of worship, as well as the principle of balance in the world and the Hereafter (Zulfikli Agus, 2018). The cultivation of Aqidah became one of the fundamental principles of Islamic education, by teaching the concept of the One God, where God is the only God worthy of worship. Everything that comes from God will be returned to Him. By instilling the Akidah to the son can help in understanding and understanding the truth and according to the teaching of Islam. Akhlak Aqidah contributes in giving motivation to children to learn and apply their beliefs through habits to do good deeds and avoid bad behavior (Umami, 2019). Buddhist education helps children to practice good and noble Buddhism in accordance with the teachings of Islam. For example, honesty, justice, patience, and compassion. There is also a worship that emphasizes obedience as a

form of devotion to God. So if the principles of Islam are implemented help children to balance between this life (in this world) and the next (in the Hereafter) according to the teaching of Islam.

## Approach to Islamic Education for Children

Implement appropriate approaches to integrate basic principles so that Islamic education for children can goals effectively. This process involves collaboration between schools, families, and communities to provide an educational environment that supports the spiritual growth of children. There are several approaches to Islamic education according to Armai Arief re-written by Nurjannah Rianie that there are five approaches used in the process of teaching activities, namely induction-deduction, socio-cultural, functional and emotional approaches (Nurjannah Rianie, 2015).

Induction-Deduction approach, in which an induction approach is a method of scientific analysis that begins from observing specific things or events to formulate laws or norms of a general or universal nature. In other words, this approach involves defining general principles based on specific principles. The aim of this approach is to get students to think scientifically, to make comparisons, considerations between parts, and to draw conclusions and principles in general.

The deductive approach is the opposite of the inductive. Induction moves from the special to the general, whereas deduction is the opposite, that is, an analytical way of thinking moving from the general to the special. The purpose of this approach is similar to induction; the difference lies in its specificity and generality. Both are aimed at guiding students to be able to draw conclusions from the various problems of analysis faced. Socio-cultural approach. This approach is focused on the view that humans are massive and cultural beings.

The functional approach in relation to Islamic education is "the presentation of Islamic educational material with emphasis on its usefulness for students in everyday life". Based on this approach, the material prepared to be delivered to the pupils is material that corresponds to the needs of pupils in society. Because it must be fully aware that the material given to the pupil is not only for the advancement of his cognitive aspects, but also for his survival in the future.

Emotional approach. Emotional in language means "touching feelings, enjoying". Terminologically, emotional approach is "the attempt to encourage the feelings and emotions of students in believing, understanding and living their religious teachings". Through emotional methods, every educator always tries to "burn" the spirit (ghirah) of his pupils in implementing religious doctrines in accordance with the directions of the Qur'an and Assunnah. Giving spiritual touch to pupils is believed to be a great contribution in triggering and driving their spirit in worship and demanding knowledge. The assumption above is supported by a belief that each one of us has emotions and emotions that are always related to feelings, each person whom they touch,

automatically their emotions will also be touched.

In addition, there is an approach to play which is one of the emphasizing approaches in education that is combined with play because it is a child's fitrah or behavior. The purpose of this play approach is to evaluate the effectiveness of play practice in learning activities (Zaharah Kamaruddin & Suziyani Mohamed, 2019). This play approach integrates elements of play and creative activities to make teaching learning activities more interesting and easier to understand by children.

## Concepts of Educational Games in Educational Game Methods

The delivery of material in the revelation of Islam is becoming more attractive with the existence of methods appropriate to the development of the child. One of them is the method of educational games in Islamic learning. According to Tedjasaputra (2021) stated that educational game tools are games that are specifically designed for the benefit of learning processes (Tedjasaputra, 2001). Educational games are activities that involve special actions guided by certain rules set by the teacher, with the aim of achieving cognitive, emotional, and educational development (Nana Citrawati Lestari et al., 2023). The opinions are presented by Kamtini and Tanjung (2005) which stated that educational games are games that are optimally able to stimulate and attract children's interests at the same time being able to develop various kinds of potential of children and used in various activities (Kamtini & Tanjung, 2005). From some of the above understandings it can be concluded that educational games are one of the methods of learning that is fun and able to attract the interest of children in learning.

The use of educational games is a step in teaching Islamic education to children. The objectives of this educational game involve various aspects, such as the development of religious and moral values, the improvement of thinking skills, the strengthening of self-confidence, as well as the training of language, motor skills, and socialization skills (Budi Triyono, 2015). The method of educational games in the context of learning Islamic education is an approach used to communicate material and improve children's understanding of Islamic religion. By involving the child in contributing to the embodiment of religious and moral values, as well as developing the child's abilities and skills.

The educational game learning approach in the context of Islamic education refers to strategies that use games as a tool to convey Islamic teachings to children. This approach takes advantage of the natural nature of children who love to play to facilitate their understanding of religious concepts. In literature, this approach is often associated with the development of religious and moral values, as well as helping to strengthen children's understanding of the teachings of Islam. This method also contributes to the formation of a child's personality that is in line with Islamic

principles. So the method of learning educational games in Islamic education is an approach that focuses on the use of games as a means to convey Islamic teachings to children, with the aim of improving understanding, developing skills, and forming personality according to the teachings of Islam.

### Benefits of Educational Games

The use of educational games in Islamic learning for children has significant benefits. First, it's able to boost the interest of the child in learning. The exploitation of educational games can arouse the interest and enthusiasm of the child in the learning process, thus increasing the child's desire to learn (Dinik Handayani, 2009). Second, educational games can help improve children's skills in both cognitive motorics and language (Ulin Nabatin, 2014). Third, being able to help children in improving their understanding of Islamic values in a fun and interactive way. Fourthly, it is able to enhance the child's independence and confidence, and it is capable of enhancing the social interaction of the child by helping the child improve social interactions with peers and adults. Thus, the use of educational games in Islamic learning for children can help improve the quality of early childhood education within Islamic concepts.

The use of educational games in the context of learning Islam is closely linked to the principles of Islam. This option is intended to enrich the development of religious and moral values in early childhood, as well as to implant Islamic values into pre-school children. This approach is chosen because early age is considered a critical period in shaping children's character, personality, and character, so it is important to provide Islamic religious education from an early age. The use of educational games can be an effective means of communicating Islamic values and concepts, as it can make the learning process more enjoyable and interactive for children. In the context of Islamic learning, educational games can be a tool to help children understand Islamic values in an interesting and interactive way, while also supporting the improvement of their skills and independence.

### Implications of Child Developmental Stages on Educational Game Methods

The implications of a child's developmental stage for the learning methods of educational games are that such games need to be adapted to the child' s developmental stages. Each stage of development has different characteristics and needs, so educational games must be adapted to improve the child's religious and moral values. For example, in the early childhood development stage, educational play should be designed to stimulate creativity, provide pleasure, and have appropriate educational elements. In the children's development phase at the elementary school level, the educational game should be made in such a way that it can support the child's

understanding of Islamic values with a fun and interactive approach. Thus, the use of educative games in learning Islamic religion should be tailored to the developmental stage of the child in order to be effective in improving the development of the children's moral and religious value.

Some types of educational games that can be applied to the appropriate level of child development, especially in the context of learning Islamic religion. Choosing the educational type of game that suits the stage of children's development can make Islamic dissemination more effective and enjoyable:

1. Games that enhance children's creativity such as building, colouring, or composing activities. This type of game is suitable for the child's developmental phase with the aim of stimulating the creativity of children,

2. Board games such as staircases, monopolies, and swords can be used in early childhood education. These games can support the teaching of Islamic religious concepts in a fun and interactive way.

Card games adapted for children and can be applied in the learning of Islamic religious concepts in a fun and interactive way.

## Conclusion

The importance of effective learning methods in Islamic education of children has a great influence on teaching learning activities. Islamic learning not only involves the transfer of knowledge but also requires methods appropriate to the developmental stage of children. Islamic learning methods have several benefits, such as helping students develop science, skills, and form an integrated attitude. The selection of appropriate methods is expected to facilitate the achievement of learning objectives effectively and efficiently. With high motivation, the student's learning performance can be improved. Varied learning methods are expected to create a conducive and communicative learning environment, enhancing the motivation of students. The importance of using educational games in Islamic learning. Educational games are considered as a solution to enhance the learning spirit of children, providing an opportunity to explore, repeat, and understand different concepts. Some teachers find it difficult to obtain references related to educational games, especially when the games need to be adapted specifically to a particular subject. Learning methods need to be adapted to the child's developmental stage. John Dewey was quoted in the article, arguing that learning methods should support the development of critical, creative, and self-reliant thinking skills in children. Thus, it is important to identify appropriate learning methods, through the use of educational games, to support the effectiveness of learning Islamic Education in accordance with the developmental stage of children.

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