

Islamic Based Educational Games in the Social Development of Early Childhood at RA Darul Hasanah

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the contribution of Islamic-based educational games to the social development of early childhood at RA Daarul Hasanah. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving two teachers and twelve children aged 5–6 years from Group B. The findings reveal that Islamic educational games positively influence children's social competence, including improved social interaction, empathy development, and the formation of Islamic social character. Children became more active in communication, cooperation, and demonstrated honesty, discipline, and responsibility during play activities. Teachers applied a reflective learning approach to help children understand the moral values embedded in each play experience. Theoretically, this study supports Vygotsky's theory of the importance of social interaction in child development and aligns with Al-Attas's (1991) concept of *insan adabi*, which emphasizes character formation through the integration of knowledge, values, and action. Thus, Islamic-based educational games play a crucial role in fostering holistic social and moral development in early childhood.

Keywords: educational games; Islamic values; social development; early childhood; Islamic character

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi permainan edukatif berbasis Islam terhadap perkembangan sosial anak usia dini di RA Daarul Hasanah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan dua guru dan dua belas anak kelompok B berusia 5–6 tahun. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa permainan edukatif berbasis nilai-nilai Islam memberikan pengaruh positif terhadap kemampuan sosial anak, meliputi peningkatan interaksi sosial, perkembangan empati, dan pembentukan karakter sosial Islami. Anak-anak menjadi lebih aktif berkomunikasi, bekerja sama, serta menunjukkan perilaku jujur, disiplin, dan amanah dalam kegiatan bermain. Proses pembelajaran yang dilakukan guru melalui pendekatan reflektif membantu anak memahami makna moral di balik setiap aktivitas bermain. Secara teoritis, hasil penelitian ini memperkuat teori Vygotsky tentang pentingnya interaksi sosial dalam perkembangan anak serta mendukung konsep *insan adabi* menurut Al-Attas (1991) yang menekankan pembentukan karakter melalui integrasi nilai, ilmu, dan amal. Dengan demikian, permainan edukatif berbasis Islam berperan penting dalam menumbuhkan kemampuan sosial dan moral anak usia dini secara holistik.

Kata Kunci: permainan edukatif; nilai-nilai Islam; perkembangan sosial; anak usia dini; karakter Islami

INTRODUCTION

Tawhid (the Oneness of God) is the fundamental foundation of all dimensions of education, morality, and the formation of human character. Islamic religious education for children plays an essential role in shaping religious values from an early age (Al Ghifari, 2025). Islam places great emphasis on educating children according to their natural disposition, which is to learn through play; therefore, learning during early childhood should be conducted in an enjoyable and meaningful way (Sairan, 2024). In this context, Islamic education for early childhood needs to be developed through methods that align with children's characteristics, such as play-based learning (Aryani, 2015). The inculcation of religious values from an early age is believed to have a positive impact on children's lives, equipping them with the ability to protect themselves from negative influences in the future (Hasanah, 2023).

Early childhood education is a crucial phase for the holistic development of children, encompassing cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects (Wahyudi et al., 2024). This stage serves as the foundation for shaping children's personalities and social abilities in the future. Social development in early childhood refers to the ability to interact and adapt to the surrounding environment (Hanifah, 2025). This ability not only serves as an indicator of social competence but also plays an essential role in fostering self-confidence, communication skills, and cooperation with others (Ismail & Subagyo, 2023).

Children's socio-emotional development is influenced by two main factors: internal (innate) factors and external (environmental) factors (Fuadia, 2022). Social environments such as family, peers, and school have a significant impact on this developmental process (Suharsiwi et al., 2024). The family, particularly parents, serves as the first environment that introduces children to social life (Lelo & Liutani, 2023). A warm, communicative, and affectionate parenting style can shape positive social character and foster empathy toward others. The preschool period is also known as the

golden period, which is highly decisive for the success of children's social development. During this stage, appropriate stimulation and positive interactions have a profound influence on shaping children's personalities in the future (Agusniatih & Manopa, 2019).

The preschool environment plays an essential role in providing opportunities for children to learn how to interact beyond the family setting. Through group activities and play, children learn to cooperate, adapt, develop empathy, and respect others (Nurhusnaina et al., 2024). The social interactions that occur within the preschool learning context are also closely related to children's academic readiness and social competence in the future (Nurdin & Nugraha, 2024).

The world of children is a world of play, and effective learning for early childhood can be integrated through play activities (Soleha & Anjani, 2025). Islam views play as part of a child's natural disposition that should be positively facilitated within the educational process (Sairan, 2024). In the context of Islamic education, **Islamic-based educational games** serve as an innovative approach that combines elements of learning and play to instill Islamic values (Al Ghifari, 2025). Such games not only enhance children's understanding of Islamic teachings but also help shape their self-identity and character from an early age (Norfazli & Mohamad Judi, 2022a).

A number of studies have shown that educational games are effective in enhancing children's religious and moral values (Hasibuan, 2023), strengthening Qur'anic learning (Husaini, 2025), and increasing children's motivation and engagement in religious education (Rachma & Amanullah, 2025). In addition, educational games oriented toward structured learning have been proven to develop children's social skills, cooperation, and adaptability (Norfazli & Mohamad Judi, 2022b). Therefore, **Islamic-based educational games** can function not only as learning media but also as instruments for strengthening the social and spiritual character of early childhood.

RA Darul Hasanah, as an early childhood education institution grounded in Islamic values, plays a strategic role in implementing **Islamic-based educational games** as a learning medium that supports children's social development. Through the application of games that integrate Islamic values, children not only learn to socialize positively but also internalize virtues such as cooperation (*ta'awun*), honesty (*shidq*), responsibility (*amanah*), and empathy toward others.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze and explore in depth how the implementation of **Islamic-based educational games** at RA Darul Hasanah, Jakarta contributes to the social development of early childhood. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness, implementation strategies, and practical implications of this approach in shaping children's character and social abilities based on Islamic values.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth description of the implementation process of Islamic-based educational games and their impact on children's social development. The research subjects consisted of two teachers and twelve students from group B.2, aged 5–6 years, at RA Darul Hasanah, Jakarta. The object of the study was the educational games used in the learning activities.

The research data included primary data (obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation of learning activities) and secondary data (supporting documents such as curriculum materials, learning modules, and student evaluation reports). Data sources were gathered from teachers, students, and relevant institutional documents.

Data collection techniques involved direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentary studies. The research instruments included observation

guidelines, interview question lists, and documentation tools such as a camera and audio recorder.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of observations and interviews indicate that the implementation of Islamic value-based educational games at RA Darul Hasanah, Jakarta, has had a positive impact on the social development of early childhood. The children became increasingly accustomed to engaging in positive interactions, understanding social rules, and demonstrating cooperative and empathetic behavior toward their peers. Activities such as Islamic role-playing games helped children learn moral values and emulate the exemplary character of the Prophets and their companions. Meanwhile, group games with themes of honesty and mutual assistance fostered children's ability to appreciate fairness, share with others, and offer help to those in need.

These findings support (Vygotsky, 2011) which states that social interaction during play activities provides an essential context for children's social and moral development. Through play, children not only learn to follow rules but also internalize values and social norms through direct experience. This is also consistent with (Hurlock, 1997) perspective, which emphasizes that group play offers opportunities for children to learn cooperation, adaptability, and constructive ways of resolving social conflicts.

From an Islamic perspective, games integrated with Islamic values reflect the principle of *ta'dib*, which emphasizes the formation of proper manners (*adab*) and moral character (*akhlaq*) through enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences (Al-Attas, 2005). The habituation of practices such as reciting prayers before playing, greeting others with *salaam*, and showing respect to peers represents a concrete form of moral education oriented toward the development of Islamic character from an early age.

In addition, the implementation of these educational games also strengthens the emotional bond between teachers and students, creating a warm and meaningful learning atmosphere. Teachers act as both facilitators and role models in instilling Islamic values through real actions during play activities. This aligns with Bandura & Hall (2018) tentang *social learning theory*, social learning theory, which asserts that children learn through observation and imitation of behavioral models demonstrated by adults.

Teachers serve as facilitators and moral guides who help children understand the social meanings and moral values embedded within play activities. Based on data obtained from semi-structured interviews, it was found that teachers consciously connect play activities with the habituation of Islamic behaviors, such as helping friends (*ta'awun*), respecting differences of opinion (*tasamuh*), and being responsible (*amanah*). This approach demonstrates that play activities are not only focused on cognitive and motor aspects but are also directed toward shaping children's character and personality in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Selain In addition, teachers apply a reflective approach at the end of play sessions by engaging children in discussions about the values they have learned, such as the importance of sharing, being honest, and showing respect for others. This reflection process provides opportunities for children to connect their play experiences with real-life situations, allowing these values to become more deeply internalized.

These findings are consistent with Vygotsky (2011) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes that children require guidance from adults or more capable peers to reach higher levels of understanding. In this context, the teacher acts as the more knowledgeable other, helping children construct moral and social meanings from their play experiences.

The reflective approach implemented by teachers is also consistent with the principles of constructivist learning, in which knowledge is actively constructed

through experience and interaction (Piaget, 1976). From an Islamic perspective, such learning practices reflect the value of *tarbiyah*, which emphasizes education that cultivates children's moral and spiritual awareness through meaningful dialogue and exemplary conduct (Al-Ghazali, in Nasr, 1984).

The thematic analysis of observation and interview data revealed that Islamic value-based educational games have a positive impact on the social development of early childhood at RA Darul Hasanah, Jakarta. The children demonstrated improvements in their ability to interact, cooperate, and display empathetic and responsible behavior in various play situations.

These findings generated three main themes that illustrate the contribution of Islamic-based educational games to children's social development, namely:

1. Enhancement of Social Interaction

Children became more active in communicating, participating in group activities, and understanding applicable social rules. They learned to share roles, take turns, and negotiate constructively with their peers. This process indicates that social interaction through play not only strengthens children's social abilities but also develops their capacity to manage emotions and understand others' perspectives.

These findings reinforce Vygotsky (2011) theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction as the foundation for children's cognitive and moral development. Through processes of scaffolding and collaboration, children gain opportunities to learn from adults or more knowledgeable peers. In the context of Islamic-based educational games, this process is further enriched by spiritual values such as *ta'awun* (mutual help) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), which make social interactions not only socio-cultural but also moral and religious in nature.

Thus, Islamic-themed play activities effectively integrate children's social, emotional, and spiritual aspects in a harmonious way. Children do not merely learn

how to interact but also come to understand the moral meaning behind their actions, in accordance with the goals of Islamic education that emphasize the balance between knowledge (*'ilm*), good conduct (*adab*), and righteous deeds (*'amal*) (Al-Attas, 2005).

2. Development of Empathy and Compassion

Children begin to show concern for others, such as helping friends in difficulty, sharing toys, or comforting a friend who feels sad. These behaviors reflect the emergence of social empathy the ability to understand and respond to others' feelings in a positive way. This process does not occur spontaneously but develops through meaningful social experiences and repeated interactions within the context of Islamic value-based educational games.

According to Hoffman (2000), empathy develops through repeated emotional and social learning processes in which children internalize affective responses to others' conditions. During play activities, children learn to recognize emotional expressions, understand social situations, and adjust their behavior according to group norms. Thus, play experiences that are structured within an Islamic framework provide a natural setting for children to cultivate social and emotional sensitivity.

From an Islamic perspective, children's empathetic behavior aligns with the value of *rahmah* (compassion), which serves as the foundation of human relationships. As stated in the Qur'an, "*And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a mercy to all the worlds*" (QS. Al-Anbiya [21]: 107). This verse emphasizes that compassion is the essence of Islamic teachings and should be reflected in social behavior from an early age. By instilling the value of *rahmah* through play activities, teachers help children develop loving and compassionate characters rooted in spirituality and humanity.

Thus, play experiences rich in empathy and compassion not only build

children's social-emotional intelligence but also serve as a medium for cultivating noble character (*akhlaq al-karimah*) in accordance with Islamic educational principles that emphasize the harmony between heart, mind, and action.

3. Formation of Islamic Social Character

Through the internalization of Islamic values in play activities, children demonstrate behaviors such as honesty, discipline, trustworthiness, and responsibility. These attitudes are reflected in their habits of taking turns during play, handling toys carefully, following rules, and speaking truthfully when interacting with peers. Play activities infused with Islamic values enable children to understand the moral meaning behind each action, rather than merely following rules mechanically.

These activities function as an effective medium for character education, as children undergo the process of value formation through direct practice and real social interactions. According to Lickona (1996), effective character education involves three main aspects: moral knowing (knowledge of values), moral feeling (emotional response to values), and moral action (concrete behaviors that reflect values). In this context, Islamic-based educational games have facilitated all three aspects in an integrated manner through hands-on experiences within an enjoyable and meaningful environment.

These findings align with Al-Attas (2005) view, which emphasizes that the primary goal of Islamic education is the formation of a cultured and morally upright human being (*insan adabi*)—an individual who possesses moral and spiritual awareness and is able to position themselves and their environment according to divine values. Values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*) and honesty (*shidq*), instilled through play, reflect the process of ta'dib, an educational approach that focuses not only on knowledge acquisition but also on the cultivation of manners (*adab*) and moral character (*akhlaq*).

Thus, Islamic value-based educational games play a strategic role in fostering children's social and moral character from an early age. Through structured play experiences, children not only learn to socialize but also understand and practice Islamic values as guidelines for daily life.

Overall, the analysis indicates that Islamic-based educational games serve not merely as recreational activities but also as an effective and contextual medium for social learning. Through play, children gain firsthand experiences in applying Islamic social values that are relevant to their everyday lives.

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Islamic value-based educational games significantly contributes to the social development of early childhood. Through play activities designed with integrated Islamic values, teachers not only stimulate social aspects but also instill moral and spiritual values in children. This aligns with Vygotsky (2011) view, which emphasizes that effective learning occurs through meaningful social interactions, where children construct understanding through shared experiences and guidance from adults.

In the context of Islamic education, play serves as a medium for the internalization of values through learning by doing. Activities such as role-playing stories of the Prophets, memorizing Hijaiyah letters, and group games with themes of honesty and mutual assistance reinforce children's understanding of values such as *ta'awun* (cooperation), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *tasamuh* (tolerance). These values are not only learned cognitively but are also lived affectively and socially through real experiences during play.

In addition, teachers' strategy of using a reflective approach after play provides children with opportunities to reflect on their experiences and recognize the moral meanings contained within them. This approach supports Piaget (1976) constructivist principle that children construct meaning through active experience and interaction. From an Islamic perspective, this also aligns with educational principles

aimed at cultivating spiritual awareness and noble character through habituation and exemplary conduct (Al-Ghazali, 2008).

The findings of this study underscore that Islamic values can be creatively integrated into play activities, making learning experiences not only oriented toward enjoyment (*fun learning*) but also toward character building. Islamic-based educational games bridge children's need to learn through enjoyable activities while simultaneously strengthening the moral and social foundations aligned with Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Islamic value-based educational games make a significant contribution to the social development of early childhood at RA Darul Hasanah. Through play activities integrated with Islamic values such as *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), *amanah* (responsibility), and *tasamuh* (tolerance), children learn to interact, cooperate, and develop empathy as well as positive social character.

The learning process facilitated by teachers is not only focused on recreational aspects but is also directed toward building moral and spiritual awareness through meaningful play experiences. The use of a reflective approach after play sessions serves as an effective means of reinforcing children's understanding of Islamic social values that are relevant to daily life.

Theoretically, these findings support Vygotsky (1978) view on the importance of social interaction in child development and align with Al-Attas (1991) principles of Islamic education, which emphasize the formation of a cultured and morally upright individual (*insan adabi*) through the integration of knowledge, values, and action. Thus, Islamic-based educational games function not only as an enjoyable learning medium but also as a strategic tool for instilling Islamic character values from an early age.

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