

The Utilization of the Educational Game 'Duck Race' as an Innovative Formative Assessment in Islamic Education Learning at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine the implementation of the educational game "Duck Race" as an innovative formative assessment in Akidah Akhlak learning for Grade II students at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research explored learning practices, classroom interactions, and students' experiences in a natural setting. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the principal, vice principal for curriculum, PAI teacher, and selected students. The findings show that the "Duck Race" game was implemented in a structured, interactive manner that promoted active participation and enthusiasm. The game helped transform abstract moral concepts into concrete experiences, improving students' interest, focus, and understanding. As a formative assessment, it enabled teachers to observe comprehension, moral reasoning, and behavioral responses during learning. Challenges included preparation time, limited facilities, and classroom management. Overall, the study concludes that "Duck Race" is an effective formative assessment strategy. Game-based learning in Islamic education supports meaningful learning and moral internalization effectively.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of educational practices in the twenty-first century has prompted educators to adopt innovative learning strategies that emphasize student-centered approaches and meaningful. Learning media play a crucial role in supporting effective instruction, particularly at the elementary school level, where students' cognitive development remains within the concrete operational stage (Bulqiyah & Sofa, 2025). At this stage, learners tend to comprehend instructional material more effectively when it is presented through visual, interactive, and playful formats rather than abstract verbal explanations

Within the context of Islamic education, Akidah Akhlak serves as a foundational subject aimed at instilling essential values of faith (akidah) and

moral conduct (akhlak) from an early age (Maulidya & Sofa, 2025). The objectives of Akidah Akhlak learning extend beyond cognitive mastery to include affective and behavioral dimensions that shape students' character in everyday life (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025). Nevertheless, teaching moral and faith-based concepts to young learners poses significant challenges, as these concepts are inherently abstract and may be difficult to internalize when delivered through conventional, lecture-based instructional methods (Ramadhani & Sofa, 2025).

One of the primary challenges faced by teachers in Akidah Akhlak instruction is sustaining students' attention and motivation while ensuring that moral values are meaningfully internalized (Sofa, Anam, et al., 2025). Elementary school students generally have limited attention spans and require diverse instructional strategies to remain engaged (Sofa, Firdausiyah, et al., 2025). Therefore, the integration of appropriate educational games becomes essential in bridging the gap between abstract religious concepts and students' real-life experiences. Educational games are widely recognized as effective learning tools, as they stimulate interest, enhance comprehension, and encourage active participation (Slama & Sofa, 2025). "Duck Race" is an educational game designed to foster an interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere while enabling teachers to conduct formative assessments. The game promotes active participation, critical thinking, and cooperative problem-solving, all of which contribute to improved understanding of religious and moral concepts (Lathifah & Shofa, 2025). By combining playful activities with instructional objectives, "Duck Race" aligns with the principles of active learning and formative assessment, offering immediate feedback on students' comprehension and moral responses (Sudaryanto & Sofa, 2025).

Previous research has demonstrated that educational games positively influence students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes across various disciplines (Amelia & Sofa, 2025). Reported that interactive games enhance students' ability to retain concepts and values, while (Sepriyanti et al., 2024) emphasized that innovative formative assessment strategies, including game-based approaches, help teachers identify learning difficulties at an early stage and adjust instructional practices accordingly. Similarly (Ilahi et al., 2025) found that students engaged in game-based learning exhibited higher levels of participation and improved critical thinking skills compared to those taught through traditional methods (Maghfiroh & Sofa, 2025). Despite these findings, studies specifically focusing on the use of educational games in Akidah Akhlak learning at the elementary school level remain limited (Rachmawati et al., 2025).

Based on these considerations, this study examines the implementation of the educational game "Duck Race" as an innovative formative assessment in Akidah Akhlak learning at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School (Anam & Sofa, 2025). The study aims to explore teachers' instructional strategies in applying the game, identify challenges encountered during its implementation, and analyze its impact on students' engagement and understanding (Hidayatingsih & Sofa, 2025). Through qualitative analysis, this research is expected to contribute to the

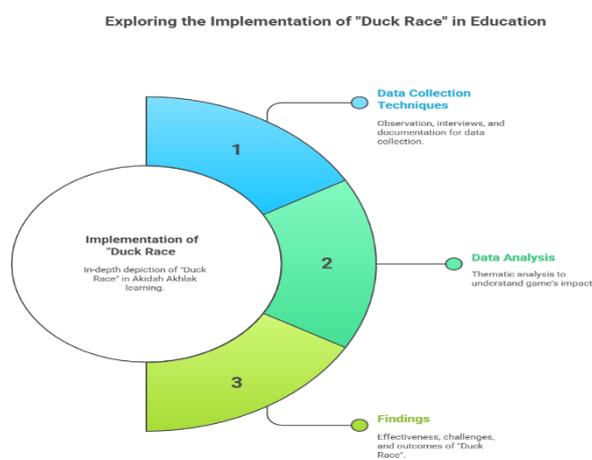
development of creative and contextually relevant learning media in Islamic education, particularly in supporting the formation of students' moral and religious character.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, aiming to provide an in-depth depiction of the implementation of the educational game "Duck Race" as a formative assessment in Akidah Akhlak learning for Grade II students at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School. The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen to comprehensively understand teaching practices, classroom interactions, and students' experiences within their natural learning environment.

The research was conducted at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School, located in Dusun Nyato, Glagah Village, Pakuniran District, Probolinggo Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia. The school was selected purposively because it has begun integrating innovative learning media, such as educational games, into its PAI instructional process, particularly at the lower-grade level (Muqorrobin & Sofa, 2025). This characteristic makes the school a suitable and relevant setting for examining the use of "Duck Race" in formative assessment during Akidah Akhlak learning (Yunus & Sofa, 2025).

Data were collected using three primary techniques: classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Mardiyah & Sofa, 2025). Observations were conducted to examine the teaching-learning process, the application of the "Duck Race" game, and students' responses and engagement during instruction (Laili & Sofa, 2025). Interviews were carried out with the Akidah Akhlak teacher and selected students to gain deeper insights into instructional strategies, challenges faced, and perceived impacts of using the game. Documentation was used to support the data, including lesson plans, teaching materials, game designs, and photographs of learning activities (Widayanti, 2025).



The diagram illustrates the data collection techniques used in this study, which include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine how Akidah Akhlak learning was implemented using the “Duck Race” game in the Grade II classroom. This included observing how the teacher introduced the game, guided the activities, and monitored students’ participation and responses during the learning process. Interviews were conducted with the teacher and selected students to obtain detailed information regarding their experiences, challenges encountered, and the perceived influence of the game on students’ engagement, motivation, and understanding. Documentation was used to collect supporting data in the form of photographs of learning activities, samples of the “Duck Race” game materials, lesson plans, and records of students’ learning outcomes.

Data analysis was carried out thematically using Braun and Clarke’s Thematic Analysis model. The process began with data familiarization, involving careful reading and understanding of all observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation. Initial coding was then performed to identify relevant data segments related to the use of the “Duck Race” game, challenges encountered, and its impact on students’ engagement and understanding. These codes were organized into initial themes representing meaningful patterns within the data.

The identified themes were further reviewed to ensure alignment with the field data. Each theme was defined and named according to its core meaning. Finally, a thematic report was compiled in the form of a descriptive narrative that presents the implementation process, challenges, and outcomes associated with using the “Duck Race” game as a formative assessment tool.

Through the application of this method, the study provides a detailed and factual depiction of the effectiveness of the “Duck Race” game in Akidah Akhlak learning for Grade II students at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School, Glagah Pakuniran, Probolinggo. In addition, the study aims to identify challenges and analyze the influence of the game on students’ motivation, engagement, and comprehension.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents the research findings regarding the implementation of the educational game “Duck Race” as a formative assessment in Akidah Akhlak learning for Grade II students at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School. The data were obtained through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the school principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, the Islamic Education (PAI) teacher, and selected Grade II students. All findings were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach and were interpreted through the lens of active learning and formative assessment theories to explain how interactive games influence students’ engagement and understanding. The discussion in this section focuses on three main aspects: the implementation of the “Duck Race” game, the challenges

encountered, and the impact of the game on students' learning interest and comprehension.

Implementation of the "Duck Race" Game in Akidah Akhlak Learning for Grade II Students

Based on classroom observations in Grade II, the use of the "Duck Race" game in Akidah Akhlak learning was carried out in a structured and interactive manner, involving active participation from both the teacher and students. The PAI teacher, Ustadz Yudi Mas'udi, personally designed the game materials to ensure alignment with the learning objectives and targeted competencies. As he stated in the interview: *"I designed the Duck Race game myself to ensure that the scenarios and questions match the material and are easy for the students to understand."*

During the learning process, the teacher guided students through the game by presenting moral scenarios, asking questions such as, "Which behavior shown here is good or bad?" or "How should we act in this situation?" Students responded enthusiastically, discussed possible answers, and justified their reasoning, demonstrating active cognitive and moral engagement.

The school principal, Moh. Samsul Bahri, M.Pd, emphasized that interactive games like "Duck Race" help young students better understand abstract moral concepts. He explained: *"When children actively play and make decisions in a game, they understand moral lessons more quickly because they experience the consequences of actions in a concrete way."* Similarly, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, Mrs. Feby Angelina P., S.Kom, noted that the game increases students' attention and focus: *"The Duck Race game makes learning dynamic. Even students who are usually passive become involved in discussions and decision-making."* Students also reported that the game made learning more engaging and easier to understand. A Grade II student, Al Habsy, stated: *"I enjoy playing the Duck Race game because it helps me think about right and wrong behaviors in real life."*



Figure 2: Documentation of the Implementation of the Duck Race Game in Akidah Akhlak Learning

The findings align with active learning and formative assessment theories, which emphasize that learning becomes more meaningful when students participate actively and receive immediate feedback. In the context of Akidah

Akhlaq learning, the "Duck Race" game provides experiential scenarios that help students understand moral concepts concretely. The combination of game-based interaction and teacher guidance enables students to process information actively, make decisions, and reflect on ethical behavior, thereby enhancing comprehension and retention.

Challenges Faced by Teachers and Students in Using the "Duck Race" Game

Despite the positive outcomes, several challenges were observed during the implementation of the game. From the teachers' perspective, the main challenge was the time and effort required to prepare the game materials. Ustadz Yudi Mas'udi stated: "*Designing the Duck Race game takes considerable time. I have to create scenarios, prepare game pieces, and ensure everything aligns with the learning objectives.*"

Limited school facilities also posed obstacles. Mrs. Feby Angelina P., S.Kom, explained: "*Not all teachers have access to the materials or tools needed to produce game components. Sometimes we have to improvise or wait for resources.*" Classroom dynamics occasionally created additional challenges. Some students became overly enthusiastic and wanted to act as the game leader or manipulate game pieces, which occasionally caused slight disruptions. A Grade II student, Al Habsy, commented: "*Sometimes I want to move the pieces myself, but I have to wait my turn.*"

Active learning theories suggest that managing interactive activities requires teachers to have specific competencies, including designing scenarios, facilitating discussion, and integrating learning objectives with playful activities. If not well-prepared, the effectiveness of the game as a learning and assessment tool may be reduced. Teacher readiness, quality of materials, and classroom management are therefore critical factors for successful implementation.

The Impact of the "Duck Race" Game on Students' Interest and Understanding

The results indicate that the "Duck Race" game positively influenced students' learning interest and understanding. Observations revealed that students were more focused, enthusiastic, and actively involved when the game was used. Ustadz Yudi Mas'udi explained: "*As soon as we start the Duck Race game, students immediately pay attention and participate actively.*"

The game also enhanced students' comprehension of moral concepts. Students could connect scenarios in the game with real-life behaviors, facilitating deeper understanding and internalization of moral lessons. Mrs. Feby Angelina P., S.Kom, highlighted: "*The game encourages students to express their opinions confidently and think critically about moral decisions.*" Students reported that the game helped them remember lessons more effectively. Al Habsy said: "*When I play the Duck Race game, I remember the rules of good and bad behavior easily.*"

The school principal added that experiential games like "Duck Race" help students internalize moral values in a concrete way: "*By playing the game, students can see examples of right and wrong actions and reflect on how to behave in real life.*" These findings are consistent with active learning and formative assessment principles, which emphasize learning through participation, feedback, and

reflection. By providing concrete experiences, the game supports the development of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of learning in Akidah Akhlak.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the Duck Race educational game as a formative assessment tool has a positive and meaningful impact on Akidah Akhlak learning for Grade II students at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School. The findings indicate that the game enhances students' attention, participation, and understanding by transforming abstract moral and faith-based concepts into concrete and experiential learning activities. These results support the view that lower-grade elementary students learn moral values more effectively when instructional strategies align with their developmental need for concrete, interactive, and engaging learning experiences.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that educational games contribute positively to students' engagement and learning outcomes. Figueroa-Flores (2016) and Hartt et al (2020) found that game-based learning strategies increase students' motivation and focus by creating a joyful learning atmosphere that encourages active participation. Similarly, Ilahi & Sofa (2025) reported that interactive learning activities enable teachers to observe students' understanding more authentically during the learning process, particularly when games are used as formative assessment tools. These studies support the present findings by confirming that educational games can function as effective instructional and assessment media in elementary education.

From the perspective of active learning and formative assessment theory, the effectiveness of the Duck Race game lies in its ability to involve students directly in decision-making, problem-solving, and reflection. In line with this, Clark (2012) and Sudaryanto & Sofa (2025) emphasized that formative assessment becomes more meaningful when students are actively engaged in learning tasks rather than being assessed solely through written tests. In the Duck Race game, students respond to moral scenarios, justify their choices, and reflect on ethical consequences, which strengthens comprehension and facilitates deeper internalization of Akidah Akhlak values.

However, some previous studies also highlight challenges that partially contrast with the positive findings of this research. Faishol et al (2025) and Xiao & Yang (2019) noted that innovative learning strategies, including game-based approaches, may be less effective when teachers lack sufficient preparation time, instructional resources, or classroom management skills. These concerns align with the challenges identified in this study, such as preparation demands, limited materials, and increased classroom excitement. This suggests that while educational games are pedagogically effective, their success is highly dependent on teacher readiness, institutional support, and structured implementation.

Overall, this study reinforces previous research suggesting that educational games function not only as instructional tools but also as mediators

for the internalization of moral values. By presenting ethical dilemmas and decision-making situations in a playful and structured format, the Duck Race game enables students to connect religious teachings with everyday experiences. In line with Zulkefli & Jamil (2024), the integration of game-based formative assessment in Akidah Akhlak learning represents a pedagogically sound approach to strengthening character education at the elementary school level. To maximize its effectiveness, sustained support in terms of teacher training, instructional planning, and adequate learning resources is essential.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the educational game “Duck Race” as a formative assessment is effective in supporting Akidah Akhlak learning for Grade II students at Cahaya Cendekia Elementary School. The game facilitates the transformation of abstract moral concepts into concrete, interactive experiences, thereby enhancing students’ learning interest, focus, and comprehension. The structured and engaging use of the “Duck Race” game encourages active student participation and supports the internalization of moral values at the elementary school level.

The findings further confirm the relevance of active learning and formative assessment principles, as the integration of experiential scenarios and teacher guidance enables students to process information actively, reflect on ethical behavior, and make decisions in a simulated real-life context. This dual engagement enhances students’ understanding, critical thinking, and retention of moral concepts. Despite its effectiveness, the use of the “Duck Race” game also presents challenges related to teacher preparation time, limited materials and facilities, and classroom management during interactive activities. These constraints indicate the need for institutional support, including adequate resources, teacher training, and instructional planning.

Overall, this study highlights that the “Duck Race” game is a creative and pedagogically sound medium that can be effectively applied in value-based subjects such as Akidah Akhlak. Future research may explore the integration of digital game versions or investigate the long-term effects of game-based learning on students’ moral behavior to further enhance the development of innovative and contextually relevant learning media in Islamic education.

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