

The Orizing Online Game Applications With Islamic Content To Foster Youth's Willingness To Learn Islam

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ABSTRACT

Online gaming becomes popular among youth with the fast emergence of internet use. Various types of games are available and free to download on gadgets. Millennial game developers also utilize this condition to build online application games with Islamic content. This paper aims to investigate sorts of online game applications with Islamic contents and analyze Muslim youth's perspectives on the phenomenon. This research employs the religion and virtual reality theory of Bainbridge (2014). This descriptive qualitative research collected the data through textual study and interviews. The collected data were analyzed by employing textual analysis and ethnography methods. The research reveals two primary results. First, there are three most popular religious game applications; they are Cerdas Cermat Islami (rated 4.7 with 100,000 active users), Kuis Pengetahuan Islam (4.7 with 10,000 active users), and Muslim Millionaire (4.6 with 100,000 active users). The three applications provide challenging puzzles, activities, and challenges with Islamic content. In other words, while entertaining themselves, gamers learn Islamic knowledge. Second, the gamers' comments indicate that they are satisfied with the games and the contents. Furthermore, they get more benefits by learning more knowledge about Islam in more amusing media. Game is probably a more effective media to foster youth learn Islam.

Keywords: *Online Game, Islamic Content, Youth Willingness*

مستخلص البحث

أصبحت الألعاب عبر الإنترنت شائعة بين الشباب مع الظهور السريع لاستخدام الإنترنت. تتوفر أنواع مختلفة من الألعاب ويمكن تنزيلها مجانًا على الأدوات الذكية. يستخدم مطورو الألعاب الألفية أيضًا هذا الشرط لبناء ألعاب تطبيق عبر الإنترنت ذات محتوى إسلامي. تهدف هذه الورقة إلى التحقيق في أنواع تطبيقات الألعاب عبر الإنترنت ذات المحتويات الإسلامية وتحليل وجهات نظر الشباب المسلم حول هذه

الظاهرة. يستخدم هذا البحث نظرية الدين والواقع الافتراضي لبينبريدج (٢٠١٤). جمع هذا البحث النوعي الوصفي البيانات من خلال الدراسة النصية والمقابلات. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من خلال استخدام التحليل النصي وطرق الإثنوغرافيا. يكشف البحث عن نتيجتين أساسيتين. أولاً ، هناك ثلاثة تطبيقات للألعاب الدينية الأكثر شيوعاً ؛ هم Cerdas Cermat Islami (التقييم ٤,٧ مع ١٠٠٠٠٠٠ مستخدم نشط) Kuis Muslim Millionaire و Pengetahuan Islam (٤,٧ مع ١٠٠٠٠٠ مستخدم نشط)، و (٤,٦ مع ١٠٠٠٠٠٠ مستخدم نشط). توفر التطبيقات الثلاثة ألعازاً وأنشطة وتحديات صعبة مع محتوى إسلامي. بعبارة أخرى ، يتعلم اللاعبون المعارف الإسلامية أثناء الترفيه عن أنفسهم. ثانياً ، تشير تعليقات اللاعبين إلى رضاهم عن الألعاب ومحتوياتها. علاوة على ذلك ، فإنهم يحصلون على المزيد من الفوائد من خلال تعلم المزيد من المعرفة عن الإسلام في وسائل الإعلام المسلية. ربما تكون اللعبة وسيلة إعلام أكثر فاعلية لتشجيع الشباب على تعلم الإسلام.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لعبة على الانترنت، المحتوى الإسلامي، رغبة الشباب

1. INTRODUCTION

People of different ages globally have widely used the internet. This condition is boosted by the excellent technical and communication infrastructure equitable in many areas of a different country, not excluding Indonesia. (Haryanto, 2020; Internet World Stats, 2021) report that Indonesia 175.4 million Indonesians used the internet in 2020 or equals to 64% of 272.1 million Indonesians. This number places Indonesia as the fourth rank in the global internet users after China, India, and the US. The huge number triggers internet developers to build various internet platforms that Indonesians possibly use, such as social media, e-commerce, education, news, business, and games. Multiple game developers target Indonesians as their market because Indonesians are also active in internet games. Since most Indonesians are Muslim, the developers build

games in line with the majority's religion. It is no wonder that many Islamic content games are available on the Playstore.

Online gaming becomes popular among youth with the fast emergence of internet use, and thus, many developers build Islamic content games. Online games are now used in education because it effectively improves various fields' teaching and learning activities (Ashraf et al., 2014; Bawa & Brockport, 2021; Gómez & Suárez, 2021; Sahrir & Alias, 2012; Talug, 2012; Teichmann et al., 2020). Games are effective for teaching and learning activities because they make the teaching and learning activities interested, fun, and less serious, enable students to feel leisure activities while studying, provide more interactive communication activities, actively involve students' engagement, raise students' emotions, and interest to learn, have obvious and specific aims, provide feedbacks and scores, adjust players (Ashraf et al., 2014; Talug, 2012). Moreover, the use of technology, including online games, for educational purposes triggers the emergence of higher-order thinking skills and encourages students to learn independently (Hopson et al., 2001). Therefore, it is no wonder that many online games contain Islamic teaching to trigger people, particularly children, to learn Islam.

Technology has been widely applied in many aspects of life, including education because it brings multiple benefits. To date, many studies have investigated the effects of technology on general education, but only a few focuses on Islamic education, particularly online games for learning Islamic knowledge. Therefore, this paper aims to (1) investigate sorts of online application games with Islamic contents and (2) analyze Muslim youth's perspectives on the phenomenon. To answer the formulations, this research employs the religion and virtual reality theory of Bainbridge (2014).

The use of games for education means that educators allow students to learn from students' preferences, not force them to learn (Talug, 2012). This condition is pivotal because the learning environment must be entertaining to arise students' willingness to learn, and most children have been exposed to games on gadgets. This condition is not excluded in religious teaching and learning. (Skačan, 2017) argues that traditional religious practices did not engage with

technology, but the modern era forces religious practices to engage with technology to develop and follow society's tastes.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This descriptive qualitative research describes phenomena of a certain context (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). This study particularly describes the phenomenon of online games for Islamic teaching and learning. The researcher merely reported and described the phenomenon of online games in Indonesia, and she did not have any control over the research variables. This research investigated ten most famous online games applications in Indonesia; they were Belajar Sholat + Audio -Marbel, Belajar Mengaji, Cerdas Cermat Islami, Hafalan Quran, Belajar Agama Islam – Marbel, Muslim Millionaire – Islamic Quiz, Islamic Quiz Game, Game Anak Sholeh, Kuis Pengetahuan Islam, TTS Islami 2020. The data were collected through literary study to achieve comprehensive information and written interview to achieve in-depth analysis of the phenomenon (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The collected data were then analyzed through phenomenology because it focuses on how people experience a particular phenomenon and ethnography method to reveal cultural phenomenon (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The emergence of the internet has significantly impacted human life aspects, including religious education. Teaching and learning are today conducted in a fun way by utilizing online games. It is no wonder that many online games are available to provide Islamic content.

A. The Emergence of Online Game Applications with Islamic Contents

This study reveals hundreds of Islamic online game applications found on Google Playstore, Appstore, or Google. These applications are available to assist Islamic teaching and learning activities. Moreover, these applications have enormous active users in Indonesia, and most of them are students. Table 1 shows the top ten Islamic online game applications on Google Playstore.

Table 1. Islamic Online Game Applications in Indonesia

No	Name of the Application	Downloads/ users	Rate	Developer
1.	Belajar Sholat + Audio -Marbel	1,000,000	4.6	Educa Studio
2.	Belajar Mengaji	1,000,000	4.5	Educa Studio
3.	Cerdas Cermat Islami	500,000	4.6	Solite Kids
4.	Hafalan Quran	100,000	4.8	Tim Anak Soleh
5.	Belajar Agama Islam – Marbel	100,000	4.7	Educa Studio
6.	Muslim Millionaire – Islamic Quiz	100,000	4.6	LABKOMIF UIN Bandung
7.	Islamic Quiz Game	100,000	4.6	Trivia
8.	Game Anak Sholeh	100,000	3.3	Agate Games
9.	Kuis Pengetahuan Islam	100,000	3.1	Cerdasional
10.	TTS Islami 2020	50,000	4.6	Mung Media

Table 1. shows that the ten highest online game applications have significant users in Indonesia. The highest number of downloaders and the best rating go to Belajar Sholat + Audio -Marbel developed by Educa Studio with more than 1 million downloaders and a 4.6 rating. This finding indicates that users enjoy playing and learn from this application. The second place was occupied by Belajar Mengaji developed by Educa Studio, with more than 1 million downloaders. However, this application has a 4.5 rating. The third place goes to Cerdas Cermat Islami developed by Solite Kids, with 500,000 downloaders and 4.6 rates. The fourth place goes to Hafalan Quran developed by Tim Anak Soleh, with 100,000 downloaders and 4.6 rates. The fifth place goes to Belajar Agama Islam – Marbel developed by Educa Studio with 100,000 downloaders and 4.7 rates. The sixth and seventh places are occupied by Muslim Millionaire – Islamic

Quiz developed by LABKOMIF UIN Bandung and Isdeveloped by Trivia. They have similar numbers of downloaders of 100,000 and rates of 4.6. Meanwhile, the eighth place goes to Game Anak Sholeh developed by Agate Games with 100,000 and 3.3 rates. The ninth place goes to Kuis Pengetahuan Islam developed by Cerdasional, with 100,000 downloaders and 3.1 rates. The last rank is occupied by TTS Islami 2020 developed by Mung Media with 50,000 downloaders and 4.6 rates.

The significant number of downloaders indicates that numerous internet users in Indonesia are interested in learning Islam through games. The users probably come from different ages and use the games for different purposes. Therefore, the top ten Islamic game applications have different genres, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Genres of Ten Highest Islamic Game Applications

No	Genre	Shalat	Reading the Quran	Memorizing the Quran	Islamic Religious Knowledge
1.	Belajar Sholat + Audio -Marbel	√			
2.	Belajar Mengaji		√		
3.	Cerdas Cermat Islami				√
4.	Hafalan Quran		√	√	
5.	Belajar Agama Islam – Marbel				√
6.	Muslim Millionaire – Islamic Quiz				√
7.	Islamic Quiz Game				√
8.	Game Anak Sholeh				√
9.	Kuis Pengetahuan				√

Islam

10. TTS Islami 2020



Table 2 denotes that there are four major genres of online games with Islamic contents. They include Shalat, reading the Quran, memorizing the Quran, and Islamic religious knowledge. The majority of the applications deal with religious knowledge, which indicates that most developers regard this knowledge as a crucial aspect of learning.

The Belajar Sholat + Audio -Marbel application focuses on Salat and aims to help its users learn Shalat in a fun way. The application provides audio-visual learning material of Shalat to entertain and encourage learners to learn. Meanwhile, the Belajar Mengaji Application focuses on teaching reading the Quran written in Arabic. Moreover, learners learn theories of reading the Quran (*tajwid*) in a fun and cordial way. Therefore, they will easily master reading the Quran. The Hafalan Quran application also offers the same advantages as that of the Belajar Mengaji Application. However, the Belajar Mengaji application focuses more on memorizing the Quran. It helps users memorizing the Quran exercise and improve their memorizing in a fun and effective way.

The last genre is Islamic religious knowledge provided by the majority of the applications: Cerdas Cermat Islami, Belajar Agama Islam – Marbel, Muslim Millionaire – Islamic Quiz, Islamic Quiz Game, Game Anak Sholeh, Kuis Pengetahuan Islam, and TTS Islami 2020. These applications are designed to hilariously learning Islamic content and motivating strategies. Therefore, learners, particularly children, will not get bored during the learning. Their knowledge will develop while they are entertained with the content.

B. Muslim Youth's Perspectives on the Emergence of Online Game Applications with Islamic Content

Children can spend more than three to five hours a day gaming on electronic devices (Anh, 2021; Hygen et al., 2020). Such a condition brings several positive and negative consequences, such as bad manners, behavior, motivation to perform physical activities, social competence, communication,

visual health, etc. (Anh, 2021; Hygen et al., 2020). The number of hours playing games increases, and the effects worsens during the pandemic because children stay with the gadgets during the quarantine (Sallie et al., 2021).

Therefore, children must access positive and educative content on online game applications. To date, religious knowledge is not attractive for many children, especially when it is delivered in outdated ways. Adopting online games for teaching and learning Islamic knowledge to children is one of the best solutions because online games can increase children's motivation to learn and trigger them to develop their skills (Amaral et al., 2013; Gómez & Suárez, 2021; Tang et al., 2018). Children become more active during independent learning because they are demanded to solve their problems and use their higher thinking skills (Selvi & Çoşan, 2018).

Many children are familiar with games because they still need entertainment. It is no wonder that children cannot learn in a serious way, but in a fun and energetic way. Addressing online games for educational purposes, particularly Islamic education, is a significant approach because Islamic education is presented in a fun way that children love. Moreover, online games with Islamic content will effectively improve students' learning achievement, boost their new knowledge, increase students' motivation for independent learning (Selvi & Çoşan, 2018). To date, teaching Islamic knowledge has been conducted conventionally and is not exciting for children. It is no wonder that not many children master Islamic knowledge and want to learn Islamic knowledge. Therefore, adopting online games to teach and learn Islamic knowledge will become an additional supporting teaching material (Selvi & Çoşan, 2018).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there are top ten online game applications: Belajar Sholat + Audio -Marbel, Belajar Mengaji, Cerdas Cermat Islami, Hafalan Quran, Belajar Agama Islam – Marbel, Muslim Millionaire – Islamic Quiz, Islamic Quiz Game, Game Anak Sholeh, Kuis Pengetahuan Islam, TTS Islami 2020. These games are categorized into four major themes: Shalat, reading the Quran, memorizing the Quran, and Islamic religious knowledge. Adopting online games

in teaching and learning Islamic knowledge brings several advantages that motivate students to learn and recognize Islam.

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