

Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan's Technological Contribution toward the Development of Islamic Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

The development of science and technology has an impact on the use of technology in education. The application of educational technology in learning is aimed at creating more effective, efficient, and meaningful learning for children. Meanwhile, Islam, which is revealed as a paradigm, explains that education is the best way in developing human nature as well as human resources towards the formation of 'Insan Kamil'. One of the notable Moslem thinkers worthen to be discussed in this case study is Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan who has written a monumental work in education entitled 'Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam'. This study sought answers to Ulwan's contributions in the development of early childhood education. The results of this study show that Ulwan's thought cannot be separated from a particular movement namely 'Ikhwanul Muslimin'. The critical foundation of Ulwan's thinking on child education is essentially derived from his thinking about fitrah. Fitrah, according to 'Ulwan, is a nature in which humans have a tendency of innate good and evil. Therefore, children at their early age require particular forms of conditioning to develop learners' type of personality through three approaches namely: the formulation of appropriate child education methods, the establishment of educator readiness and attachment to children, and the conditioning of early childhood education environments.

Keywords: Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan, Education of Islam, Early Childhood

Abstrak

Berkembangnya ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi berdampak pada penggunaan teknologi dalam pendidikan. Adapun penerapan teknololgi pendidikan dalam pembelajaran memiliki tujuan agar kegiatan belajar lebih efektif, efisien, serta lebih bermakna bagi anak. Di sisi lain, Islam yang lahir sebagai sebuah paradigma, menjelaskan bahwa pendidikan merupakan jalan terbaik dalam mengembangkan fitrah manusia serta sumber daya insani menuju terbentuknya Insan Kamil. Salah seorang pemikir Muslim yang layak untuk diangkat dalam studi kasus ini adalah Abdullah

Nashih 'Ulwan yang telah menulis karya monumental dalam pendidikan yaitu *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam*. Kajian ini berusaha mencari jawaban atas kontribusi 'Ulwan dalam pengembangan pendidikan anak usia dini. Hasil dari kajian ini menjelaskan bahwa pemikiran 'Ulwan tidak bisa dilepaskan dari pemikiran Ikhwanul Muslimin sebagai sebuah gerakan. Landasan utama lahirnya pemikiran 'Ulwan tentang pendidikan anak sejatinya merupakan derivasi atas pemikirannya tentang fitrah. Adapun fitrah dalam pandangan 'Ulwan diterjemahkan sebagai pemikiran yang mendefinisikan bahwa manusia memiliki kecenderungan kebaikan dan keburukan bawaan. Oleh karenanya anak usia dini membutuhkan bentuk-bentuk pengkondisian untuk mengembangkan kepribadian peserta didik melalui tiga pendekatan yaitu metode pendidikan anak yang sesuai, pembentukan kesiapan pendidik dan keterikatannya dengan anak, dan pengkondisian lingkungan pendidikan anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan, Pendidikan Islam, Anak Usia Dini

Introduction

In addition to educational goals, children, educators, and teaching-learning process, human is one of the five important elements of education. At the same time, human is considered as the vital element of education since they are *educable* creatures while they can also be the educators. Based on this, human is then referred to as *homo educable*.¹ Educational activity itself cannot be separated from the humanization (humanizing of human being), as a process to help human beings to grow better.² Meanwhile, the globalization that has brought the advancement of science with the opening of new insights and mindsets has a profound psychological impact on human life. Humans living in a technological era are required to think universally and substantially. This also means that human beings are inclined towards instant solution (fast, direct, right answer).³ The spread of the globalization will inevitably result in the spread the overarching spirit of science and technology open competition.

The development of science and technology undeniably brings big impact on the use of technology in education. Educational technology can be defined as a discipline of an applied science that develops simultaneously due

¹ Dinasril Amir, "Konsep Manusia Dalam Sistem Pendidikan Islam," *Al-Ta lim Journal* 19, no. 3 (November 21, 2012), hlm. 188, <https://doi.org/10.15548/jt.v19i3.52>.

² Abdul Khoir, "Human Nature and Its Implications in Education Process (Overview of Islamic Education Philosophy)," *Forum Tarbiyah* 8, no. 1 (2010), hlm. 2.

³ Maragustam, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam; Menuju Pembentukan Karakter Menghadapi Arus Global* (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Alam Semesta, 2010), hlm. 243.

to the real needs of the teaching-learning process. The implementation of educational technology in teaching-learning process is aimed at creating more effective, efficient as well as meaningful learning activities for children.⁴ Various learning experiences, both inside and outside classroom need to be packaged attractively by considering the application of educational technology. Therefore, it is expected that learning messages can be systemically packed without any time and space limit, well received by the child learners and is able to develop children's potential both individually and communally.

Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) in 1977 defined educational technology as: "a complex, integrated process involving people, procedure, ideas, devices, and organization, for analyzing problems and devising, implementing, evaluating, and managing solutions to those problems, involved in all aspects of human learning".⁵

However, over time, there are some changes considering the definition of educational technology stating that "educational technology is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources."⁶ Based on this 2008 definition, the use of the term educational technology is used as a substituting term of "instructional technology". This terminology replacement shows the dynamic nature of the field and its potential growth in education. The definition issued by AECT in 2008 involves at least some key terms that are not mentioned in previous popular terms.

The crucial point of the change is emphasized on the use of the term "ethical practice" that focuses on the fact that professionals in this field must maintain high level of professionalism. For that reason, AECT then set the standard of the code of ethics by outlining principles which assist educators

⁴ Oom Mukarromah, "Peran Teknologi Pendidikan Islam Pada Era Global," *An-Nidhom* 1, no. 02 (January 11, 2017), hlm. 94.

⁵ AECT Task Force on Definition and Terminology, *The Definition of Educational Technology* (Washington DC: Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1977), hlm. 1.

⁶ Ahmad Abdullahi Ibrahim, "Evolutionary Nature of the Definition of Educational Technology," *International Journal of Social Science & Education* 5, no. 2 (2015), hlm. 237.

both individually and collectively with the aim of maintaining high-level professional behavior. The following are the mentioned principles:

1. Commitment to individuals such as protection of access rights to materials and endeavors to protect professionals' health and safety.
2. Commitment to community such as honest public statement on educational issues or fair practice in the provision of services.
3. Commitment to profession such as improvement of knowledge, skills, professional credit and accurate ideas for publication.

Ivor K. Davies classifies educational technologies into hardware, software, and the combination of both. Nonetheless, this paper focuses on the third approach that considers educational technology as the combination of hardware and software technology. According to Ivor K. Davies, as quoted by Rogantina, technology-oriented education approach system is a tool to increase the benefits of what is around. At this point, educational technology is positioned as an interesting diagnostic approach as well as fascinating solution.⁷

Islam, which is revealed as a paradigm, explains that education is the best way in developing human nature as well as human resources towards the formation of *Insan Kamil* (perfect human). Therefore, Islam also puts attention on children's education, including the implementation of learning management and technological resources. Thus, children are expected to grow and develop in accordance with their potential. In this paper, the author tries to conduct a study related to Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan's contributive thoughts in early childhood education to find learning management pattern using appropriate methods and resources.

This study focused on the review of a book entitled *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam* by Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan. This book is taken due to its comprehensive explanation on child education, starts from the ideal family establishment to the method and the facilities for child education. This book is used due to its comprehensiveness. Moreover, it can be easily understood by the readers. Based on these facts, the author assumes that Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan is a scientist who had broad understanding on children's education based on

⁷ Rogantina Meri Andri, "Peran Dan Fungsi Teknologi Dalam Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran," *Journal of Scientific Research Science* 3, no. 1 (2017), hlm. 125.

Islamic principles (i.e., the Qur'an, sunnah, salaf, law, and adab). Therefore, his work is valuable to be taken as authoritative reference in the area of Islamic early childhood education. Furthermore, it is expected that if the thought of Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan is implemented as the reference for development of Islamic early childhood education, then it will be apt since his work has been acquainted to Moslem scholars.

The analysis of this paper is divided into several sub-chapters that explain the stages of children cognitive development in Islam and then adapted to the definition of 'early childhood', and then followed by subsequent chapters that discuss the contribution of Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan on Islamic early childhood education. The result of this study reveals the contribution of Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan's in the development of Islamic early childhood education. Practically, the author hopes that this paper can contribute to develop early childhood education and generate children growing in accordance with their respective potential.

The Biography of Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan

Abdullah Nashih Ulwan is a Moslem born in Qodhi Askar, the city of Halab, Syria in 1928. His father, Shaykh Said 'Ulwan was a man known to the public as a respected scholar and physician. Said 'Ulwan was able to treat various diseases by means of own made wood roots. 'Ulwan grew up in a family that strongly cling to religion and attached importance to Islamic morality while interacting and doing *muamalat* to human beings. 'Ulwan passed his elementary education (*Ibtidaiyyah*) at Bandar Halab. Shaykh Said 'Ulwan sent him to religious *Madrasahs* to study wider religious disciplines. At that time, 'Ulwan had memorized the Qur'an and was able to master Arabic well and eloquently.⁸

At the age of 15 years Ulwan was able to memorize the Qur'an and master the knowledge of Arabic well. 'Ulwan was also brilliant in his lessons, that he turned out to be his friends' referral at the madrasah. Ulwan was also attended actively in several organizations with excellent ability in delivering speeches. He was also charged as an editor in scientific publication. 'Ulwan was known as a man who dared to defend the truth and had exceptional

⁸ Andri, "Peran Dan Fungsi Teknologi Dalam Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran."

competence in terms of social interaction and deliver *dakwah*. As a teenager, 'Ulwan was impressed with the thought of prominent scholars such as Shaykh Raghīb al Tabhakh⁹ and Dr. Sheikh Mustafa al Siba'i, a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood who tried to place his party within political mainstream in Syria that was known to represents religious sentiments.¹⁰

In 1949, 'Ulwan obtained an intermediate religious degree that he could continue his study at one of the centers of Islamic studies in the field of Shari'ah Islamiyah in Egypt. 'Ulwan was able to study at al-Azhar University the following year and obtained his first diploma in the Faculty of Ushuluddin in 1952. Subsequently Ulwan conducted a master study at the same university and graduated in 1954 and was eligible to receive a specialist degree in education equivalent to Master of Arts (MA). However, in the same year, 'Ulwan was expelled from Egypt by the government of Gamal Abdul Naser.¹¹

Coming home from al-Azhar, his whole life was dedicated as a preacher. 'Ulwan was active as a preacher/teacher in high school and mosque in Halab. 'Ulwan was the person who first introduced the subjects of *Tarbiyah Islamiyah* as the basic lesson in school. In further development, this lesson becomes a compulsory subject for students in high schools throughout Syria. The principle he used was that teacher should also act as parent who educate their own children. During his tenure, 'Ulwan received several offers to deliver lectures form almost all parts of Syria. 'Ulwan finally succeeded in obtaining a Doctoral degree at the University of Al-Sand Pakistan in 1982 with the dissertation of *Fiqh Da'wah wa Da'iyah*. This data is taken from Shaykh Wahbi

⁹ M. Indra Saputra, "Sex Education for Youth by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Journal of Islamic Education* 7 (2016), hlm. 144.

¹⁰ Khasnah Sya'idah, "Pemikiran Pendidikan Anak Abdullah Nashih Ulwan" (Desertation unpublished, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2005), hlm. 76.

¹¹ In 1954 Nasser captured the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Audah and dissolved the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt. This resulted in Ulwan not successfully completing his doctorate studies due to being expelled by Gamal Abdul Nasser. There are at least 150 employees declared to be in contact with the Muslim Brotherhood and not less than 500 workers who are laid off and thousands of students from various universities are fired and suspended, including Isfahani, "The Concept of Sex Education by Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan" (Thesis, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2000), hlm. 23.

Sulaiman al-Ghawajji al-Albani comments on Ulwan's book by calling him as "al-Ustadz al-Shaykh".¹²

'Ulwan hardly cited Western thoughts except under certain circumstances. This was carried out because Ulwan wanted to educate Moslems in Islamic way.¹³ 'Ulwan is also an activist of an Islamic movement. He devoted himself to deliver preaching along with Muslim Brotherhood. It is at this point that Ulwan was closely connected with Abdul Qadir 'Audah, Sayyid Qutb and Abdul Badi' Shaqar. While in Egypt, 'Ulwan lived during the Syrian period under foreign rule until 1947. 'Ulwan always called on people to return to the Islamic system and criticize the government. This is why he was forced to leave Syria in 1979 to Jordan. In 1980, 'Ulwan left Jordan and headed for Jeddah after receiving an offer to be a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Teaching at Abdul Aziz University. At home, after attending a gathering in Pakistan, Ulwan felt sick at the chest. Ulwan was later admitted to Malik Abdul Aziz University hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and passed away on August 27, 1987 AD (Muharram 5th, 1408 H) at the age of 59.¹⁴ His corpse was brought to the Grand Mosque to be revered and was buried in Makkah.

The Study of the Stages of Child Cognitive Development in Islam

In the following sub-chapters, the author explains the general picture of human cognitive development. Human life in the Qur'an is categorized into two phases: the prenatal and postnatal birth phases. The Qur'an also explains that the first phase has a fixed and definite condition in which a human embryo reaches the peak of its development before birth which is then ended by the delivery of a baby. At the same time, the Qur'an has established that prenatal period should include nine months (under normal circumstances) as recited in one hadith as well as experienced in actual everyday life. As for the post-natal growth and development phase, the Qur'an does not mention a fixed life span accepted for all individuals. However, an important thing to be taken into consideration is an effort to reveal and depict the stages that are symbolized

¹² Wahbi Sulaiman al-Ghawajji al-Albani, "Muqaddimah," in *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan (Beirut: Dar as-Salam, 1978), hlm. 19-20.

¹³ Abdul Kholiq, *Thought of Islamic Education* (Semarang: Tarbiyah Faculty of IAIN Walisongo and Pustaka Pelajar, 1999), hlm. 248.

¹⁴ Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam* (Beirut: Dar as-Salam, 1978), hlm. 119.

explicitly or implicitly in the Qur'an and Hadith in terms of children cognitive development.

Another point that needs to be emphasized in this regard is that the stage of cognitive development as implied in the Qur'an and Hadith is closely related to the stage of physical development. Therefore, the stages of cognitive development can have similarities in several stages to that of physical development. At this stage, the author deliberately put forward the idea of Salisu Shehu, a professor of psychological education from Bayero University, Kano-Nigeria who tried to study the developmental psychology in an Islamic perspective. His ideas can be accessed through his several scientific papers. The following are the stages intended:¹⁵

1. The first stage, *sinnulidrak al-hissi* (sensory perception period) that starts from birth to 2 years of age

The first stage is the post-partum life. This is characterized by the development of sensory perception through the five sense organs that send information to the mind. The mind interprets and stores information based on its limited experience and maturity. Behavior at this stage is in principle characterized by a reflexive and instinctive tendency that has been given. In the view of other thinkers such as Abdul Mujib, this happens because a child in this phase has no life initiative. With the constant interaction with the environment, this tendency fades gradually and is replaced by the behavior of free will. This phase is discussed a lot in a number of verses such as in Qur'an, Surah As-Sajdah [32]: 9, and Qur'an, Surah al-Hadid [57]: 23.¹⁶

2. The second stage, *attufulatul-mubakkirah*, early childhood development that starts from age 2 to 7 years of age.

The demarcation line of the child mentioned here is at the age of seven. In the following Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (Peace upon on Him)

¹⁵ Salisu Shehu, "A Study of the Islamic Perspective of Cognitive Development and Its Implications in Education in the Muslim World," *Revelation and Science Journal* 05, no. 01 (2015), hlm. 6-8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, hlm. 6.

ordered that children at the age of seven should be commended to pray as described in the following hadith cited by Abu Daud:

مُرُوا الصَّبِيَّ بِالصَّلَاةِ إِذَا بَلَغَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ وَإِذَا بَلَغَ عَشَرَ سِنِينَ فَاصْرِبُوهُ عَلَيْهَا

Meaning: "Instruct children to pray if they reach the age of seven and when they reach ten years hit them until they execute the prayer."¹⁷

This hadith shows that since the children start their seven years of age, they should have been commanded to perform the prayer. Thus, this hadith also explains that the children has completed one stage of their mental growth and shifted to another stage.¹⁸

3. The third stage, *sinnut-tamyiz* or *attufulatul-muta'akh-khirah*, that is the period of determination or childhood that starts from the age of 7 to 10 years of age.

This stage is also mentioned in the previous Hadith stating that. that children should be beaten if they leave prayer at the age of ten. As stated in the hadith narrated by at-Tirmidhi:

عَلِّمُوا الصَّبِيَّ الصَّلَاةَ ابْنَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ وَاصْرِبُوهُ عَلَيْهَا ابْنَ عَشْرَةَ

Meaning: "Teach children to pray when they are seven years old and beat them to perform the prayer when they are ten."¹⁹

This hadith shows the period of exclusive mental development. This implies that at the age of seven the child begins to see what is worth doing because of its intrinsic value. This means that the child is able to distinguish the good and the bad (*tamyiz*).²⁰ In this phase, the child has

¹⁷ Abu Daud Sulaiman bin al 'Asy'as as-Sijistani al-Azdi, *Sunan Abi Daud, Juz I* (Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), hlm. 133.

¹⁸ Shehu, "A Study of the Islamic Perspective of Cognitive Development and Its Implications in Education in the Muslim World," 2015, hlm. 6.

¹⁹ Muhammad bin 'Isa Abu 'Isa at-Tirmizi, *Sunan At-Tirmizi* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), hlm. 416.

²⁰ Shehu, *A Study of the Islamic Perspective of Cognitive Development...*, hlm. 6.

been prepared to become the true *Abdullah* or the servant of Allah Almighty who obeys all of His orders and avoids His prohibition.

4. The fourth stage, *sinnul-murahaqah*, that is early adolescence which starts from the age of 10 to 15 years of age.

In this stage, individual cognitive development begins to assume a formal tendency. An abstract premise begins to take shape at this stage. In this period, individuals are in fact still in the childhood mental domain. Therefore, their level of intellectual development has not considered the personal maturity status. This is the reason why an individual who is at this stage has not been called a mukallaf (the person responsible for all his actions).²¹ This is based on the following hadith narrated by Abu Daud:

رَفَعَ الْقَلَمَ عَنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ عَنِ النَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَسْتَيْقِظَ وَعَنِ الصَّبِيِّ حَتَّى يَحْتَلِمَ وَعَنِ
الْمَجْنُونِ حَتَّى يَعْقِلَ

Meaning: "Pens have been detached from three classes, the one who sleeps until he wakes up, a child until he dreams of intercourse (*baligh*), a madman until he is intelligent."²²

5. The fifth stage, *sinnul-bulugh*, that is the age of puberty to young age, which starts from the age of 15 to 33 years.

The age of puberty is the turning point of a child's physical and cognitive development. At this point, a child is assumed to have achieved adult cognitive developmental status due to puberty. This is why all obligations must be executed by the child by the time he/she enters puberty. A child who has entered puberty means that he/she is responsible for all his/her actions and deeds. The verses that support the demarcation of this stage are Q.S. An-Nur [24]: 58-59 and Q.S. An-Nisa [4]: 6.²³ According to Abdul Mujib, in this phase, human begins to beautify

²¹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 7.

²² Sulaiman bin al-Asy'as bin Syadad bin 'Amr al-Azdadi Abu Daud as-Sajastāni, *Sunan Abu Daud, Juz 13* (Kairo: Wizāra al-Auqāf al-Misriyah, n.d.), hlm. 59.

²³ Shehu, *A Study of the Islamic Perspective of Cognitive Development...*, hlm. 7.

themselves because the puberty starts to grow. Individuals, at this stage, no longer think of themselves, but how they can be recognized by others.²⁴

6. The sixth stage, *sinnu bulugil ashadd*, that is a period of physical strength and perfect intellectual development which starts from the age of 33 to 40 years of age.

At the age of 40, a normal person usually reaches the peak of intellectual development and interpretation. The verses that support the demarcation of this stage are Q.S. al-An'am [6]: 152, Q.S. Joseph [12]: 22, Q.S. al-Hajj [22]: 5, Q.S. al-Qasas [28]: 14, Q.S. al-Mu'min [40]: 67 and Q.S. al-Ahqaf [46]: 14. The verse which specifically explains the period of perfect physical strength and intellectual development is Q.S. al-Isra '[17]: 36.²⁵ At this stage, ones because of their intellectual perfection have a tendency to boast (*tafakhur*) on what has been pioneered in the previous stage such as academic degrees, occupations, and roles in society.²⁶

7. The seventh stage, *sinnul-tawaqquf*, that is a constant period in cognitive development that starts from the age of 40 to 60 years of age.

After 40 years, human being typically experiences a very delicate cognitive function decline, meaning that the changes cannot be observed clearly. Based on this, scientists call this stage as *sinnul-tawaqquf*, which means a stage in which there is no progressive development related to further recognizable mental functioning or even a decline in terms of the mental function. This phase is more accurately referred to as the age of determination in mental development. This is because the position of one's mental function remains normal in this phase. The basis of this opinion is the Hadith and Q. S. Fathir [35]: 37.²⁷

On the other hand, humans tend to multiply (*takatsur*) and enjoy their affluence and adore their children. Moreover, they have in depth emotional, moral, spiritual, and religious awareness as well as intelligence. Al-Ghazali referred this phase as *auliya 'wa anbiya'* because humans in this

²⁴ Abdul Mujib and Jusuf Mudzakir, *Nuansa-Nuansa Psikologi Islam* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Perkasa, 2002), hlm. 103.

²⁵ Salisu Shehu, *A Study of the Islamic Perspective of Cognitive Development...*, hlm. 7.

²⁶ Mujib and Mudzakir, *Nuansa-Nuansa Psikologi Islam*, hlm. 103.

²⁷ Shehu, *A Study of the Islamic Perspective of Cognitive Development...*, hlm. 7.

certain phase are required to behave as that of Allah's lovers and His prophets.²⁸ In this phase, humans will experience mental enlightenment, if they are able to live their *taklif* period well, which is characterized by the opening of spiritual realities (*futuh*).²⁹

8. The eighth stage, *sinnush-shaikhukhati*, that is an advanced age that starts from the age of 60 to 80 years of age.

Ibn Katsir explains that the precise human's *udzur* is at the age of sixty as stated in hadith no. 6419 narrated by Bukhari:

أَعْدَرَ اللَّهُ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِيٍّ آخَرَ أَجَلَهُ , حَتَّىٰ بَلَغَهُ سِتِّينَ سَنَةً

Meaning: "God has given the peak of *udzur*/reason for the one whose death is postponed until he reaches the age of sixty."³⁰

This hadith is the basis for defining this stage. At this stage, a decline in mental function gradually begins to manifest. This is as described in Q. S. Ghafir [40]: 67. This verse also commands humans to understand, that is the intention is to always remember the resurrection day.³¹ The Arabic word used in this verse is *shuyukhan* (شُيُوخًا) which means elderly people. Its specific word implies that this phase is an exclusive stage which is different from the next coming phase.³²

9. The ninth stage, *ardhalul-umuri*, that is old age or sense science that starts from age 80 years and after

This phase begins after eighty years in which there is more obvious mental degeneration, especially at the age up to 100 years and beyond. Many verses of the Qur'an mention this stage such as Q.S. an-Nahl [16]: 70 and Q.S. al-Hajj [22]: 5. It has been narrated by Ali (ra) that the weakest age (i.e., senile age) is "seventy-five years". At this age, there will be weakness in physic, memorization, and decline in knowledge considering

²⁸ *Ibid.*, hlm. 108.

²⁹ Fuad Nashori, *Human Potentials; Series of Islamic Psychology* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2003), hlm. 159.

³⁰ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al- 'Azim, Juz 6* (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), hlm. 555.

³¹ Abu Fida' Ismail bin Amr bin Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim* (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), hlm. 157.

³² Shehu, *A Study of the Islamic Perspective of Cognitive Development...*, hlm. 7.

individuals' previous abundant knowledge. Human will lose their knowledge due to senility and sense science.³³

Early Childhood Education in Indonesia and the Stages of Cognitive Development

In Indonesia the definition of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is stipulated in the Act No. 20 of the 2003 National Education System Article 1 number 14. It states that Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth up to age of six which is done through the provision of educational stimuli to help the growth and the development of children's physical and spiritual so that they will have readiness in entering further education.³⁴ The Early Childhood Education Program (PAUD) can be either formal or non-formal institution. Meanwhile, the formal establishment can be in the form of kindergarten (TK) or Raudlatul Athfal (RA) or Bustanul Athfal (BA)³⁵ and other similar forms that implement particular program for children, aged 4 to less than or equal to 6 years. On the other hand, non-formal early childhood education may be structured as Child Care House (TPA) and other equal forms³⁶ which apply special program for children aged 0 to less than 2 years; aged 2 to less than 4 years; aged 4 to less than 6 years, Caring Program for children aged 0 to less than or equal to 6 years, and Play Groups

³³ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al- 'Azim*, Juz 6, hlm. 358.

³⁴ Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System, ratified in Jakarta on July 8, 2003 by Megawati Soekarnoputri and enacted on the same date by the Secretary of State of the Republic of Indonesia, Bambang Kesowo, 2 n.d.

³⁵ Raudhatul Athfal, hereinafter referred to as RA and Bustanul Athfal, hereinafter referred to as BA is one form of Early Childhood Education unit in the formal education channel that organizes educational program with the peculiarity of Islam, Government Regulation of Republic of Indonesia Number 74 Year 2008 About Teachers set in Jakarta on December 1, 2008 by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and enacted at the same place and date by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia, Andi Mattalatta, hlm. 3.

³⁶ As for the meaning of similar early childhood (SPS) is the form of Post PAUD, Taman Posyandu (TP), Taman Anak Anak Muslim (TAAM), PAUD Taman Pendidikan Al Qur'an (PAUD TPQ), PAUD Bina Iman Anak (PAUD BIA) PAUD Pembinaan Anak Kristen (PAUD PAK), and Nava Dhamma Sekha. See: Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 146 of 2014 on Curriculum 2013 Early Childhood Education established in Jakarta on 14 October 2014 by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Mohammad Nuh and enacted in Jakarta on 17 October 2014 by the Minister Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia, Amir Syamsudin, hlm. 2.

(KB) and other equivalent forms implementing special program for children aged 2 to less than four years and four to less than or equal to six years.³⁷ In addition, the Act article 28 also states that early childhood can also be informal, i.e., it can be held in family or neighborhood.³⁸ The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 58 year 2009 on Early Childhood Education Standard also explained about the standard of achievement of early childhood development. This standard is defined as the level of developmental achievement that describes the growth and the development that is expected to be achieved within a certain age range. The achievement of child development is an integrated element consisting of the understanding of religious, moral, physical, cognitive, discussion, and social-emotional values.

However, this regulation does not specifically standardize religious and moral values in educating children aged 0-2 years while the implementation is handed over to the institution which provide the education.³⁹ In fact, the actual development of early childhood cognitive development is in line with that of Islamic perspective, as mentioned before, namely the stage of *sinnulidrak al-hissi* (sensory perception period) that starts from birth to age less than 2 and the *attufulatul-mubakkirah* stage which is the development early childhood that starts from the age of 2 to 7 years of age. Based on this study, the contribution of Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan will be interpreted in accordance with the two stages of cognitive development.

Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan' Contributions in Islamic Early Childhood Education

On the previous sub-chapter, two important aspects that are related to age limitation called early childhood and early childhood cognitive development have been described. This sub-chapter discusses specifically the contribution of Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan, seen as child education expert in the

³⁷ Minister of National Education Regulation Number. 58 of 2009 on Early Childhood Education Standards, signed by the Minister of National Education Bambang Sudibyo, Appendix 1.

³⁸ The Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2013 on the National Education System, ratified in Jakarta dated July 8, 2003 by Megawati Soekarnoputri and enacted on the same date by the Secretary of State of the Republic of Indonesia, Bambang Kesowo, hlm. 8.

³⁹ Minister of National Education Regulation Number. 58 of 2009 on Early Childhood Education Standards..., Appendix 1-6.

field of educational development. The study is analyzed from the perspective of educational technology by looking at his book *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam*.

1. The Standardization of Child Education Method

Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan's first contribution was the standardization of methods in children education. This is important, according to him, because it is expected to be influential in stabilizing *aqidah* and morals, creating knowledge, shaping children's mental and social competence, so that they will have firm maturity and constant emotional stability.⁴⁰ The methods are:

a. Modelling

Modelling, according to 'Ulwan, is an effective way in preparing children's morals, mental, and social ability. This is because educators are role models and are regarded as idols in the child's point of view. The educators play big role in children's high-level perception standard whether it is known by the child or not. 'Ulwan argues that children have potential to be good, but they will not follow the principles if they do not see this from their educators. This means that educators should demonstrate the top level of good morals and set a good example.⁴¹ This method, according to 'Ulwan, is based on Q.S. al-Ahzab [33]: 21, and 45-46 and a hadith narrated by al-'Askari and Ibnu Sama'ni:

ادبني ربي فا حسن تا دبي

Meaning: "My Lord has educated me, so He has perfected His education for me."⁴²

Consequently, it is assumed that this method is important to be applied at the level of early childhood education, because basically the main children's cognitive development called *sinnulidrak al-hissi* (sensory

⁴⁰ Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, *Pendidikan Anak Dalam Islam*, trans. Ayit Irfani (Bandung: Fathan Media Prima, 2016), hlm. 602.

⁴¹ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, hlm. 603.

⁴² In the explanation of the translation book published by Fathan Publisher, the following Hadith is given an explanation that although there are weaknesses in the sanad, the meaning contains the truth Ulwan, hlm. 604.

perception period) requires the introduction some aspects of religious doctrine, especially related to faith.⁴³

b. Habituation

Based on Q.S. ar-Rum [30]: 30, 'Ulwan explained that children are born in the state of *fitrah*, that is a state of monotheism and faith in Allah Almighty.⁴⁴ As a comparison, the word *fitrah* in the dictionary of al-Munawwir is defined as instinct (innate), while in the dictionary composed by Mahmud Yunus, *fitrah* is defined as religion, creation, temperament, original events.⁴⁵ The babies who have just been born then need a habituation, dictation, and discipline in strengthening the potential recognition of pure Oneness, noble character, great *kiwa*, and ethics of the straight Shari'a. 'Ulwan added that the elements of Islamic education and conducive environment are the contributing factors which shape noble personality in children. This based on the hadith narrated by Tirmidhi:

ما نحل والد والد ا من نحل ا فضل من ادب حسن

Meaning: "No gift a father gives to his son is better than good education."⁴⁶

The writer believes that this method is important to apply to early childhood education, because the child's cognitive development during the stage called *sinnulidrak al-hissi* (sensory perception period) requires maintenance for the growth of sensory and psychological potentials such as hearing, sight and conscientiousness as well as self-preparation by familiarizing and practicing good living, such as in speaking, eating, associating, adapting to the environment, and behaving. This habituation includes affective aspects (*al-infi'ali*), otherwise it will be hard to be implanted on later age.⁴⁷ 'Ulwan also quotes Ghazali saying that children

⁴³ Mujib and Mudzakir, *Nuansa-Nuansa Psikologi Islam*, hlm. 104-5.

⁴⁴ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, hlm. 625.

⁴⁵ Mahmud Yunus, *Dictionary: Arab-Indonesia* (Jakarta: Organizer Foundation for Interpreters of the Qur'an, 1973), hlm. 319.

⁴⁶ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, hlm. 625-26.

⁴⁷ Mujib and Mudzakir, *Nuansa-Nuansa Psikologi Islam*, hlm. 104-5.

have sacred heart and precious substance in which if they are accustomed to goodness they will grow well and vice versa.⁴⁸

c. Advice

The next method discussed by Ulwan is a method of giving advice or counseling which have major influence on children to understand the nature of things and to give them awareness on Islamic principles, as exemplified by the Qur'an in Q.S. al-A'raf [7]: 65-68, Q.S. Hud [11]: 32-34, Q.S. Luqman [31]: 13-17, Q.S. Saba [34]: 46-49.⁴⁹ 'Ulwan also asked educators to understand the call of the Qur'an to give advice to humans. 'Ulwan also outlined several styles of advice delivery conveyed by the Qur'an such as persuasive style accompanied by empathy and denial style (QS Luqman [31]: 13), telling story and moral lesson (QS al-A'raf [7] 101), and Qur'an guidance containing messages and advice (QS al-Furqon [25]: 63-67). This method is important for early childhood education, since children's cognitive development in the stage of *attufulatul-mubakkirah* requires a lot of advice from their educators. This is also because in this phase, children play around (*lahw*) a lot merely for pleasure without any intended deep purpose.⁵⁰ This stage is discussed in Q.S. an-Nisa '[4]: 5, which is interpreted by Ibnu Katsir who explains that Allah (Almighty) forbids giving the possibility to *sufaha* to manage the treasures Allah has made as the principal of life for man. One interpretation of the phrase *Sufaha* (those who have not gained perfect logical reasoning) given by scholars like Ibn 'Abbas refers to children.⁵¹

d. Attention/Supervising

'Ulwan explained that the purpose of giving attention and supervising in education is to monitor children's development and to supervise the formation of aqidah, morals, mental, and social capability. At the same time, children are also supervised in terms of physical and intellectual education. Based on this, children are expected to grow to be able to assume all the responsibilities and obligations that must be

⁴⁸ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, hlm. 630.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 639.

⁵⁰ Mujib and Mudzakir, *Nuansa-Nuansa Psikologi Islam*, hlm. 102.

⁵¹ Abu Fida' Ismail bin Amr bin Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al- 'Azim, Juz 2* (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), hlm. 214.

endured. This method is based on Q.S. at-Tahrim [66]: 6, Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 233, and the following hadith narrated by Abu Dawud:

مُرُوا الصَّبِيَّ بِالصَّلَاةِ إِذَا بَلَغَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ وَإِذَا بَلَغَ عَشَرَ سِنِينَ فَاضْرِبُوهُ عَلَيْهَا

Meaning: "Instruct children to pray if they reach the age of seven and when they reach ten years hit them until they execute the prayer."⁵²

e. Punishment

'Ulwan explained that the Islamic *Shari'a* explains the holistic principles of punishment in *adh-dharuriyat al-khams* or *al-kulliyat al-khams* (guarding of religion, soul, honor, mind, and wealth). However, in the field of education, it is important to understand that punishment should be sentenced according to age, knowledge, and social strata. The penalties imposed by educators at home differ in quantity as well as in quality to that at school or in society. The following are the ways in which Ulwan implements punishment: (1) considering the character of the child who made mistake, (2) giving gradual punishment from mild to severe, (3) indicating fault by directing it, (4) telling mistakes gently (5) denoting mistakes by rebuking, (6) indicating mistakes by avoiding it, and (7) indicating mistakes by hitting.⁵³

2. The Standardization of Educators and Their Attachment to Children

'Ulwan's second contribution is related to the standardization of educators. 'Ulwan argues that if educators have certain qualities, then their traits will affect the children and can attract a strong response from them.⁵⁴ 'Ulwan emphasized that educators must have several characteristic such as (a) giving up his intention in teaching only for the sake of Allah Almighty as Q.S. al-Bayyinah [98]: 5 and Q.S. al-Kahf [18]: 110, (b) having the true nature of taqwa that is to obey the commands of Allah, and to abstain from His prohibition as Q.S. ali Imran [3]: 102 and Q.S. al-Ahzab [33]: 70, (c)

⁵² Abu Daud Sulaiman bin al 'Asy'as as-Sijistani al-Azdi, *Sunan Abi Daud, Juz I* (Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), hlm. 133.

⁵³ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, hlm. 690-96.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, hlm. 703.

having knowledge on educational principles outlined in the Islamic Shari'a as Q.S. ash-Shaffat [37]: 24, (d) being polite and forgiving so that it is expected that children may be attracted to their teachers and follow their words, as explained in Q.S. ali Imran [3]: 134 and Q.S. al-A'raf [7]: 199. (e) Having responsibility in caring children in terms of nurturing their faith, their physical, mental, intellectual and social attitudes. Educators must fully aware that if they neglect their responsibilities although only for a moment, then children will gradually lead to damage, neglect their duty, and make mistakes simultaneously. In the end, they will grow into deviant human being as described in Q.S. Thaha [20]: 132 and Q.S. at-Tahrim [66]: 6.⁵⁵

At the same time, 'Ulwan also provided details regarding the attachment of educators to children. This bondage of attachment needs to be established early on, so that children/learners can flourish in a community that supports them such as among the faithful and pious people or among independent *mujahid*.⁵⁶ The following is an overview of the links that educators should establish early: (a) the faith bond, children are expected to have understanding related to the basic pillars of faith and protect their Aqedah from apostasy and atheism.⁵⁷ Understanding of these beliefs can be initiated since the children are still in 0-2 years, though the conception of aqidah in this period is still at the stage of recognition. For example, the introduction of the essence of faith to Allah Almighty, angels, the books of Allah Almighty, His messengers, *qodo* and *qadar*, the question of two angels in the grave, grave *adzab*, things that happen in the last day such as the resurrection from the grave, rewards and punishment, heaven, hell, and other unseen things.⁵⁸ (b) The spiritual bond. The purpose of this spiritual bond is to guard the purity of the children's spirit from the deviation of behavior.⁵⁹ This bond can be formed when children are still at an early age by forming obedience in worship, teaching the children the Qur'an, the hadiths, the saga of the righteous, and some religious laws, and inviting the children to the mosque to form attachment to mosque.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, hlm. 705-10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, hlm. 728.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, hlm. 851.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, hlm. 729.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 851.

Children spiritual bond to the mosque is shaped aiming at educating the spirit of the children in the mosque, directing their mind to get knowledge in the mosque, teaching disciplined in the mosque, and formatting of the unity with other children in the mosque. At the same time, the child should also be directed/taught to perform *dhikr* to Allah and practice worship of prophet tradition (*sunna*).⁶⁰ (c) The thinking bond, the intention of this bond is that educators need to establish children's attachment to the rules of Islam, and avoid them from any foolish conception and foreign thought.⁶¹ The attachment is in terms of Islamic teachings as the constitution and the sources of law, the science of shari'a as the *manhaj*, the history of Islam as the spirit and the role model, the culture of Islam as the civilization, and *manhaj dakwah* Islam as the driver and encouragement.⁶² (d) The social bond, this bond means that educators have great responsibility in educating children since early stage of their lives so that they will always adhere to the noble social ethics and familiarize them with the principles of strong soul. This specific principle must be derived from Islamic aqidah, so that children will appear as strong individuals completed with good morals, the spirit of brotherhood, reasonable sense, and virtuous attitude.⁶³ In other words, this social bond is meant to protect children from exclusiveness and inferiority of being a Moslem.⁶⁴ (e) The sport bond, this bond is intended to educate children's physical wellbeing as well as to make use of their spare time.⁶⁵ At the same time, this bond also serves to maintain children's physic out from weakness, vain games, familiarize them for exercise and prepare for *jihad*.⁶⁶ However, the sports in Islam must consider balance. This means that children's sport activities should be proportional compared to their obligations. At the same time, the sport in Islam must also observe Allah's rules in terms of the use of sportswear that covers the private parts and the selection of places that needs to follow Islamic rules.⁶⁷ In this regard,

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, hlm. 732-34.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 851.

⁶² *Ibid.*, hlm. 746.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, hlm. 751.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, hlm. 851.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, hlm. 774.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, hlm. 775; 851.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, hlm. 777-79.

'Ulwan suggested several types of sport such as running race, wrestling, archery, spear games, horse riding, hunting, and chess.⁶⁸

Therefore, it is obvious that those characteristics are urgently needed and that educators should own these basic traits. 'Ulwan does not give significant details about different qualities that educators must have at certain level, therefore the discussion in this section is in fact a general study regarding the characteristics of educators. Furthermore, in terms of bonding formation with children, 'Ulwan gives some important contributions to Islamic early childhood education:

- a. Directing the development of sensory perception through the five sense organs and children psychology. This can be formed during children's spiritual educational stage through the practice of worship in spiritual bonding and running contest in sports ties. Specifically, children activities can be directed to the development of motoric sensory which can be applied on several activities such as climbing up and down stairs or the development of fine motoric sensory such as the activities of moving hands.
- b. Directing children psychological development. This can be done through the formation of social bond and the development of children's social-emotional ability. This may be arranged on a number of activities such as giving guidance on children's interaction with the environment, especially those around them.
- c. Developing the knowledge (cognitive) associated with children daily life. This activity is divided into several ways such as the development of basic knowledge related to Islam which is established through the bonds of *aqidah* and spirituality, the development of language knowledge in order to be able to receive and express the language, and the development of simple knowledge such as the recognition of the name and the function of specific material which is formed through the bond of thought. The development of this knowledge will also contribute to children's affective side by preparing, familiarizing and training them in terms of speaking, eating, socializing, adapting to the environment, and behaving.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, hlm. 804-8.

- d. Directing the development of perfecting the mind so that the children are ready to get into the *tamyiz* period. This can be done by logical thinking practice which is formed in the bonds of thought and problem-solving exercise which is shaped in social ties.
- e. Developing Islamic understanding in terms of preparing children to become *abdullah*. In other words, children at early childhood stage are given comprehensive understanding that they are the servant of Allah Almighty. Therefore, they have vertical attachment to the Creator. One way to always be tied to the Creator is to obey all of His commands and stay away from what He ban. It can be formed in spiritual bonds for example by worshipping. In this phase, the activities of worship began to be introduced and are made to be a habituation. Thus, the practice remains as affective learning process.

3. The Effort of Early Childhood Education Conditioning

Ulwan's third significant contribution is related to the efforts to form effective environmental conditioning for early childhood education. 'Ulwan argues that this environmental conditioning effort is crucial to the development of children's *fitrah* through early childhood education.⁶⁹ The efforts include: (a) motivating children to always accomplish noble effort. This is based on the example given by Prophet who always equipped themselves with special expertise. Besides, the Prophets also exemplifies people to work and fulfill their daily necessity by seeking *halal* sustenance. For example: Prophet Noah was able to create a great ark and Prophet David who worked as a blacksmith and was able to design war clothes.⁷⁰ (b) paying attention to the children's readiness, by understanding their specific potential or ability to a certain skill, the future job that may suit him, and the goals they want to achieve. The educator should place children in an appropriate place which is in line with their talent as well as put them in the appropriate environment and suitable with their development.⁷¹ (c) Giving opportunity to play and relax because Islam is principally a religion that recognizes human's natural and basic needs. Therefore, activities aimed at shaping joy by playing, relaxing, and joking

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 854.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, hlm. 855.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 860-62.

are still advisable on condition that they are within the boundaries of the Shari'a and within the Islamic ethical framework. This is necessary because Islam also pays attention to the stages of children cognitive development that is their need for more play and laughter compared to the later period of life when playing is less needed. Basically, relaxation and playing on proportional boundaries will shape children readiness to be better in receiving teaching, because children's responsiveness during teaching is greater than that of their later life.⁷² (d) Establishing cooperation between houses, mosques, and schools for the intention of accommodating children's education. Nevertheless, there are several conditions necessary in this cooperation in order that it can work effectively and efficiently that is the absence of dualism or paradox between the direction given at home and in school. In addition, the existing cooperation should aim to establish the integrity and balance of children's personality.⁷³ (e) Strengthening the relationship between educators and children. This aims to perfecting the educational interaction and achieving the formation of intellectuality, mentality and morality. Therefore, educators and parents should implement positive and active methods so that the children deliver love and empathy to them, strengthen relationships and foster the attitudes of cooperation between them, and make children feel loved.⁷⁴ (f) applying a *manhaj* education (*tarbawi*) simultaneously, so that children are accustomed. The exposure of the *manhaj* can be in activities such as: accompanying children to wake up in the morning and perform *dhikr* together, carrying out ablution together with the children, introducing a light night prayer to them, reminding them about the virtues of science and knowledge and learning as well as many other activities.⁷⁵ (g) Preparing useful facilities for children, by arranging private library for children filled with various supporting books. 'Ulwan explained that the current Islamic libraries are lacking with educational books suitable for children aged 6-12 years. Therefore, 'Ulwan does not recommend specific reference of educational books for early childhood education. 'Ulwan also recommended that educators or parents may spend time with children to

⁷² *Ibid.*, hlm. 863-67.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, hlm. 867-70.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, hlm. 870-76.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, hlm. 876-907.

visit public libraries, museums, using props and electronic media in children's education, and subscribe to weekly or monthly magazines.⁷⁶ (h) Giving motivation to children to read and review. It is based on a parent/educator's responsibility to provide intellectual awareness to children. At this point, children are introduced to the insight about Islam as a religion and a state. The study of the books should be directed to several aspects i.e., Islamic holistic thoughts, historical insight explaining the glory of Islam, insight into the war of thought in order to reveal the plans of Islam enemies, and insights about Islamic civilization.⁷⁷ (i) Directing children to understand their responsibilities towards Islam. This is carried out by introducing the children to the role of the faith-based generations gathered in Darul Arqam who take on the responsibility of Islamic da'wah. Therefore, the current Islamic generation should be directed to run the *manhaj* in which the predecessors were strongly upholding the Islamic teachings of Islam, sacrificing, being patient, diligent and persistent in realizing the glory of Islam and building Islamic state.⁷⁸ (j) establishing the spirit of jihad in children, which can be done by raising their awareness about the glory of Islam that can only be realized with jihad. At the same time, they are also introduced to jihad in the form of treasures, *tabligh*, *ta'limi*, politics, and war and reminding them of the heroic tales of the Prophet's companion's children who can be emulated by them. Last but no less important is to deepen the *aqidah* related *qodo* and *qodar*, that anything that befell on them will be calculated by Allah and whatever they do will be the cause of the coming events.⁷⁹

4. The Uniqueness of Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan's Idea in Viewing the Purity of Children

There has been various definition of *fitrah* proposed by Moslem scholars. Any attempt to explain the concept of *fitrah* always involves some subjective interpretations even though the analysis is derived from classical Islamic scholars, based on both the Qur'an and the prophet tradition (hadith). This is what ultimately affects the methods of children education,

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, hlm. 907-15.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, hlm. 915-19.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, hlm. 919-23.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 923-28.

preparation for educators, and the conditioning of early childhood education environments. The discussion of *fitrah* has been open to various interpretations, which have been exposed by many classical Islamic scholars. The writer uses the concept offered by Mohamed Yasien in his article entitled "The Interpretations of *Fitrah*".⁸⁰

The previous section discusses 'Ulwan standards of children development in early childhood education. However, the uniqueness of 'Ulwan's idea lies precisely in its translation of the conceptual notion of the children's *fitrah* which was not much considered by the *jumhur ulama*. This conceptual idea is seen when 'Ulwan translates that naturally, children are born in a state of monotheism. At the same time, 'Ulwan also argues that since their birth, infant has brought the potential of being good and evil at once.⁸¹ While the influencing factors whether they turn out to be real good or real evil are Islamic education and environmental factors.⁸² If this conceptual idea of *fitrah* is examined through the perspective put forward by Yasien Mohamed⁸³ in three major categories, then 'Ulwan' thought can be included into "dualist" view point within the mainstream definition of *fitrah*. There are at least four important criteria to distinguish one view from another i.e.:⁸⁴

- a. An overview of the congenital state of the newborn child.
- b. A description of levels which comprises good tendency and bad tendency that are merely innate factors or innate and environmental factors which determine human nature.
- c. The description of evil as an external agent of apostasy.
- d. The description of prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and revelation (treatise) as external agents of God's guidance.

⁸⁰ Yasien Mohamed, *Fitra: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, 1996).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, hlm. 629.

⁸² *Ibid.*, hlm. 625.

⁸³ Yasien Mohamed, "The Interpretations of *Fitrah*," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 34, no. 2 (1995), hlm. 129-51.

⁸⁴ Mohamed, *Fitra: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature*, hlm. 70.

The definition of *fitrah* according to Yasien Mohamed not only stops here. He then made a comparison of three major maps that becomes a mainstream in defining *fitrah*:⁸⁵

No	Criteria	Dualism	Neutral	Positive
1.	Born	Bringing the readiness to accept faith and kufr	In a stupidity and without sin- no faith and infidelity	In a state of accepting faith and Islam with (bringing) kufr potential
2.	Tendency	Innate tendency equals both right and wrong	No inborn tendency to the right or the wrong- human being in an empty state	By default, tends to know God and do right
3.	Evil	An external agent of apostasy that complements innate evil in human beings	An external agent of mislead	An external agent of mislead
4.	Prophethood and Revelation	External Divine Agents for guidance that complement the goodness of the human beings	External Divine agents for guidance	External Divine Agents for guidance that complement the innate tendencies

Fitrah in Ulwan's view is defined as a thought describing that humans have tendency for innate good and evil. At this point, human kindness and ugliness are understood as a tendency, while the creation of good or evil is the influence of external factors. The interpretation related to this concept of *fitrah* developed during the twentieth century and was supported by most modern Moslem scholars who were actively involved in the revolutionary trend in the contemporary Islamic movement. The dynamic concept of the paradigm stating that life is a struggle against injustice and oppression became a cornerstone of thought regarding the definition of *fitrah*. It seems that this modern view does not suggest in detail certain theoretical formulations as that of earlier definition. This understanding can also be seen as a consequence of the contemporary socio-political reality of the nation-state that surrounds Moslems. This

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, hlm. 71.

interpretation was supported by Moslem scholars such as Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati.⁸⁶

In this case, 'Ulwan seemed to have been directly influenced by Qutb as well as in direct contact with him when he became an activist of the Muslim Brotherhood. He also admired the Muslim Brotherhood ideologists such as Mustafa al Siba'i.⁸⁷ On the other hand, 'Ulwan puts Hasan al Banna,⁸⁸ Sayyid Quthb,⁸⁹ Muhammad Quthb,⁹⁰ Fathi Yakan,⁹¹ Said Hawa,⁹² and Yusuf al-Qardhawi⁹³ as the leading author that can be

⁸⁶ Mohamed, "The Interpretations of Fiṭrah," hlm. 130.

⁸⁷ Khasnah Sya'idah, "Child Education Thought Abdullah Nashih Ulwan" (Desertation, Graduate UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2005), hlm. 76.

⁸⁸ Hasan bin Ahmad bin Abdurrahman Muhammad al Banna or known as Hasan al Banna was an initiator and founder of the Muslim Brotherhood organization. The purpose of the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood is to mobilize a power of people to eradicate munkar and disobedience and invite people to return to the teachings of Islam A. Zaeny, "Hasan Al Banna and Strategy of Struggle," *Journal of Al-Adyan* 6, no. 2 (n.d.), hlm. 135-36.

⁸⁹ Sayyid Quthb Ibrāhīm al-Shādhili or known as Sayyid Qutb is an ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood. Sayyid Qutb is mentioned as an ideologue for being a pioneer of modern Sunni militancy with his *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*. The martyrdom of Qutb at some point eventually made it an "iconic text" for many Islamic militant movements Virginia Murr, "The Power of Ideas: Sayyid Qutb and Islamism," *Rockford College Summer Research Project*, 2004, hlm. 8.

⁹⁰ Muḥammad Quthb Ibrāhīm al-Shādhili is the younger brother of Sayyid Qutb. Muhammad Qutb is also touted as one of the Muslim Brotherhood's thinkers. Esposito and Voll's *Makers of Contemporary Islam* study shows that Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Qutb belong to the Muslim Brotherhood activists in Egypt as well as the leading Brotherhood Muslim thinkers who influenced the Islamist movement in Tunisia in 1967 Masami Nishino, *Muhammad Qutb's Islamist Thought: A Missing Link between Sayyid Qutb and Al-Qaeda?* (NIDS Journal of Defense and Security, 16, National Institute for Defense Studies, 2015), hlm. 115.

⁹¹ Fathi Yakan is a Muslim Brotherhood thinker who later formed al-Jama'ah al Islamiyyah. Nevertheless, Yakan still considers that al-Jama'ah al Islamiyyah is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, articulated by Hasan al Banna and Sayyid Qutb, is at the core of the ideological foundation in the activism and orientation of Fathi Yakan Islam Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani, and Eric Brown, *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology Volume 5* (Washington, D.C: Center on Islam, Democracy, and The Future of the Muslim World-Hudson Institute, 2007), hlm. 7.

⁹² Sa'id Hawwa has the full name of Sa'eed bin Muhammad bin Dib Hawwa, who is an activist of the Muslim Brotherhood since he was on the bench of 'Aliyah in 1952. In the course of his time Sa'id Hawwa even became head of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria Ryan Alfian, "The Concept of Leadership by Sa'id Hawwa in the Kitab Al-Asas Fi Al-Tafsir and Al-Islam" (Thesis, Ushuluddin Faculty, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, n.d.), hlm. 17-18.

⁹³ Yusuf Mustafa al-Qardhawi or commonly known as Yusuf Qardhawi was born in 1926 in Sift Turab. Qardhawi is also one of the activists of the Muslim Brotherhood. Even at an age of less than 20 years he has preached in the delta of the Nile River Anna Belén Soage, "Shaykh

taken as references in Islamic knowledge as what he did in writing his book *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam*.⁹⁴ At least, the writers cited by 'Ulwan has direct or indirect relationship with the movement of Muslim Brotherhood.

Quthb seeks the Islamic transformation from religion as "a static, purely transcendental, ideal" concept into "a set of active-operative thought to solve modern problems". This thought was born as a logical consequence of Quthb's activism in the Muslim Brotherhood. At the same time, Quthb terminologically sensed that contemporary society was divided into two classes called Nizam Islami (the true Islamic rule) and Nizam Jahili (the preceding rule before Islam). The former terminology denotes the manifestation of the ideal ideology, while the latter is a rejection of ideal understanding. Quthb considered socialism, capitalism, and communism as a product of *jahiliyah* thought that should not be associated with ideal ideology proposed by Islam.⁹⁵ It also appears in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam* that educators should always be wary of communist, crusader, Jewish (freemasonry), imperialist, and colonialist thought because it can damage children's environment to develop according to Islamic standards.⁹⁶

According to Quthb, human beings as free beings and decision makers are between, on one side, the nature which is manifested by clay which has tendency towards Nizam Jahili and on the other side, the part manifested by divine attributes of *Oneness* that has tendency towards Nizam Islami. Thus, when humans are portrayed between these two poles, humans are reminded to make effort simultaneously by carrying out *jihad* to reach ideal conditions and to resist injustice and ignorance.⁹⁷ Quthb uses Q.S Al-Hijr [15]: 28-29; Q.S. Al-Balad [90]: 10 and Q.S. Ash-Shams [7]: 7-10 as the basic foundation of his thought and conclusive evidence for the creation of human beings by their dual nature and potential. Two important constituents of the creation of the human being are the attributes of the God and the clay in which each plays significant role in describing certain tendency.⁹⁸ 'Ulwan's tendency in interpreting *fitrah*

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi: Portrait of A Leading Islamic Cleric," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2008), hlm. 52.

⁹⁴ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, hlm. 911.

⁹⁵ Mohamed, "The Interpretations of Fiṭrah," hlm. 131.

⁹⁶ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, hlm. 911.

⁹⁷ Mohamed, "The Interpretations of Fiṭrah," hlm. 131.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, hlm. 132.

as "dualistic" potential ultimately influenced the idea of early childhood education in his book *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam*. 'Ulwan' engagement in Muslim Brotherhood had strong connection to the pattern of education that he asserted. This can be seen from 'Ulwan intense suggestion on the practice of jihad in education,⁹⁹ by introducing exercises such as running, wrestling, archery, spear-playing, horse riding, hunting, and chess.¹⁰⁰ This certainly cannot be separated from the idea of Muslim Brotherhood movement was established to welcome the awakening of faith, Islamic practice, morals, social reform and resistance to despotic leadership at that time.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

Based on this study, it can be understood that the idea of a child's education in Islam written by Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan cannot be separated from Muslim Brotherhood's thinking movement. The ultimate foundation of Ulwan's thought about children true education is in fact a derivation of his thinking about *fitrah*. *Fitrah*, according to 'Ulwan is a thought that defines humans of having tendency of innate good and evil. At this point, human kindness and ugliness are understood as a tendency, while the creation of a good or evil is influenced by external factors. Therefore, early childhood requires forms of conditioning to develop children's personality through three appropriate children education approaches, establishment of educator readiness and attachment to children, and conditioning of early childhood education environments.

⁹⁹ Ulwan, *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*, 775; 851.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, hlm., 804-8.

¹⁰¹ Mohamed, "The Interpretations of *Fitrah*," 131.

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