

Asynchronous Development from a Fitrah Perspective: A Case Study at Sekolah Otak Kanan Yogyakarta

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Abstract. Early childhood development is dynamic and does not always progress at the same pace across developmental domains. In some children, reasoning and verbal expression may appear more prominent, while social emotional regulation is still developing. This study aimed to analyze differences in developmental rhythms in a four year one month old child at Sekolah Otak Yogyakarta, focusing on the relationship between opinion expression and Islamic self regulation in social interactions. This qualitative study employed a case study design. Data were collected through focused observation, a parental questionnaire, and documentation. The data were analyzed qualitatively by identifying and categorizing recurring patterns related to opinion expression, reasoning, social interaction, and self regulation. Asynchronous development was used as an analytical perspective, while a fitrah based perspective grounded in Qur'an Surah Ar Rum [30]:30 was used as an Islamic educational framework. The findings showed that the participant consistently expressed opinions and preferences, provided simple reasons, identified cause and effect relationships, compared outcomes, and communicated procedural knowledge during learning and play activities. Self regulation varied across social situations. The participant was able to wait for turns, communicate personal conditions, adjust behavior, and respond to guidance in several situations, while differences in preferences and shared social situations sometimes required facilitator support. Several behavioral adjustments were observed following adult guidance, including allowing peers to participate and returning to activities. These findings indicate different developmental rhythms between opinion expression and self regulation without establishing asynchronous development as a diagnosis. The study highlights the importance of responsive educational support that recognizes children's developmental differences and supports self regulation through a fitrah based approach.

Keywords: *asynchronous development; early childhood; fitrah; self-regulation; Islamic education.*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood development is a dynamic process involving multiple developmental domains, including cognitive, language, social-emotional, physical, and moral development. These domains do not always develop at the same pace or to the same degree. Differences in developmental pace across domains have been discussed through the concept of asynchronous development [1]. In preschool children with prominent abilities, self-regulation is also an important developmental aspect, and motivation has been associated with self-regulation skills [2]. These perspectives indicate that children's developmental characteristics need to be understood across multiple domains rather than through a single developmental ability.

In early childhood education, developmental differences need to be recognized through children's everyday learning and social experiences. Children develop abilities to express preferences, communicate ideas, follow social expectations, wait for turns, and regulate their responses in different situations. For children with prominent abilities, developmental strengths may coexist with areas that are still developing, making responsive educational support important [2], [3]. Teacher perceptions and teacher-child interactions are also relevant to how children's characteristics are understood and supported in educational settings [3].

In Islamic early childhood education, development can also be understood through the concept of fitrah, which emphasizes the child's innate disposition and potential and the responsibility of education to accompany development appropriately [4], [5]. This perspective is grounded in Surah Ar-Rum verse 30, which refers to the fitrah upon which human beings are created [6]. In this study, a fitrah-based perspective is used as an educational framework for recognizing existing strengths while accompanying areas that are still developing. It is not used as a diagnostic framework.

Previous studies have examined the social-emotional development and educational needs of children with prominent abilities. Teacher perceptions may influence teacher-child interactions and the ways in which children's characteristics are understood in educational settings [3]. Parenting attitudes have also been

discussed in relation to the developmental and educational needs of gifted children [7]. Research has further highlighted social-emotional needs and the importance of appropriate educational support [8], [9]. However, less attention has been given to how differences between opinion expression and self-regulation appear in naturally occurring interactions within an Islamic early childhood education setting and how facilitator support can be interpreted through a fitrah-based perspective.

This study examines the developmental dynamics of a four-year-one-month-old child at Sekolah Otak Kanan Yogyakarta. It does not aim to determine whether the participant is gifted or to diagnose asynchronous development. Instead, asynchronous development is used as an analytical perspective to examine differences in developmental rhythms, while fitrah is used as an Islamic educational perspective for interpreting strengths, support needs, and facilitator responses. The study focuses on opinion expression and reasoning, self-regulation, social interaction, and changes in responses following facilitator support. It also identifies the support strategies observed during naturally occurring learning and play activities.

METHODS

Study area

The study was conducted at Sekolah Otak Kanan Yogyakarta, an early childhood education setting where children engage in daily learning and play activities. The study was situated within the children's regular learning environment, allowing the developmental process to be observed through naturally occurring activities and social interactions. The observation took place during learning, play, and interaction activities involving the participant, peers, and facilitators. This setting provided opportunities to observe the participant's expression of opinions and ideas, responses to social situations, and self regulation in everyday activities.

Procedures

Observation

The study was conducted at Sekolah Otak Kanan Yogyakarta, an early childhood education setting where children engage in daily learning and play activities. The study was situated within the children's regular learning environment, allowing the developmental process to be observed through naturally occurring activities and social interactions. The observation took place during learning, play, and interaction activities involving the participant, peers, and facilitators. This setting provided opportunities to observe the participant's expression of opinions and ideas, responses to social situations, and self regulation in everyday activities.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was completed by the participant's parent as supplementary data to provide information about the child's behavior and developmental characteristics in daily situations. The questionnaire addressed the child's self regulation, social interaction, responses to differences in preferences, and responses to situations that required adjustment or adult support. The questionnaire data were considered alongside the observation records to provide additional information for understanding the participant's behavior across daily contexts.

Table 1. Research Focus and Observation Indicators

Research Focus	Indicators	Data Source
Opinion expression	Expressing opinions, reasons, and ideas during daily activities	Observation
Social interaction	Responding to differences in opinions and preferences during interaction with peers	Observation and questionnaire
Self regulation	Waiting for turns, adjusting to play situations, and managing responses when expectations are not fulfilled	Observation and questionnaire
Social emotional response	Recognizing and responding to other people's feelings	Observation and questionnaire
Response to guidance	Modifying responses after receiving guidance from the facilitator	Observation
Developmental differences	Differences between opinion expression and self regulation across social situations	Observation, questionnaire, and documentation

Data analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively by organizing observation records, documentation, and questionnaire responses according to the research focus. Relevant statements and observed behaviors were identified and coded based on patterns of opinion expression, reasoning, social interaction, self-regulation, and responses following facilitator support. Similar codes were grouped into categories to identify recurring patterns across activities and social situations. Facilitator responses were also examined to identify observable support strategies, such as providing explanations, offering assistance, giving direct guidance, acknowledging the child's expressed condition, and allowing self-directed adjustment. The emerging patterns

were interpreted using asynchronous development as an analytical perspective and fitrah as an Islamic educational framework. The analysis focused on observable developmental processes and did not aim to establish causal effects or diagnose the participant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Opinion Expression and Reasoning

The observation showed a recurring pattern of opinion expression, simple reasoning, comparison of outcomes, and communication of procedural knowledge across different activities. This pattern was also reflected in the parent questionnaire, in which the parent reported that the participant usually understood explanations and instructions quickly, frequently asked detailed questions about topics that interested her, and expressed opinions and preferences firmly while providing reasons. The convergence between observation and parent report supports the interpretation that verbal expression, questioning, and reasoning were relatively consistent features across the participant's everyday contexts. This finding is relevant to asynchronous development because developmental abilities may appear at different levels across domains [1]. From a fitrah-based perspective, these recurring verbal and reasoning abilities can be recognized as existing potential that should be given space to develop rather than used as a basis for labeling the child [4]. Educationally, the facilitator can use the child's questions, explanations, and comparisons as entry points for dialogue, reflection, and guided decision-making.

Table 2. Qualitative Coding of Opinion Expression and Reasoning

Observed Data	Observed Pattern	Category	Emerging Theme
"Buat bunga mawar."	Giving a purpose to an activity	Expressing ideas	Verbal expression of ideas
"Diangetin biar nggak kedinginan."	Explaining a reason	Causal reasoning	Verbal reasoning
"Tidak papa, masih bisa diperbaiki lagi."	Identifying that an outcome can be changed	Problem solving	Flexible response to an unexpected outcome
"Cair banget, Ummi. Ummi, mau tepung."	Identifying a change in material and requesting an action	Observation and problem solving	Reasoning based on observation
"Ini slime. Kalau ini playdough. Ini beda, Ummi."	Comparing two observed outcomes	Comparing and classifying	Conceptual differentiation
"Ganes, pelan-pelan ya, tuangnya sedikit-sedikit."	Giving procedural guidance to a peer	Communicating procedural knowledge	Reasoning expressed through social interaction

Self-Regulation in Social Interaction

The observation showed that the participant's self regulation varied across social situations. She was able to wait for her turn, follow guidance, communicate her own condition, and adjust her behavior in several situations. For example, she waited for her turn before starting an activity and changed her position after receiving guidance from the facilitator. However, situations involving differences in preferences or shared spaces sometimes required adult support. On July 22, she initially said, "Ini area pribadiku" and did not allow a peer to join. After receiving an explanation from the facilitator, she allowed the peer to participate. She also communicated her own condition by saying, "Nggak jadi deh, Ummi. Ummi aja. Kakak capek," and changed her activity after stating, "Ummi, Kakak nggak jadi main, Kakak mau area lain aja." These observations indicate that self regulation was present across several situations but varied according to the social context.

Table 3. Qualitative Coding of Self Regulation in Social Interaction

Observed Data	Observed Pattern	Category	Emerging Theme
Waiting for her turn before starting an activity	Delaying immediate action	Turn taking	Regulation of immediate wants
Changing position after receiving guidance from the facilitator	Adjusting behavior following guidance	Response to guidance	Supported self regulation
Allowing a peer to join after receiving an explanation	Changing an initial response	Social adjustment	Adjustment in social interaction
Returning to the activity after feeling disturbed by a peer	Resuming activity after guidance	Managing social disruption	Regulation with adult support
"Kakak capek" after initially offering to help	Recognizing and communicating personal condition	Self awareness	Adjusting behavior according to personal condition
Choosing another activity after stating that she no longer wanted to continue	Changing activity based on expressed preference	Decision making	Flexible adjustment

The parent questionnaire provided additional information that was generally consistent with the observation findings. The parent reported that the participant had become accustomed to taking turns, although she still sometimes needed reminders and showed a desire to be prioritized. The parent also reported that when required to follow rules that differed from her preferences, the participant usually asked why the rule needed to be followed and was more willing to comply after receiving an explanation. In situations involving disappointment or disagreement, however, she could express her disagreement through crying or shouting and continued to require support in managing her emotions. The parent further reported that she was willing to share, although reminders were sometimes still needed. These reports correspond with the

observation findings, in which the participant demonstrated turn-taking and behavioral adjustment in some situations but required adult support when her preferences conflicted with those of others.

Previous research has identified self-regulation as an important developmental ability among gifted preschool children and has examined its relationship with motivation [2]. Research has also emphasized teacher-child interactions and social-emotional support in understanding and supporting children with prominent abilities [8], [9], [3]. These studies are consistent with the present finding that self-regulation needs to be considered within broader developmental and social experiences. From a fitrah-based perspective, variation in self-regulation does not negate the child's existing strengths; rather, it indicates an area that can continue to be accompanied through developmentally appropriate experiences [4], [5].

The present study differs from previous work by focusing on naturally occurring social situations in one preschool child and considering observation alongside parent-reported experiences. The participant was able to wait for turns and adjust her behavior in some situations, while differences in preferences or shared spaces sometimes required facilitator support. The parent questionnaire described a similar combination of emerging turn-taking and sharing skills alongside continued support needs in managing disappointment and emotional responses. Within a fitrah-based interpretation, these differences are approached as part of an ongoing developmental process rather than as a contradiction between the child's strengths and support needs.

The findings suggest that self-regulation should be understood in relation to the immediate social context rather than treated as a fixed ability. The facilitator strategies observed in these situations included providing explanations, giving direct guidance, acknowledging the participant's expressed condition, and allowing opportunities to make another choice. These strategies accompanied moments of adjustment but cannot be interpreted as causing the changes because the study did not manipulate or test an intervention. For educational practice, such responsive support is consistent with a fitrah-based approach in which the child's perspective is heard while guidance is provided for waiting, sharing, managing disappointment, and adjusting responses [4], [5].

Changes Following Adult Support and Observed Facilitator Strategies

Observation data showed changes in the participant's responses in several situations following guidance from the facilitator. These changes were observed when the participant encountered situations that differed from her initial preferences or expectations. On July 22, for example, the participant initially described an area by saying, "Ini area pribadiku," and did not allow a peer to join. After the facilitator provided an explanation, the participant subsequently allowed the peer to participate. This observation shows a change in the participant's response following adult guidance.

A similar pattern appeared during activities involving play materials. When the mixture did not produce the expected result, the participant communicated her observation and requested assistance or additional materials. On August 10, when the mixture became playdough instead of slime, she said, "Kok malah jadi playdough, Umami? Kakak mau bikin slime." She then continued the activity with the facilitator. Similar responses were observed on other occasions when the participant identified changes in the mixture and continued the activity after receiving assistance or guidance.

The participant also adjusted her behavior following direct guidance during physical activities. On July 20, when she wanted to sit because she felt tired, the facilitator advised her not to sit because she was wearing a white skirt. The participant then changed her position and continued collecting sand. In another situation, she communicated her decision to change activities by saying, "Umami, Kakak nggak jadi main, Kakak mau area lain aja," and subsequently moved to another activity.

Overall, the observations showed several instances in which the participant changed her response or continued an activity following facilitator support. Across these situations, the observable strategies included providing an explanation when social expectations differed from the participant's preference, offering assistance when an activity outcome differed from her intention, giving direct guidance during physical activity, acknowledging the participant's stated condition or preference, and allowing self-directed movement to another activity. The qualitative coding identified adjustment following social guidance, persistence with support, behavioral adjustment, resuming activity after support, and self-directed adjustment as recurring patterns. These findings describe strategies that accompanied behavioral adjustment; they do not establish the effectiveness of a particular intervention.

Previous research has emphasized the importance of teacher-child interactions and supportive educational environments in understanding and responding to children's developmental characteristics [8], [9], [3]. The present study adds a situated description of how support appeared during naturally occurring learning and play activities. From a fitrah-based perspective, the observed strategies are relevant because support was not limited to directing behavior: in several situations, the facilitator provided an explanation, responded to the child's expressed preference or condition, and allowed room for adjustment. This is consistent with an

educational orientation that recognizes children's potential while accompanying areas that are still developing [4], [5].

The observed pattern suggests that facilitator support accompanied moments in which the participant adjusted her response to social situations, expectations, or activity outcomes. Providing explanations appeared particularly relevant when the participant asked why or resisted a situation, while assistance and direct guidance were used when she encountered difficulty continuing an activity. Allowing the participant to communicate fatigue or choose another activity also preserved space for agency within adult support. Because the study was observational, these strategies should be understood as documented forms of responsive accompaniment rather than evidence of causal effectiveness.

Table 4. Qualitative Coding of Responses Following Adult Support

Observed Situation	Initial Response	Response Following Support	Emerging Pattern
A peer wanted to join her play area	Described the area as private and initially refused	Allowed the peer to join after receiving an explanation	Adjustment following social guidance
Mixture did not match the intended result	Expressed that she wanted to make slime	Continued the activity with the facilitator	Persistence with support
Wanted to sit while collecting sand	Wanted to sit because she felt tired	Changed position and continued the activity after guidance	Behavioral adjustment
Felt disturbed when a peer used her space or materials	Expressed discomfort	Returned to the activity after guidance	Resuming activity after support
No longer wanted to continue an activity	Communicated that she wanted another area	Moved to another activity	Self directed adjustment

Social Interaction and Response to Others

The observation showed that the participant actively engaged in social interactions with peers and facilitators during learning and play activities. She initiated shared activities, communicated procedural knowledge, responded to other people's conditions, and adjusted her responses during interactions. For example, while making playdough, she guided a peer by saying, "Ganes, pelan-pelan ya, tuangnya sedikit-sedikit." She also responded to the facilitator's condition by saying, "Semoga Ummi cepet sembuh ya." In interactions with peers, her responses varied according to the situation. She initially maintained a personal boundary when a peer attempted to join her play area, but later allowed the peer to participate after receiving an explanation. She also showed willingness to share materials by offering to divide them with a peer. These observations indicate that the participant demonstrated active social engagement and responsiveness to others, while her responses varied according to the social context.

The parent questionnaire provided additional information about the participant's social behavior in daily situations. The parent reported that the participant enjoyed playing with friends, was able to adjust her preferences when playing in other people's homes, and was willing to share with others, although reminders were sometimes still needed. The questionnaire also indicated that the participant could express her preferences and respond to social situations while still requiring support in some situations involving disagreement or adjustment. These reports are generally consistent with the observation findings, particularly in showing active engagement with peers alongside a continuing need for support in adjusting social responses.

Previous research has emphasized social-emotional development and appropriate educational support for children with prominent abilities in early childhood settings [9], as well as the role of teacher perceptions and teacher-child interactions [3]. The present findings similarly show social development through communication, participation, responses to others, sharing, personal boundaries, and adjustment during peer interactions. From a fitrah-based perspective, both the participant's initiative and her personal boundaries can be treated as meaningful expressions of the child, while guidance can support negotiation and consideration of others [4], [5].

The present study provides a more specific description of social responses during naturally occurring activities and considers them alongside parent-reported behavior. The participant's responses involved both expressing personal preferences and adjusting to the presence and needs of others. Her initial maintenance of a personal boundary, followed by allowing a peer to participate after an explanation, illustrates how social adjustment could occur without eliminating her opportunity to express a preference. For educational practice, facilitators and parents can acknowledge children's boundaries and viewpoints while providing explanations and opportunities to practice negotiation, sharing, and consideration of others. This responsive balance between recognition and guidance reflects the fitrah-based orientation used in this study.

Table 5. Qualitative Coding of Social Interaction and Response to Others

Observed Data	Observed Pattern	Category	Emerging Pattern
"Ganes, pelan-pelan ya, tuangnya sedikit-sedikit."	Giving guidance to a peer	Peer interaction	Communicating knowledge to others
Inviting peers to participate in play	Initiating shared activity	Social	Active engagement with peers

Observed Data	Observed Pattern	Category	Emerging Pattern
activities		participation	
“Semoga Ummi cepat sembuh ya.”	Responding to another person's condition	Response to others	Verbal response to another person's condition
Initially refusing a peer's participation in a private play area	Maintaining a personal boundary	Peer interaction	Context dependent social response
Allowing the peer to join after receiving an explanation	Adjusting social response	Social adjustment	Response following adult guidance
Offering to divide materials with a peer	Sharing resources	Social interaction	Negotiating access to materials

Discussion

Asynchronous Development

The present study found that the participant's ability to express opinions, ideas, and simple reasons appeared relatively consistent across learning and play activities, while her self-regulation varied across social situations. She communicated ideas, explained simple relationships between actions and outcomes, compared observed results with expectations, and communicated procedural knowledge to others. In contrast, situations involving differences in preferences, shared spaces, or unmet expectations sometimes required facilitator support. This pattern is consistent with asynchronous development as an analytical description of different developmental rhythms across areas of functioning [1].

Previous research has discussed asynchronous development in relation to uneven developmental characteristics among children with giftedness and special educational needs [1], while self-regulation research has shown the importance of considering regulatory development alongside other abilities [2]. The present study does not classify the participant as gifted or establish asynchronous development as a diagnosis. Instead, it uses the concept to understand the observed contrast between relatively consistent verbal reasoning and more context-dependent self-regulation. Through a fitrah-based perspective, this unevenness is interpreted without reducing the child to either her strengths or her difficulties; both are considered parts of a developmental process that requires recognition and accompaniment [4], [5].

The findings therefore suggest that a prominent ability in verbal expression does not imply that self-regulation will appear at the same level in every situation. For early childhood education, the implication is twofold: educators can provide rich opportunities for the child's reasoning and communication to develop, while also using clear explanations, guided social experiences, and opportunities for choice to accompany self-regulation. This connects the asynchronous pattern observed in the data with a fitrah-based educational response rather than a diagnostic conclusion.

Self Regulation as a Developing Process

The present study found that the participant's self-regulation varied according to the situation. She was able to wait for her turn, follow guidance, communicate when she was tired, and adjust her behavior in several situations. However, differences in preferences, shared spaces, or disagreement with peers sometimes required facilitator support. The parent questionnaire showed a comparable pattern: turn-taking and sharing were developing, while reminders and support were still needed in some situations involving disappointment or disagreement.

The parent questionnaire provided additional information that was generally consistent with the observation findings. The parent reported that the participant had developed an understanding of turn taking, although reminders were sometimes still needed. When rules differed from her preferences, she tended to ask for an explanation before following them. The parent also reported that situations involving disappointment or disagreement could still lead to crying or shouting and that support was needed to manage these emotional responses. These reports correspond with the observation findings, in which the participant demonstrated adjustment and turn taking in some situations while requiring adult support when her preferences conflicted with those of others.

Previous research has identified self-regulation as an important developmental ability and has examined its relationship with motivation [2]. Studies of teacher-child interaction and social-emotional needs also emphasize the relevance of appropriate educational support [8], [9], [3]. In the present study, the fitrah perspective adds an educational interpretation: variability in self-regulation is treated as an area for accompaniment while the child's communication and reasoning remain recognized as developmental resources [4], [5].

The observed facilitator strategies included giving explanations, offering assistance, providing direct guidance, acknowledging the child's expressed condition, and allowing opportunities for self-directed adjustment. These strategies accompanied changes in responses but were not experimentally tested. The findings therefore support a responsive educational implication rather than a causal claim: facilitators and parents can listen to the child's perspective, explain social expectations, and provide repeated opportunities to

practice waiting, sharing, managing disappointment, and making appropriate choices. Such support is compatible with a fitrah-based approach because it combines recognition of the child's agency with guidance for developing self-regulation.

Fitrah Perspective and Educational Implications

The findings can be further understood through a fitrah-based perspective grounded in the Qur'anic concept of human creation upon fitrah. Surah Ar-Rum verse 30 states:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

The verse provides an Islamic foundation for the concept of fitrah [6]. In early childhood education, fitrah-based perspectives emphasize recognizing children's innate potential and accompanying development according to their needs and process [4], [5].

In the present study, this perspective connects directly with the observed findings. The participant's verbal expression, reasoning, initiative, and responsiveness can be recognized as existing strengths, while context-dependent self-regulation and social adjustment represent areas that continue to develop. The observed facilitator strategies—explanation, assistance, direct guidance, acknowledgement of the child's condition, and opportunities for choice—illustrate forms of accompaniment that preserve the child's voice while supporting adjustment.

This interpretation does not mean that every observed facilitator response is automatically a fitrah-based intervention or that the strategies were proven effective. Rather, the fitrah perspective provides a value-based framework for understanding why education should recognize potential and provide proportionate guidance at the same time [4], [5]. The observational findings show how this balance can appear in everyday interactions without requiring a diagnostic label.

For educational practice, children's reasoning can be used as an entry point for discussing choices, consequences, and social situations. When self-regulation is challenged, facilitators can provide clear explanations, model or guide an appropriate response, acknowledge the child's stated feelings or preferences, and allow opportunities for the child to adjust. These strategies should remain responsive to context and should not replace the child's opportunity to communicate and make developmentally appropriate choices.

Overall, integrating asynchronous development with a fitrah-based perspective shifts the emphasis from identifying deficits to understanding developmental rhythm and educational response. The child is viewed as having meaningful existing potential while still needing accompaniment in areas that are developing. This synthesis also clarifies the role of facilitator strategy in the present study: support is documented as part of the developmental context, not as an experimentally validated intervention.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the participant demonstrated different developmental rhythms between opinion expression and self-regulation. Verbal expression, simple reasoning, and communication of ideas appeared relatively consistent, while self-regulation varied across social situations and sometimes required facilitator support. Observation and parent-report data showed converging patterns in turn-taking, sharing, and the need for support during some emotional or social situations. The facilitator strategies observed included providing explanations, offering assistance, giving direct guidance, acknowledging the child's expressed condition, and allowing self-directed adjustment. These findings can be understood through asynchronous development as an analytical perspective and fitrah as an Islamic educational framework, without classifying the participant as gifted or assigning a diagnosis. Educationally, the findings support responsive accompaniment that recognizes children's existing potential while providing context-sensitive opportunities to develop self-regulation and social adjustment.

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