

## THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION BASED ON AGE CATEGORIES ACCORDING TO JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU & ITS RELEVANCE TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDONESIA

Fakhirah Maulidya<sup>1</sup>, Ismail<sup>2</sup>

Email: [fakhirahmaulidya@gmail.com](mailto:fakhirahmaulidya@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [ismail6131@unm.ac.id](mailto:ismail6131@unm.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

**Abstrak:** Pemikiran Rousseau tentang pendidikan berdasarkan kategori usia menekankan pentingnya memahami tahap perkembangan alami anak. Menurut Rousseau, pendidikan anak-anak harus sesuai dengan tahap perkembangan fisik dan mental mereka. Ia membagi perkembangan anak menjadi beberapa tahap, seperti masa kanak-kanak dan remaja, dan menekankan perlunya pendekatan pendidikan yang berbeda untuk setiap tahap tersebut. Relevansi pemikiran Rousseau terhadap sistem pendidikan Indonesia dapat dilihat dari upaya untuk mengkaji ulang kurikulum dan metode pengajaran yang digunakan. Dengan memahami bahwa setiap tahap perkembangan anak memerlukan pendekatan yang berbeda, sistem pendidikan Indonesia dapat mengkaji ulang kurikulum dan metode pengajarannya untuk menyesuaikan dengan tahap perkembangan alami anak. Hal ini dapat membantu menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang lebih sesuai dengan kebutuhan perkembangan anak, sehingga mendorong perkembangan potensi anak secara optimal.

**Kata Kunci:** Rousseau, Kategori Usia, Pendidikan

**Abstract:** *Rousseau's thinking about education based on age categories emphasizes the importance of understanding children's natural stages of development. According to Rousseau, children's education should be appropriate to their stage of physical and mental development. He divided child development into stages, such as childhood and adolescence, and emphasized the need for different educational approaches for each stage. The relevance of Rousseau's thinking to the Indonesian education system can be seen from efforts to review the curriculum and teaching methods used. By understanding that each stage of a child's development requires a different approach, the Indonesian education system can review its curriculum and teaching methods to adapt to the child's natural developmental stage. This can help create an educational environment that is more suited to children's developmental needs, thereby encouraging the optimal development of children's potential.*

**Keyword:** *Rousseau, Age Category, Education.*

### INTRODUCTION

Rousseau's concept of education based on age categories emphasizes the natural development of children. According to Rousseau, education should be adapted to the various stages of a child's development, with a focus on physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. For young children, he advocated a focus on sensory experiences and play, while older children should learn practical skills and teenagers should focus on moral and civic education.

In the Indonesian context, the current education system faces challenges in providing quality education that is relevant to student needs. This system is often criticized for its rigid curriculum and lack of emphasis on practical skills and moral education. There is a need to reform the education system to align with Rousseau's ideas and serve the holistic development of students.

Rousseau's emphasis on the natural development of children and the need for education to be adapted to different age groups is relevant to the challenges that exist in the Indonesian education system today. By combining his ideas, the system can better address students' diverse needs and provide a more holistic education that prepares them for the demands of the modern world.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses library research methods. Library research is research carried out using literature (libraries), in the form of books, notes, or other reference sources (Wulandari, 2020). Data collection techniques include identifying reading materials through books, articles, magazines, the web (internet), and other information about survey titles to find things related to euthanasia. The resulting data is descriptive data

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Jean Jacques Rousseau was born of a highly respectable parentage in the city of Geneva in 1712. His father was a French watch-maker. Rousseau lost his mother soon after his birth. So he was entrusted to the care of his easy-going aunt. His father was careless. Consequently, Rousseau was not checked from falling into bad habits during his childhood days (Chaube 2002).

The life of the infant Jean-Jacques had been preserved by the assiduous nursing and care of one of the sisters of his father, and it is to this aunt Suson that he traces his subsequent passion for music, because during the seven or so years in which he was in her care by day she continually sang many songs and melodies to him in a sweet voice. To her, also, he must have owed his learning to read, which he could do with ease before he was six. As a consequence, in the evenings in his father's workshop, the father would work on watches while his little son read, or he would stop the reading to explain passages or to comment on them. Then, when the child tired, the father would take over the reading for a while. Thus, Jean-Jacques claims his earliest thoughts regarding the outside world were placed in an unrealistic and romantic background. This was the more true because he was kept almost continually in the house and not allowed to mingle with other children of his age (Dobinson 2022).

When Rousseau was ten years old, his father was forced to leave the city, leaving Rousseau and his brother behind with relatives. Rousseau gained a rudimentary education before becoming an apprentice to a notary and engraver. Soon he left Geneva and got a patron in the form of Louise de Warens— a Catholic noblewoman of Protestant background. With her support Rousseau became well versed in philosophy, music, mathematics and other subjects (Chakrabati, 2019).

Rousseau's life reached a crisis when, in 1737, he had a serious illness during which he began to read a wide variety of books on literature, philosophy and science. Among the French writers that he read were Fénelon, Pascal, Voltaire, Montaigne and Descartes; whilst the English writers who most affected him were Hobbes, Addison, Pope, and Locke. Rousseau was by now convinced that his own métier was writing, and in 1750 he won a prize for a Discourse on the Arts and Sciences—adjudged the best essay by the Academy of Dijon on the topic, "Has the progress of sciences and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morals?" After this effort he produced a number of essays and articles on such general topics as human inequality and political economy. He then went on to write the main works of his literary career: *The New Héloïse* in 1761, which was a romance of love and domestic life; *The Social Contract* in 1762, which, says Dr W. Boyd, with the *Discourse on Inequality* provided "the leaders of the French Revolution with their main ideas about government"; and *Emile*, also in 1762, which was his chief work on education (Morrish, 2019).

### **Rousseau's Concept Of Education**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) has long been considered one of the most important educational texts. Written as a treatise embedded in a fictional narrative, it advances suggestions on how an imaginary tutor, called Jean-Jacques, should educate an imaginary child, called Emile. Scholars have argued that the mode of education proposed therein is oriented to facilitating the formation of what Rousseau calls the "general will" — the collectively held will that seeks the common good and on which all just laws are founded. In particular, it has been noted that the education of pity in the treatise plays a very important role in engendering this concern for the common good. This is because pity, at least for Rousseau, requires that we partake of others' perspectives and feel their pain, and hence has the capacity to transform us from self-regarding egoists to other-regarding citizens (Leung, 2023).

From *Emile*, it can be seen that Rousseau believes that the purpose of education is to make people become natural persons, that is, what he calls "in accordance with the order of nature", "trust nature", "take nature as the only Bible" and "those who follow conscience follow nature" (Wang, 2022).

In epistemology, Rousseau believes that the source of cognition is feeling, and the concrete reflection of this feeling theory in his educational thought is the naturalness of education that he has been trying to pursue. The biggest characteristic of Rousseau's thought of natural education is that from the view of human nature, people should always follow the principles of nature, so that children's body and mind can be developed freely in education (Lu, 2019).

Rousseau's notions about "natural education" suggested children have a natural inclination to demonstrate activity, curiosity, creativity, and discovery of their own essential goodness. The teacher's role is to guide the student to experiences, during which this natural tendency toward growth and moral development will unfold. *Emile*, Rousseau's educational charge, was encouraged to learn by experience, by trial and error, and to draw his own conclusions about life. He believed children need to grasp ethical principles through concrete experiences, which is something very different from memorizing verbal formulas (Dobinson, 2022).

### **Stages Of Child's Development By Rousseau**

The stages become a guide to see a picture where children in education are isolated from the influence of the cultural environment that wants to dominate. A learning process that focuses on children aims to ensure that they can draw their own conclusions about what they are exploring. The environment becomes a place for students to learn by manipulation by the tutor (Betram, 2017).

Based on the division of natural stages of development, J.J. Rousseau stated about five stages of human mental development which are adapted to the stages in the educational level (Rochmawati, 2023). Rousseau's 5 stages of child development in Koblin (2023) are early childhood, boyhood, pre-adolescence, adolescence, and adulthood (Koblin, 2023).

Stage 1, early childhood (0-6), begins with *Émile's* birth. During this stage, it is essential for his parents to ensure that *Émile* develops physically. Only the mother should feed the boy, because she naturally loves him more than anyone else. To allow the boy to make experiences with all his senses, he wears loose clothing and is placed in a large cradle where he can move freely. Rousseau, who was influenced by John Locke, believed that dressing children too warmly makes them weak.

If *Emile* doesn't want to eat, he's supported. If he wants to use his left hand, he can. Beating or shouting at the boy should be avoided. When *Emile* "cries", which Rousseau called our first language, his mother should try to understand him and find the underlying cause. Since children are born essentially good, it is the responsibility of the parents to shield them from those who could influence their innocent minds.

During Stage 2, Boyhood (7-9), *Emile* is educated to perfect his senses. This is important because the mind needs a wide range of trained senses to perceive information correctly and develop good judgment. Instead of recommending books, the tutor lets *Emile* play games and conduct natural experiments outside. The city or a school are not the right places for a child at this age.

*Emile* learns to tell right from wrong by experiencing the consequences of his actions. Instead of actively teaching, the tutor is merely a bystander who is there to protect the boy from those who want to influence his thinking or teach him bad habits. Over time *Emile* learns morality and virtue naturally.

In Stage 3, Preadolescence (10-12), *Emile* is ready to learn how to reason. Rousseau thought that only self-directed learning led to the discipline necessary to acquire real knowledge. The tutor therefore trusts *Emile's* interests and if the boy wants to learn history, history he learns. Languages are acquired naturally through conversations.

*Emile* is also taught carpentry, a manual labor that requires creativity and intellect, which helps him to become a virtuous adult who knows the value of hard work. Doing such work also keeps *Emile* out of trouble, and allows him to make a living in the event of a change in fortune.

In Stage 4, Adolescence (13-19), *Emile* is ready for the last part of his education — sentiment. Only now is he capable of understanding complex emotions such as true compassion. *Emile* now becomes a loving person who learns to live with, and for others. Or as Rousseau wrote "We have made an active and thinking being. It remains for us, in order to complete the man, only to make a loving and

feeling being—that is to say, to perfect reason by sentiment”

The tutor now begins formal education and introduces the passionate boy to concepts such as religion. Children who learn such complex ideas earlier, are unable to think about them freely and hence just recite what they have been told. Emile, whose character has grown strong enough to reason, is now permitted to mingle with people in society.

In Stage 5, Adulthood (20+), Emile becomes a virtuous man, who can make up his own mind. He visits the city and develops a sense for the finer things in life. Thanks to his strong character, the pursuit of wealth or other temptations are none of his interest. The young man is now ready to meet Sophie — the perfect woman, his wife-to-be.

Sophie, a representative of the ideal woman, is educated to be governed by her husband while Émile, a representative of the ideal man, is educated to be self-governing. “The man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive”, Rousseau wrote. Sophie’s purpose is to please, advise and console her husband.

Based on the theory of natural development education, it can be a reference for understanding development according to a child's age. Apart from that, it can also provide an overview of educational manipulation for children according to their development. Finally, adults will also better understand that learning is basically individual. Thus, the three principles of Rousseau's theory are, child development, the principle of environmental manipulation or intervention activities for children's learning activities and individualization of education (Darmawan, 2016).

#### **Education Review Based On Age Categories In Indonesia**

Educational practice in Indonesia regulates that each level of education has an age category. These rules are found in Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia No 1 Tahun 2021 Tentang Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Pada Taman Kanak-Kanak, Sekolah Dasar, Sekolah Menengah Pertama, Sekolah Menengah Atas, dan Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Tahun Pembelajaran 2021/ 2022, 2021.

Prospective new kindergarten students must meet the age requirements; group A is the lowest 4 years and the highest is 5 years, group B is the lowest 5 years and the highest is 6 years old (Kemendikbud, 2021). Kindergarten is a coaching effort aimed at children which aims to improve various abilities of children from an early age as preparation for life and to get used to their environment. The early childhood period (0-6 years) is the golden age where a conducive position of environmental stimulation (especially teachers and parents) will be able to improve brain development and all of the child's abilities (Mawardah & Maryanti, 2023).

Learning in early childhood is emphasized on play activities. Through play, children can develop their creativity. Creative thinking and play are important parts of children's development (Tok, 2022). The results of development research conducted by Nurani & Mayangsari (2017) show that through play activities children aged 5-6 years can increase creativity. Other research states that the directions for creativity development programs in early childhood include fun learning activities, learning in the form of play activities, students being actively involved, combining various aspects of learning and development, and learning in the form of concrete activities (Suryaningsih, Cahaya & Poerwati, 2016).

Prospective new students in 1st grade of elementary school must meet the age requirements 7 years or a minimum of 6 years on 1st July of the current year (Kemendikbud, 2021). Age 6-12 years is the primary education period, if we are guided by child development, then in the stages of development, elementary school age children are divided into 2 periods, namely age 6-9 years in early childhood and age 10-12 years in late childhood. This period is a period of playing together, marked by children who like to go out of the house and start hanging out with their peers. At this time children already have and choose friends to hang out with. Children at this age stage have the characteristics of enjoying playing, moving, working in groups, and enjoying experiencing things directly (Rahmi & Hijrianti, 2021).

Students in this learning are accustomed to always innovating in receiving learning material, after that the group discusses the problem given and investigates within the group to find a solution. If

learning is accompanied by activity and discovery as well as creating small groups and then paying attention to personal differences, it makes the person stronger in logic and finding solutions. Group work eliminates their boredom in class and increases student participation to solve problems and reduces the stress experienced by students, during exams and also makes their self-confidence much better. In the interaction approach students learn who is learning too. Because students can teach others whatever they learn, their learning is much better than just listening or reading alone. Additionally, significant social, speaking, listening, logic, and problem-solving skills are strengthened by experiential interactions (Salamah & Rifayanti, 2023).

Prospective new students in 7th grade of junior high school must meet the requirements; aged no more than 15 years on 1st July of the current year, and have completed 6th grade elementary school or other equivalent form (Kemendikbud, 2021). Children at this stage are able to use their minds to solve problems that require high-level thinking such as connecting, combining, weighing, testing, understanding, analyzing and abstract thinking. However, in reality not all junior high school students are in the formal phase so they are able to think critically. Middle school students tend to still rely on concrete objects to make it easier to understand the problems they face. This happens because students have not yet fully entered the formal operations stage. So teachers must be able to provide appropriate learning to improve students' problem-solving abilities in accordance with the phase of cognitive development that students are experiencing (Setiawan & Widodo, 2019).

Prospective new students in 10th grade of senior high school must meet the requirements; be at least 21 years old on 1st July of the current year, and have completed 9th grade of junior high school or other equivalent form (Kemendikbud, 2021). Education in high school is usually marked by students being confronted with new problems that are more complex than the problems experienced in middle school. At this stage they are able to solve problems that require quite high logical operation skills. This period is characterized by the ability to operate the rules of formal logic which are no longer bound by concrete objects (Syar, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

This means that education in Indonesia is carried out based on the child's age. When reviewed further, this educational practice still has relevance to Rousseau's thinking, who argued that education should ideally be in accordance with students' natural development.

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