



## Development of the Emo Path Educational Game Media in Group Counseling Services to Help Flood Survivor Students Express Their Emotions

Klara Putri Ningsih<sup>1\*</sup>, Nefi Darmayanti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ✉ [klara303222065@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:klara303222065@uinsu.ac.id) \*

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop an educational media game called Emo Path for use in group counseling to help flood survivor students express their emotions. The study is motivated by findings showing that students affected by floods often have difficulty expressing emotions such as fear, sadness, anxiety, and trauma due to disaster-related experiences. This research uses a Research and Development (R&D) Level 1 approach with a 4D development model, limited to the define, design, and develop stages. The study was carried out at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan, involving 18 flood survivor students from grades VII, VIII, and IX, selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through a needs analysis questionnaire, validation instruments from content and media experts, and a student response questionnaire. The data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive techniques with a Likert scale. The needs analysis results showed that students really need game-based educational media in group counseling services, with agreement percentages ranging from 61.1% to 72.2%. The content expert validation scored 93.2%, while the media expert validation reached 94.2%, both of which fall into the very feasible category. Meanwhile, the practicality test conducted on students scored 87.8%, indicating that the media is very practical to use. The research findings show that the Emo Path Game is a feasible and practical tool to use in group counseling services to help student flood survivors express their emotions more openly, safely, and adaptively. The novelty of this study lies in the development of an educational game specifically designed based on the emotional experiences of student flood survivors, as well as in the integration of event cards, emotion expression cards, and value reflection cards into a unified counseling game framework.

**Keywords:** *Educational Games, Emotion Expression, Game Emo Path, Group Counseling.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Education doesn't just work to develop students' academic skills, but it also plays an important role in supporting their social, emotional, and psychological growth. (Niu, Bartolome, Mai, & Ha, 2021; Iskandar, Thalal, Sari, & Azhari, 2026). Emotional aspects are important to pay attention to because they affect students' ability to adapt, socialize, and follow the learning process (Azzopardi et al., 2022; Nasution & Siregar, 2023). This is even more relevant for students who have experienced natural disasters, because those experiences can cause various psychological impacts that affect their well-being (McMain, 2024; Daulay et al., 2022).

One of the disasters that often happens in Indonesia is flooding. Besides causing physical and material losses, floods can also have emotional impacts like fear, anxiety, sadness, loss, and even long-lasting trauma (Hasibuan, Hasibuan, & Mahidin, 2023). This situation shows the importance of being able to express emotions healthily. Students who can express their emotions well tend to have better mental health, self-control, and adaptability, while having trouble expressing emotions can lead to various psychological and social problems (Sari et al., 2025).

Guidance and counseling services play a strategic role in helping students recognize and manage their emotions. However, services that are still dominated by verbal approaches are often less effective for students who have trouble expressing their feelings directly (Fasya, Darmayanti, & Arsyad, 2023). Therefore, a more interactive and enjoyable medium is needed. One alternative that can be used is educational games, which have been proven to increase student engagement and help them recognize and express their emotions more openly (Hawthorn, Jesus, & Baptista, 2021).

Based on these needs, the educational media Game Emo Path was developed as a group counseling tool for students who are flood survivors. This media is designed to help students recognize their post-disaster experiences, identify the emotions that arise, safely express their feelings, and reflect on the positive values from their experiences (Malik & Sethi, 2025). The Emo Path game combines event cards, emotion expression cards, and value reflection cards that are arranged based on the real experiences of students who survived floods. This media development is also based on William James and Carl Lange's emotion theory as well as emotion expression theories from Robert Plutchik, Daniel Goleman, Carol Ryff, and Paul Ekman, so it's expected to help students develop their ability to express and manage emotions more adaptively (Wong, et al., 2026).

Based on initial observations at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan, it was found that some flood-affected students tend to withdraw, get easily angry, are less active in group activities, and have difficulty expressing their feelings both verbally and nonverbally. These findings were reinforced by interviews with the guidance and counseling teachers, who stated that students still need media that can facilitate emotional expression more comfortably and effectively. Therefore, developing the educational media Game Emo Path becomes important as an innovative effort in group counseling services to help flood-affected students develop healthy and adaptive emotional expression skills.

Through the development of this media, it is hoped that students will be able to recognize, understand, and express their emotions more openly, which can improve their self-adjustment skills, strengthen social relationships, and support their readiness to learn in the school environment. Therefore, the development research on the game Emo Path has both theoretical and practical relevance in enriching counseling and guidance media innovations that respond to the psychological needs of students who are disaster survivors.

Various previous studies show that educational games, music, literary works, and gamification techniques can help the social-emotional development and emotional expression skills of students. Research (Rachmat, 2023) proves that educational games can improve students' social skills and emotion management. Meanwhile, Pratama, Fitriani, & Adinegoro (2025) found that music is effective as a medium for regulating and expressing emotions. Research (Nurhayati, Mukhlesiyeni, Salehha, Dewi, & Darniati, 2026), It also shows that literary works can be a way to understand different forms of emotional expression.

Besides, Gadeng et al. (2026) proved that gamification-based group counseling services with the help of emotion cards are effective in helping students recognize, manage, and express their emotions. However, various studies still focus on general emotion management and have not developed media specifically designed based on the emotional experiences of flood-affected students. Therefore, there is still a research gap in the form of the lack of contextual and interactive educational game media to help flood-affected students express and reflect on their emotions in group counseling services.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of the educational game media Game Emo Path, which is specifically designed to help students who survived floods recognize, express, and reflect on their emotions. Unlike previous studies that used games, music, literature, or emotion cards in general, Game Emo Path was developed based on the real experiences of students after the flood, making it more relevant to their psychosocial needs.

This media combines event cards, emotion expression cards, and value reflection cards into a structured gameplay flow, allowing students to connect their experiences with the emotions that arise and the positive values they can learn. In addition, the development of this media combines William James and Carl Lange's emotion theories with the emotion theories of Robert Plutchik, Daniel Goleman, Carol Ryff, and Paul Ekman, resulting in a more comprehensive, interactive, and contextual counseling tool to help students manage their emotions adaptively after experiencing a flood.

## **METHOD**

This research uses the Research and Development (R&D) method. R&D is a research method used to create a specific product while also testing the feasibility of the product being developed (Sugiyono, 2024). The product developed in this research is the educational media Game Emo Path, which is used in group counseling sessions to help students who are flood survivors express their emotions. This method was chosen because the research aims not only to study a phenomenon but also to create practical counseling media that can be applied in schools.

According to Sugiyono (2024), Research and Development (R&D) studies are methodologically divided into four levels. Level 1 focuses on product design without testing effectiveness, level 2 tests existing products, level 3 develops existing products while also testing their effectiveness, and level 4 creates new products and tests their effectiveness. Based on this classification, this study falls into R&D level 1 because it focuses on the process of designing, developing, and validating the product without conducting effectiveness tests through experiments.

This research was carried out at the UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan, located at Jalan Kapten M. Jamil Lubis No. 108, Bandar Selamat, Medan Tembung District, Medan City, North Sumatra. The research location was chosen because the school is in an area frequently affected by floods, making it relevant to the research focus, which is developing educational game media to help flood-affected students express their emotions.

The research subjects consisted of 18 students from grades VII, VIII, and IX, aged 12–15 years, both male and female. The subjects were chosen using a purposive sampling technique, which is a method of selecting samples based on certain considerations and criteria that fit the research purpose (Sugiyono, 2024). The criteria for selecting subjects include: (1) students who have directly experienced a flood; (2) showing emotional responses due to the flood experience; (3) willing to participate in group counseling services and the educational games developed; and (4) recommended by the guidance and counseling teacher as students who need help expressing their emotions. The number of subjects, 18 students, was divided into three groups of 6 students each. This number is considered adequate because a level 1 R&D study focuses on product development and validation, not on testing effectiveness or generalizing results. Additionally, having group members ranging from 5 to 10 people is in line with the recommendation for conducting group counseling so that group dynamics can run optimally (Prayitno, 2017).

The development model used in this research is the 4D model proposed by Thiagarajan, Semmel, & Semmel (1974), which consists of four stages, namely Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. However, since this research is classified as R&D level 1, the development process is only carried out up to the Develop stage without proceeding to the Disseminate stage. The product developed is the educational media Game Emo Path, designed to be used in group counseling services to help students who are flood survivors recognize, understand, and express their emotions more adaptively.

The first stage is Define. This stage aims to identify the problems and needs that form the basis for developing the Emo Path Game media. Activities carried out at this stage include interviews with guidance and counseling teachers regarding the implementation of group counseling services at school, distributing media needs questionnaires to students, analyzing students' abilities to express emotions related to flood experiences, and identifying the limitations of the media used in group counseling services.

The second stage is Design. In this stage, the initial design of the educational game media Game Emo Path is carried out. The activities include determining the concept and objectives of the game, setting up the rules and procedures, designing the form and appearance of the media, developing event cards based on the experiences of students who survived floods, emotion expression cards, and value reflection cards, as well as designing visual elements like colors, icons, images, and typography. In addition, guidelines for using the game and research instruments are also developed, which include expert validation questionnaires for content, expert validation questionnaires for media, and student response questionnaires.

The content expert validation instrument was developed based on five aspects: material suitability, visual accuracy, alignment with student characteristics, clarity of the card content, and the benefits of the material. Meanwhile, the media expert validation instrument covers aspects like design appearance, visual quality, color and readability, ease of use, and media attractiveness. The student response instrument was created based on interest in the game, ease of use, understanding of emotions, activeness in group counseling, and the benefits of the game media.

The third stage is Develop. In this stage, the initial Emo Path Game product is created and refined based on validation results. Activities carried out include developing the initial game product, validation by media experts and content experts, collecting suggestions and feedback from validators, revising the product based on validation results, testing the media in group counseling services, and final revisions based on the trial results.

The data analysis techniques used in this study are quantitative descriptive analysis and qualitative descriptive analysis. Quantitative data were obtained from the results of expert

validation questionnaires from material experts, media experts, as well as responses from students to the Game Emo Path, while qualitative data were obtained from suggestions and feedback from validators for product improvement. The assessment data were analyzed using a Likert scale with five evaluation categories, namely strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Quantitative descriptive analysis is used to determine the feasibility level of the Game Emo Path media by calculating the percentage of assessment scores using the formula:

$$Percentage = \frac{Score\ obtained}{Maximum\ score} \times 100\%$$

The percentage results are then interpreted based on feasibility criteria, namely 81%–100% categorized as very feasible, 61%–80% feasible, 41%–60% fairly feasible, 21%–40% less feasible, and 0%–20% not feasible. Thus, the data analysis is carried out to determine the feasibility level of the educational game media Game Emo Path as a group counseling service medium for flood survivor students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Needs Test

The following explains the results of the analysis of students' needs related to the development of the educational media Game Emo Path in group counseling services to help students who survived the flood express their emotions.

**Table 1. Results of Student Needs Analysis**

<b>Analysis Dimension</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Media Needs</b>	Type of Media	The use of educational game media is needed in group counseling services.	Strongly Agree 61.1%; Agree 38.9%; Undecided 0%; Disagree 0%; Strongly Disagree 0%
<b>Student Characteristics</b>	Emotional Expression	Game-based media help students express their emotions after experiencing a flood disaster.	Strongly Agree 68.5%; Agree 31.5%; Undecided 0%; Disagree 0%; Strongly Disagree 0%
<b>Service Needs</b>	Group Counseling	Educational games make group counseling services more engaging and enjoyable.	Strongly Agree 72.2%; Agree 27.8%; Undecided 0%; Disagree 0%; Strongly Disagree 0%
<b>Student Motivation</b>	Interest	Game-based media make students more confident in expressing their feelings.	Strongly Agree 57.4%; Agree 42.6%; Undecided 0%; Disagree 0%; Strongly Disagree 0%
<b>Media Practicality</b>	Emotional Understanding	Game-based media help students recognize and understand various types of emotions.	Strongly Agree 64.8%; Agree 35.2%; Undecided 0%; Disagree 0%; Strongly Disagree 0%

Based on the results of the needs analysis, the majority of students demonstrated a very high level of agreement regarding the development of the Emo Path educational game as a medium for group counseling services. In terms of media needs, 61.1% of students strongly agreed and 38.9% agreed that educational game media are necessary in group counseling services.

Regarding student characteristics, 68.5% of students strongly agreed, and 31.5% agreed that game-based media help them express their emotions after experiencing a flood disaster.

With respect to service needs, 72.2% of students strongly agreed, and 27.8% agreed that educational games make group counseling activities more engaging and enjoyable. In terms of student motivation, 57.4% of students strongly agreed, and 42.6% agreed that game-based media help them become more confident in expressing their emotions. Furthermore, regarding media practicality, 64.8% of students strongly agreed, and 35.2% agreed that game-based media assist them in recognizing and understanding various types of emotions.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that students need the Emo Path educational game as an engaging and interactive medium to support emotional expression within group counseling services. The results indicate that the developed media has strong potential to facilitate students in expressing, recognizing, and understanding their emotions more effectively, particularly following their experiences with flood-related situations.

### **Product Development**

Emo Path Game is an extension of the Emo and Side Game. The Emo and Side Game focuses on introducing children's emotions in general, whereas the Emo Path Game is developed contextually as a group counseling tool for students who survived floods to express their emotions. The disaster context is integrated into the event cards, allowing students to connect personal experiences with the process of identifying and expressing emotions. Additionally, the presence of value reflection cards is a unique feature of the Emo Path Game in providing psychological reinforcement as well as post-disaster positive values.



**Figure 1. Initial Product Design**

The Emo and Side game has several main components, including 54 situation cards, 24 emotion cards, 48 point tokens, a parent guidebook, and a game guidebook. Each component is designed to support interactive gameplay and help learners recognize, understand, and express emotions in both learning activities and guidance and counseling services.

### Product After Being Revised and Developed



Figure 2. Front cover of the Emo Path game

The game Emo Path depicts the concept of students' emotional journey in dealing with post-flood experiences. The game's visual design portrays flood disaster situations to build students' emotional connection to the experiences they go through, helping them be more open in expressing their emotions.



Figure 3. Components of the Emo Path Game

The following image shows the main components of the educational game Emo Path, which consist of event cards, emotion expression cards, and value reflection cards. These three types of cards are designed to help learners recognize post-disaster experiences, express the emotions they feel, and reflect on positive values when facing life situations.

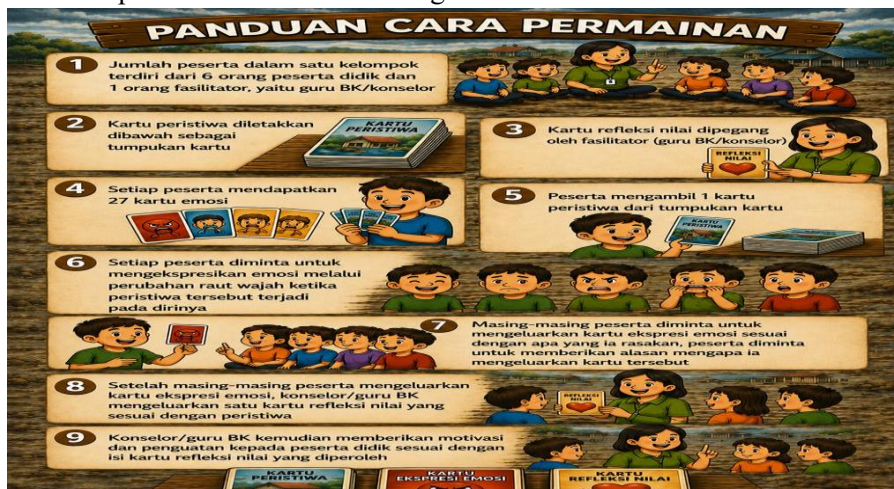


Figure 4. Instructions on How to Play

The following image shows guidelines for playing the educational game Emo Path. The game instructions are arranged systematically, starting from forming groups, distributing emotion cards, drawing event cards, the process of expressing emotions, and providing value reflections by the facilitator/counselor teacher. These steps are designed to help students identify, express, and better understand the emotions they experience in a more open and guided way.



**Figure 5. Components of the Event Card**

Event cards are a basic component in the game that serve as a stimulus or trigger for emotions to arise. These cards contain various situations that are relevant to the students' experiences, especially post-flood conditions, such as: 1) School is closed because of the flood; 2) Cannot play with friends because of the flood; 3) Cannot go to school because the roads are flooded; 4) School books and assignments are wet due to the flood; 5) School surroundings are dirty because of the flood; 6) House is flooded. Through these cards, participants are invited to imagine and respond to an event that can bring out emotional expression reactions. This way, students can more easily recognize, express, and understand the emotions that arise based on experiences or situations they have gone through.





**Figure 6. Emotion Expression Card**

The Emotion Expression Card contains various types of emotions that arise as a result of physical responses and individual interpretations of an event. The types of emotions used in developing the Emo Path Game are limited to emotions adapted from theories proposed by Robert Plutchik, Daniel Goleman, Carol Ryff, and Paul Ekman. This limitation aims to ensure that the types of emotions used align with the research objectives and the characteristics of students who are flood survivors, which include: the emotion theories of William James and Carl Lange regarding physiological responses to emotions, as well as a combination of emotion expression theories from Robert Plutchik, Daniel Goleman, Carol Ryff, and Paul Ekman.

From this theory, 27 types of emotions are identified, namely: 1) Joy; 2) Happiness; 3) Pleasure; 4) Delight; 5) Love; 6) Pride; 7) Awe; 8) Calm; 9) Acceptance; 10) Anticipation; 11) Moved; 12) Surprised; 13) Confused; 14) Awkward; 15) Bored; 16) Anxious; 17) Relieved; 18) Sad; 19) Disappointed; 20) Heartbroken; 21) Angry; 22) Curious; 23) Embarrassed; 24) Guilty; 25) Disgusted; 26) Nauseated; 27) Afraid. These components help students recognize, name, and express the emotions they feel after experiencing a certain event.



**Figure 7. Value Reflection Card**

The Values Reflection Card is the final component designed to provide reinforcement, moral lessons, and positive values to students. The values contained in this card include 1) supporting one another among friends; 2) working together to clean up the environment; 3) keeping yourself safe; 4) staying motivated to learn; 5) studying independently at home; 6) helping parents clean the house. This card is used by facilitators (guidance and counseling teachers/counselors) to give guidance, motivation, and support to students in reflecting on their emotional experiences in a wiser and more constructive way.

### **Use of the Product After the Development Process**

The Emo Path Game is systematically designed to illustrate the process of forming and expressing emotions through the direct experiences of students who survived floods during group counseling activities. The guidelines for using or playing the Emo Path Game are as follows: 1) Each group consists of 6 students and 1 facilitator, who is a guidance and counseling teacher/counselor; 2) Event cards are placed face down and stacked into a single pile; 3) Value reflection cards are held by the facilitator (guidance and counseling teacher/counselor); 4) Each participant receives 27 emotion cards; 5) Participants draw 1 event card from the pile; 6) Each participant is asked to express their emotions through facial expressions as if the event really

happened to them. 7) Each participant is asked to choose and show the emotion expression card that matches their feelings, then explain why they chose that card. 8) After all participants have shown their emotion expression cards, the counselor/guidance teacher displays a value reflection card that corresponds to the event that occurred. 9) The counselor/guidance teacher then provides motivation and encouragement to the students based on the content of the value reflection card they received.

### **Feasibility and Practicality Test**

Here are the results of the feasibility and practicality tests of the educational media Game Emo Path based on assessments conducted by media experts, material experts, and students in group counseling services.

### **Material Validation**

Material validation in the Emo Path Game involves three expert validators, namely Alfin Siregar, Humairah Mustika, and Della Pelita, who are lecturers in the Islamic Education Guidance and Counseling Study Program. The results of the material experts' validation calculations are presented as follows.

**Table 2. Results of Content Expert Validation**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Feasibility Category</b>
<b>Material Relevance Aspect</b>	14.6	97.3%	Highly Feasible
<b>Visual Suitability Aspect</b>	13.3	88.6%	Highly Feasible
<b>Suitability to Students' Characteristics</b>	13.5	90.0%	Highly Feasible
<b>Clarity of Card Content</b>	13.5	90.0%	Highly Feasible
<b>Usefulness of the Material</b>	15.0	100%	Highly Feasible
<b>Average Percentage</b>	<b>69.9/75 × 100%</b>	<b>93.2%</b>	<b>Highly Feasible</b>

Based on the material expert validation results, the Emo Path educational game media obtained an average feasibility percentage of 93.2%, which falls into the Highly Feasible category. The highest score was achieved in the usefulness of the material aspect, with a percentage of 100%, indicating that the content is highly beneficial for supporting students' emotional expression in group counseling services. Other aspects also received very high ratings, including material relevance (97.3%), suitability to students' characteristics (90.0%), clarity of card content (90.0%), and visual suitability (88.6%). These findings indicate that the Emo Path educational game media is highly appropriate for use as a counseling medium and meets both content and design requirements.

### **Media Validation**

Media validation in the Emo Path Game involves three expert validators, namely Manna Wasalwa, Aufa, and Fitria Umami, who are lecturers and staff of the Islamic Education Guidance and Counseling Study Program. The results of the media expert validation calculations are presented as follows.

**Table 3. Media Expert Validation Results**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Feasibility Category</b>
<b>Display Design Aspect</b>	14.6	97.3%	Highly Feasible
<b>Visual Quality Aspect</b>	14.2	94.6%	Highly Feasible
<b>Color and Readability Aspect</b>	13.8	92.0%	Highly Feasible
<b>Clarity of Card Content</b>	14.2	94.6%	Highly Feasible
<b>Media Attractiveness</b>	13.9	92.6%	Highly Feasible
<b>Average Percentage</b>	<b>70.7/75 × 100%</b>	<b>94.2%</b>	<b>Highly Feasible</b>

The qualitative data obtained from media experts provided several improvement suggestions, namely fixing the background of the front cover of the Emo Path Game box (game title) and adding the name of the game creator. Based on the media feasibility assessment results, an average percentage of 94.2% was obtained, which falls into the "very feasible" category.

#### **Practicality Test of the Emo Path Game**

The practicality test of the Emo Path Game was carried out with students on April 14, 2026, at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan. This trial involved 18 students as respondents to find out the practicality and feasibility of the Emo Path Game in helping students who are flood survivors express their emotions.

**Table 4. Practicality Test Results Based on Flood-Affected Students' Responses**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Practicality Category</b>
<b>Interest in the Game</b>	13.5	90.0%	Highly Practical
<b>Ease of Use</b>	13.2	89.3%	Highly Practical
<b>Emotional Understanding</b>	13.0	86.6%	Highly Practical
<b>Active Participation in Group Counseling</b>	13.3	88.6%	Highly Practical
<b>Usefulness</b>	12.7	84.6%	Highly Practical
<b>Average Percentage</b>	<b>65.9/75 × 100%</b>	<b>87.8%</b>	<b>Highly Practical</b>

Based on the evaluation results from students as users, an average percentage of 87.8% was obtained, which falls into the "very practical" category. Based on the percentages obtained from material experts, media experts, and student responses, it can be concluded that the Emo Path Game is in the very practical category and suitable for use. The results of the development research on the educational media Emo Path Game show that students who survived flooding have a very high need for guidance and counseling media that is interactive, communicative, and able to help them express their emotions more openly. This condition is closely related to the psychological impacts often experienced by students after facing natural disasters, such as fear, anxiety, sadness, trauma, and difficulty expressing their feelings to others.

In this context, group counseling services need media innovations that not only serve as counseling tools but also as therapeutic media that can create a sense of safety and comfort for students. Therefore, developing the educational media Game Emo Path becomes a relevant alternative to help students flood survivors recognize, understand, and healthily express their emotions.

## **Discussion**

The research results show that students who survived the flood have a very high need for group counseling media that can help them recognize, understand, and express their emotions more openly. This finding is reflected in the needs analysis results, which show that all students responded positively to the development of the Game Emo Path media, with approval percentages ranging from 61.1% to 72.2%. The high level of need indicates that flood-affected students require a service approach that not only focuses on delivering information but also facilitates psychological recovery and emotional expression after a disaster.

This finding aligns with research (Rees & Friedman, 2024) which states that children and teenagers who experience natural disasters are vulnerable to emotional disturbances such as anxiety, fear, sadness, loss of a sense of security, and even trauma that can affect their social, emotional, and academic development. Similarly, Priyadarshini & Jose (2025) explain that floods not only cause physical and material losses but also have a significant impact on the psychological condition of victims, especially school-aged children who are still at a stage of dynamic emotional development.

The high demand from students for educational media shows that group counseling services, which so far tend to use lecture methods and verbal communication, have not fully been able to meet the emotional needs of students who survived the flood. This finding supports the opinion (Praharani, Pramudyani, Puspitasari, & Nuraini, 2025), which states that the effectiveness of group counseling is greatly influenced by the counselor's ability to create a group atmosphere that is safe, comfortable, and supportive of members being open. In the context of students who survived floods, this atmosphere becomes even more important because many students have difficulty directly expressing their emotional experiences. Therefore, media that can naturally and safely facilitate emotional communication are needed.

The development of the Emo Path Game in this study is based on the principle that games are a natural means for children and teenagers to learn, interact, and express their emotional experiences. In the study (Waters et al., 2022; Nur' Aini, Esterilita, & Rochman, 2024) explaining that playing is a child's natural language, which allows them to express thoughts, feelings, and experiences that are difficult to convey through verbal communication. Through play activities, individuals can symbolically express inner conflicts, fears, anxieties, and traumatic experiences, making them easier to understand and accept. This aligns with research findings showing that 68.5% of students strongly agree and 31.5% agree that play media helps them express emotions after experiencing a flood. These findings indicate that Game Emo Path functions as an expressive medium that helps students connect disaster experiences with the emotions they feel.

The success of the Emo Path Game in facilitating emotional expression can also be explained through emotional intelligence theory. According to Goleman (2006) and Liu, Yu, Xu, Zhao, & Guo (2022), the ability to recognize and understand emotions is the main foundation in developing emotional intelligence. Individuals who can recognize their emotions will find it easier to manage stress, build healthy social relationships, and adapt to various life situations. In the Game Emo Path, students are not only asked to name the emotions they feel but also to understand the causes of those emotions through event cards based on real post-flood experiences. This process helps students build emotional awareness, which is the first step in emotion regulation.

The findings of this study are also in line with the emotion regulation theory proposed by Xyngkou et al. (2023) and Fusar-Poli et al. (2024), which explains that the ability to identify and label emotions is an important step in managing emotions in a healthy way. Students who can

recognize the emotions they are feeling will find it easier to control their behavioral responses compared to those who don't understand what they are feeling. The presence of emotion expression cards in the Emo Path Game serves as a tool to help students recognize different types of emotions, both positive and negative, so they can understand their emotional experiences more comprehensively.

One of the main advantages of the Emo Path Game compared to previous media is that it's developed contextually based on the real experiences of students who survived floods. The event cards used don't contain general situations, but rather various experiences that students often face after floods, such as having their homes submerged, being unable to go to school, losing study materials, or having limited social interactions with peers. This contextual approach aligns with Vygotsky's constructivist theory, which emphasizes that learning becomes more meaningful when linked to the students' real experiences. Through this connection, students can more easily relate past experiences to the emotions that arise, making the reflection process deeper and more authentic.

In terms of service needs, the research results show that 72.2% of students strongly agree that educational games make group counseling services more interesting and fun. These findings reinforce the research results (Ye & Gao, 2025), which found that a game-based learning approach in group counseling services can increase students' participation, motivation, and emotional engagement during the service process. Research (Ameruddin, Berezina, & Yap, 2025) It also shows that card-assisted gamification techniques are effective in helping students recognize, manage, and express their emotions more openly. Therefore, using game elements in group counseling services not only engages students' interest but also strengthens the therapeutic process that happens during group activities.

The presence of value reflection cards in the Emo Path Game is an innovation that sets this medium apart from other educational games. After students identify and express the emotions they feel, they are invited to reflect on positive values such as resilience, teamwork, social care, responsibility, and the spirit of rising after experiencing a disaster. This reflection process aligns with the concept of psychological well-being proposed by Zhang, Zhang, Zhou, Zhang, & Gao (2024), which emphasizes the importance of an individual's ability to find positive meaning from difficult life experiences. Through this reflection, students not only understand the emotions they go through but also learn to build an adaptive attitude in dealing with life's challenges.

The media feasibility, which scored 93.2% from content experts and 94.2% from media experts, shows that the Emo Path Game has met the standards for developing good guidance and counseling media. According to Abdullateef, Ibraheem, & Abdulkareem (2025), Effective media must meet aspects of material suitability, content clarity, visual appeal, ease of use, and usefulness for users. The high validation scores indicate that these elements have been accommodated in the development of the Emo Path Game. In addition, the practicality test results, reaching 87.8%, show that this media is easy for students to use and can be implemented in group counseling services without significant obstacles. These findings are in line with the product practicality theory proposed by Abrutyn (2024), which states that a product is considered practical if it can be used easily, understood by users, and able to achieve its development goals.

Overall, the results of this study strengthen previous research that confirms educational games are an effective medium for supporting students' social and emotional development. The research shows that educational games can enhance social skills, learning engagement, and students' emotional regulation abilities. However, this study presents significant novelty because it develops a game specifically designed based on the emotional experiences of students who

survived floods. The integration of event cards, emotion expression cards, and value reflection cards in a single game series makes Emo Path Game not only an educational tool but also a therapeutic and psychosocial medium that helps students build emotional resilience after disasters. Thus, the Emo Path Game has the potential to become a relevant and practical innovation in school guidance and counseling services, especially for students who are dealing with traumatic situations caused by natural disasters.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study successfully developed the educational game media Game Emo Path as a suitable and practical group counseling tool to help students who are flood survivors recognize, understand, and express their emotions more adaptively. The needs analysis results showed that students really need interactive and fun media to support the post-disaster emotional expression process. This is supported by material expert validation at 93.2%, media expert validation at 94.2%, and student practicality test responses at 87.8%, all of which fall into the very feasible and very practical category. These findings suggest that Game Emo Path can be an innovative alternative media for guidance and counseling teachers in creating services that are more engaging, participatory, and supportive of students' psychosocial recovery. However, this study is still limited to the development and practicality testing stages without testing the product's effectiveness, involving a limited number of subjects, and using self-report instruments that could potentially cause response bias. Therefore, future research is recommended to test the effectiveness of the Emo Path Game through an experimental design, involving a larger sample, and using observation instruments and validated emotion expression scales to get a more comprehensive picture of the media's impact on students' emotional development.

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