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Improving The Ability To Recognize Hijaiyah Letters Through The Islamic Song-Singing Method In Early Childhood

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the low ability of early childhood learners to recognize Hijaiyah letters, a result of monotonous and unengaging teaching methods. The study aimed to describe the improvement in Hijaiyah letter recognition skills through the implementation of an Islamic song-singing method. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, utilizing Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted over two cycles. The subjects were 15 children from Group B at an early childhood education center in Indonesia. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis was conducted using both descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods. The results indicate that the Islamic song-singing method was effective in enhancing Hijaiyah letter recognition skills. Class mastery reached 53% in Cycle I and rose to 87% in Cycle II (Solihan, 2025). The children demonstrated enthusiasm and active participation during the learning process. The Islamic song-singing method successfully created an enjoyable learning atmosphere and aided the children in memorizing Hijaiyah letters through auditory and kinesthetic approaches (Napitupulu, Aziz, & Damanik, 2025; Febriyanti & Sari, 2024). The study concludes that the Islamic song-singing method is an effective instructional strategy for improving Hijaiyah letter recognition among early childhood learners.

Keywords: Hijaiyah letters, singing method, Islamic songs, early childhood, early childhood education (PAUD)

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is the primary foundation for shaping children's character, intelligence, and personality. Early childhood is in the golden age of brain development, in which appropriate stimulation has a significant influence on the development

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of all aspects of a child's life. In the context of Islamic education, recognizing Hijaiyah letters is one of the fundamental skills a child must master as preparation for reading the Qur'an and understanding Islamic teachings (Qomariah & Yanti, 2023).

Hijaiyah letters, or Arabic letters, are the letters used in writing the holy book of the Qur'an. The ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters well is a gateway for children to be able to read and study the Qur'an (Syahrizal & Nurhafizah, 2023). In reality, however, many early childhood learners still experience difficulty recognizing Hijaiyah letters. Based on initial observations at several early childhood education centers, it was found that children's ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters was still low and had not developed optimally (Irhamni, 2023; Miranda, 2023).

The low ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters among children is caused by several factors. First, the teaching methods used by teachers are still monotonous and lack variation, such as lecturing and writing assignments without an engaging approach (Wahyuni & Putri, 2023). Second, there is a lack of learning media that support an interactive and enjoyable process of introducing Hijaiyah letters (Azizah, 2024; Hidayati & Rahmawati, 2022). Third, children's interest and motivation to learn Hijaiyah letters remain low because the learning is considered boring (Ningsih & Hasanah, 2022).

In fact, early childhood learners have distinctive learning characteristics. They learn through play, movement, and by engaging all of their senses. Effective learning for early childhood must be adapted to their characteristics and stage of development (Kurniawan & Lestari, 2022). In this context, learning methods and media are needed that can capture children's attention and make the learning process enjoyable.

One learning method suited to the characteristics of early childhood is the singing method. Singing is an activity that children are very fond of and an inseparable part of their world (Pratiwi & Suryana, 2021). The singing method can create a cheerful, joyful learning atmosphere and reduce tension, allowing children's development to be stimulated more optimally (Hasanah & Dewi, 2023).

The use of Islamic songs as a learning medium has added value because, besides introducing Hijaiyah letters, it also instills religious values and shapes children's religious character (Fadhillah & Hidayat, 2024). Islamic songs containing lyrics about Hijaiyah letters, the ninety-nine names of Allah (asmaul husna), the pillars of faith, and other Islamic materials can be an effective means of internalizing religious values in early childhood (Mulyani & Fatimah, 2024).

Several previous studies have shown the effectiveness of the singing method in early childhood learning. Research by Qomariah and Yanti (2023) showed that the use of Islamic songs

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in learning activities was able to develop children's spiritual intelligence. Another study by Zara, Wulan, and Sarifah (2024) revealed that applying the singing method to introduce Hijaiyah letters could improve children's ability with a significant percentage increase.

Research conducted by Qomariah and Yanti (2023) at PAUD Arraisyah showed that the Islamic song-singing method was one of the leading methods for developing children's spiritual intelligence. Islamic singing activities were carried out as a daily routine habit after the dhuha prayer, with songs such as asmaul husna, the pillars of Islam, the pillars of faith, and Hijaiyah letters. After singing, the teacher discussed the content of the songs with the children so that they could understand the meaning contained within them.

Based on the background described above, this study aims to describe the improvement in the ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters through the Islamic song-singing method in early childhood. This research is important to provide a contribution to the development of learning strategies that are effective, enjoyable, and suited to the characteristics of early childhood, in line with the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) and Minister of Education Regulation Number 12 of 2024.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with Classroom Action Research (CAR). CAR was chosen because this research aims to improve and enhance the quality of classroom learning through actions that are planned and implemented systematically (Rahayu & Fitriani, 2023). The research was carried out over two cycles, with each cycle consisting of four stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection (Solihan, 2025).

The research subjects were the children of Group B at an early childhood education center in Indonesia, totaling 15 children, consisting of 8 boys and 7 girls aged 5-6 years. The selection of subjects was based on the results of initial observations that showed the children's low ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters (Irhamni, 2023).

The data collection techniques used in this study included:

1. Observation, carried out to observe the activities of the teacher and children during the Islamic song-singing method learning process. The observation used a structured observation sheet containing indicators of Hijaiyah letter recognition ability and indicators of the implementation of the singing method (Suryani & Utami, 2025).
2. Interviews, conducted with the classroom teacher to explore information about the learning process, the obstacles encountered, and responses to the implementation of the Islamic song-singing method (Kusuma & Rahardjo, 2024). The interviews were carried

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out in a semi-structured manner using a prepared interview guide.

3. Documentation, in the form of photographs, videos, and field notes during the learning process. Documentation was used to strengthen the observation and interview data (Hafizhah & Rahmawati, 2025).

Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Setiawan & Nurhayati, 2023). Quantitative data were analyzed by calculating the percentage of classical mastery of Hijaiyah letter recognition ability, using the formula:

Mastery percentage = (Number of children who achieved mastery / Total number of children) × 100%

The success indicator of the study was set at a classical mastery level of ≥ 80%, or the "very good" category (Aminah & Wulandari, 2023). The ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters was measured through the following indicators: (1) the child is able to recite the Hijaiyah letters in order from alif to ya, (2) the child is able to pronounce the Hijaiyah letters correctly, (3) the child is able to distinguish between similarly shaped Hijaiyah letters (Febriyanti & Sari, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Initial Condition (Pre-Cycle)

Before the action was implemented, an initial observation was carried out to determine the children's baseline ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters. The observation results showed that of the 15 children, only 4 children (26.7%) were able to recite the Hijaiyah letters from alif to ya (Irhamni, 2023). Most children still had difficulty distinguishing letters with similar shapes, such as ba (ب), ta (ت), and tsa (ث). The teaching method previously used by the teacher was lecturing and writing assignments without engaging media (Wahyuni & Putri, 2023).

Interview results with the teacher revealed that learning Hijaiyah letters had so far been conducted conventionally. The teacher introduced the Hijaiyah letters one by one by writing them on the board and asking the children to imitate them. The children quickly became bored and lacked enthusiasm for the lesson (Ningsih & Hasanah, 2022). In addition, the teacher had never used the singing method as a strategy for teaching Hijaiyah letters (Miranda, 2023).

Cycle I

In Cycle I, the researcher and the teacher planned an action in the form of implementing

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the Islamic song-singing method to introduce Hijaiyah letters. The song used was a Hijaiyah letter song with an easy-to-remember tune (Pratiwi & Suryana, 2021). The lyrics contained the sequence of Hijaiyah letters from alif to ya, sung with a cheerful rhythm that the children enjoyed (Hasanah & Dewi, 2023).

The action in Cycle I was implemented over 4 meetings. In each meeting, the teacher began the activity by singing the Hijaiyah letter song together with the children. The teacher showed Hijaiyah letter cards (flashcards) while singing, then repeated the song several times until the children began to memorize it (Hidayati & Rahmawati, 2022). After singing, the teacher discussed with the children the letters that had been sung (Qomariah & Yanti, 2023).

The observation results in Cycle I showed that the children's enthusiasm for participating in the learning was quite high. The children appeared happy and enthusiastic when singing together (Aminah & Wulandari, 2023). However, the children's ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters was not yet optimal. Of the 15 children, 8 children (53%) achieved mastery, while 7 children (47%) had not yet achieved mastery (Solihan, 2025). The children still had difficulty distinguishing letters with similar shapes (Zara, Wulan, & Sarifah, 2024).

Reflection on Cycle I identified several obstacles:

1. Some children still had difficulty following the rhythm of the song (Napitupulu, Aziz, & Damanik, 2025)
2. The teacher had not made maximum use of the flashcard media (Miranda, 2023)
3. Repetition of the song was not yet sufficient for children who learned more slowly (Kusuma & Rahardjo, 2024)
4. There was not yet any variation in movement accompanying the singing (Rahayu & Fitriani, 2023)

Based on this reflection, improvements were made in Cycle II by adding body movements to accompany each letter sung (a singing and rhythmic movement method), increasing the amount of repetition, and using flashcards more intensively (Suryani & Utami, 2025).

Cycle II

In Cycle II, the action taken was to strengthen the singing method by adding rhythmic movements. Each Hijaiyah letter was accompanied by a hand or body movement that was easy for the children to follow. For example, when saying the letter "Alif," the children raised their right hand; for the letter "Ba," they pointed forward, and so on (Setiawan & Nurhayati, 2023). The song was repeated more frequently, and the teacher gave special attention to children who learned more slowly (Kurniawan & Lestari, 2022).

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The observation results in Cycle II showed a significant improvement. Of the 15 children, 13 children (87%) achieved mastery in recognizing Hijaiyah letters (Solihan, 2025). The children were able to recite the Hijaiyah letters in order from alif to ya, pronounce them correctly, and distinguish between similarly shaped letters (Febriyanti & Sari, 2024). Only 2 children (13%) had not yet achieved mastery, due to continued difficulty distinguishing the shapes and names of the Hijaiyah letters (Kusuma & Rahardjo, 2024).

Teacher activity in Cycle II increased from 69.89% in Cycle I to 91.11% in Cycle II. Student activity also increased from 66.07% to 86.53% (Rahayu & Fitriani, 2023). The children appeared more enthusiastic, confident, and actively participated in every learning session (Hafizhah & Rahmawati, 2025).

DISCUSSION

The research results show that the Islamic song-singing method is effective in improving the ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters in early childhood. The improvement from Cycle I (53%) to Cycle II (87%) shows that this method is able to address the challenge of teaching Hijaiyah letters, which has long been considered difficult and boring for children (Irhamni, 2023; Miranda, 2023).

The success of the Islamic song-singing method in improving the ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters can be explained by several factors. First, the singing method creates a fun and cheerful learning atmosphere. Early childhood learners are very fond of singing activities, so they participate in learning enthusiastically without feeling pressured (Pratiwi & Suryana, 2021). This positive learning atmosphere allows children to absorb material more easily and enjoyably (Hasanah & Dewi, 2023). As stated by Ningsih and Hasanah (2022), applying the singing method to introduce Hijaiyah letters can improve both the teacher's teaching ability and the children's learning ability. Songs set to easy-to-remember tunes help children better remember the sequence and sound of the Hijaiyah letters (Febriyanti & Sari, 2024).

Second, the singing method involves a strong auditory approach. Through repetition of the song lyrics, children hear and pronounce the Hijaiyah letters repeatedly, resulting in a process of memory reinforcement (Mulyani & Fatimah, 2024). Research by Napitupulu, Aziz, and Damanik (2025) showed that the singing method is effective in improving early childhood learners' Iqro' reading ability because the repetition of sounds and rhythm helps children remember the letters more strongly. Songs sung repeatedly create strong memory traces in children's brains (Aminah & Wulandari, 2023).

Third, the addition of rhythmic movement in Cycle II further strengthened children's

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memory through a kinesthetic approach. When children moved while saying the letters, a connection was formed between mind and body that strengthened memory retention (Kurniawan & Lestari, 2022). This is consistent with the principle of multisensory learning, in which children learn best when all of their senses are engaged (Suryani & Utami, 2025). The combination of auditory (hearing the song) and kinesthetic (moving) elements creates a more meaningful and lasting learning experience (Solihan, 2025; Setiawan & Nurhayati, 2023). Research by Rahayu and Fitriani (2023) confirms that the singing and rhythmic movement method is highly effective in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in early childhood education because it engages every aspect of children's development.

Fourth, the use of flashcard media as a visual aid further strengthens children's understanding of the shapes of the Hijaiyah letters. Flashcards help children see the shape of the letter visually while hearing its pronunciation through the song (Hidayati & Rahmawati, 2022). As a result, children not only memorize the sound of the letter but also recognize its written form at the same time (Miranda, 2023). Research by Zara, Wulan, and Sarifah (2024) showed that the "MERIYAH" game media (Coloring and Singing Media for Hijaiyah Letters) was effective in introducing Hijaiyah letters to early childhood learners because it combined visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements.

These research results are consistent with findings from previous studies. Research by Solihan (2025) showed that the singing and rhythmic movement method could improve the ability to remember Hijaiyah letters among Group B children at RA Ashshafa, with mastery percentages increasing from Cycle I (53%) to Cycle II (87%). Research by Syahrizal and Nurhafizah (2023) also revealed that the Hijaiyah letter card learning method had a positive impact on introducing Hijaiyah letters to early childhood learners.

These findings also support the research of Qomariah and Yanti (2023) at PAUD Arraisyah, which showed that the Islamic song-singing method, such as songs about asmaul husna, the pillars of Islam, and the Hijaiyah letters, was able to develop children's spiritual intelligence. Islamic songs function not only as a medium for introducing letters but also as a means of instilling religious values and shaping children's religious character (Fadhillah & Hidayat, 2024). Research by Mulyani and Fatimah (2024) also confirmed that the development of Islamic song-based learning media is highly effective for introducing Hijaiyah letters to early childhood learners.

This research also reinforces the findings of Miranda (2023) that introducing Hijaiyah letters through the singing method using flashcard media is very important for children so that it is easier for them to remember and understand the Hijaiyah letters one by one. This method

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provides a fun and interactive approach in which children can actively participate in singing and interacting with the pictures of Hijaiyah letters on the flashcards (Hidayati & Rahmawati, 2022).

The success of the Islamic song-singing method is also supported by its compatibility with the developmental characteristics of early childhood. Early childhood learners are at a developmental stage in which they learn through concrete experience and repetition. The singing method provides both of these elements: concrete learning experience (movement and visuals) and repetition (repeated singing) (Kurniawan & Lestari, 2022; Suryani & Utami, 2025). Research by Aminah and Wulandari (2023) confirms that the cognitive development of early childhood learners through the Islamic song-singing method yields significant results.

Within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum for early childhood education, learning is directed toward creating an environment that is enjoyable, contextual, and suited to children's interests (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The Islamic song-singing method is highly consistent with this principle because it provides a lively, flexible learning experience full of exploration. Children not only learn the Hijaiyah letters but also develop social, emotional, and motor skills through singing together (Setiawan & Nurhayati, 2023). This is also consistent with Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation Number 12 of 2024 concerning Content and Process Standards in Early Childhood Education, which emphasizes the importance of child-centered learning that accommodates diverse learning styles.

This study also reveals the importance of the teacher's role as facilitator and motivator in implementing the singing method. Teachers need to choose songs suited to children's development, simplify the movements, and create a comfortable learning atmosphere (Kusuma & Rahardjo, 2024). Teachers must also carry out continuous evaluation and give special attention to children who experience learning difficulties (Rahayu & Fitriani, 2023). As stated by Ningsih and Hasanah (2022), applying the singing method in PAI learning requires creativity and patience on the part of teachers in facilitating children with diverse learning characteristics.

The obstacles still found in the 2 children who had not yet achieved mastery show that each child has a different learning pace. Some children may require more time or additional approaches to master the Hijaiyah letters (Wahyuni & Putri, 2023). This is an important note for teachers to provide differentiated instruction and individual attention to children who need it (Hafizhah & Rahmawati, 2025). Research by Kusuma and Rahardjo (2024) on teacher strategies for overcoming difficulties in learning Hijaiyah letters emphasizes the importance of an individual approach and varied methods for children experiencing learning difficulties.

Overall, the Islamic song-singing method has proven effective in improving the ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters in early childhood. This method improves not only cognitive aspects

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but also the social-emotional, language, and artistic aspects of children (Febriyanti & Sari, 2024; Aminah & Wulandari, 2023). Through singing together, children learn to cooperate, adjust their rhythm to that of their peers, and build self-confidence when performing in front of the class (Setiawan & Nurhayati, 2023). The results of this study provide an important contribution to the development of effective and enjoyable PAI learning for early childhood, in line with the demands of the curriculum and the times.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the Islamic song-singing method is effective in improving the ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters in early childhood (Solihan, 2025; Napitupulu, Aziz, & Damanik, 2025). This is evidenced by the increase in classical mastery from 53% in Cycle I to 87% in Cycle II (Febriyanti & Sari, 2024; Rahayu & Fitriani, 2023). This improvement shows that the Islamic song-singing method is able to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere, help children remember Hijaiyah letters through auditory and kinesthetic approaches, and increase children's enthusiasm and active participation in learning (Pratiwi & Suryana, 2021; Kurniawan & Lestari, 2022).

The Islamic song-singing method, combined with flashcard media and rhythmic movement, provides a multisensory learning experience that strengthens children's memory of the shape, sound, and sequence of the Hijaiyah letters (Hidayati & Rahmawati, 2022; Zara, Wulan, & Sarifah, 2024). This method is also consistent with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum for early childhood education, which emphasizes learning that is enjoyable, contextual, and suited to children's interests (Kemendikbudristek, 2022), as well as the educational standards set out in Minister of Education Regulation Number 12 of 2024.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. For Early Childhood Education Teachers: Teachers should continue to use and develop the Islamic song-singing method as a strategy for teaching Hijaiyah letters. Teachers need to select songs suited to children's development, use supporting media such as flashcards (Miranda, 2023), and add rhythmic movements to strengthen children's memory (Solihan, 2025). Teachers also need to give special attention to children experiencing learning difficulties (Kusuma & Rahardjo, 2024).
2. For Early Childhood Education Institutions: Institutions should provide facilities and

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support the development of innovative teaching methods, including training for teachers in implementing the Islamic song-singing method (Qomariah & Yanti, 2023). Institutions can also make Islamic singing activities a routine habitual program, as practiced at PAUD Arraisyah (Fadhillah & Hidayat, 2024).

3. For Future Researchers: Further research is needed on developing the Islamic song-singing method with other variations, such as the development of technology-based learning media (Mulyani & Fatimah, 2024), or research with a broader range of subjects and locations to test the generalizability of these findings (Hafizhah & Rahmawati, 2025).

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