

## **EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE RECOGNITION OF HIJAIYAH LETTERS THROUGH THE TILAWATI METHOD IN GROUP A CHILDREN AT ABA 55 KINDERGARTEN IN SEMARANG**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve the ability to recognize hijaiyah letters in Group A children at ABA 55 Semarang Kindergarten through the application of the Tilawati method. The background of this research is the low ability of children to recognize and pronounce hijaiyah letters, which is caused by learning methods that are less interesting and not in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development. Learning that is monotonous and less varied causes children to get bored easily and not focus on recognizing hijaiyah letters. Therefore, a more interactive, fun, and appropriate approach is needed for the child's developmental stages. This study uses the Kemmis and McTaggart model Class Action Research (PTK) approach, which is carried out in two cycles. Each cycle consists of four stages, namely planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. The subjects in this study were 7 children aged 4–5 years who were members of Group A. Data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and performance assessment. The results of the study showed a significant increase in children's ability to recognize hijaiyah letters. In the initial condition (pre-action), only 28.57% of children were in the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) category. This percentage increased to 71.43% in cycle I, and reached 85.7% in cycle II. These findings prove that the Tilawati method is effectively used in improving the recognition of hijaiyah letters in early childhood, especially in the context of Islamic religious learning in kindergarten.

**Keywords:** hijaiyah letters, Tilawati method, early childhood, ABA kindergarten, religious learning.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Islamic religious education in early childhood plays a strategic role in forming the foundation of faith, noble morals, and spiritual character of children from an early age. In the golden age of child development, proper stimulation through habituation of Islamic values is very important so that it is firmly embedded and becomes a guideline in their lives in the future. One of the basic skills in religious education that needs to be introduced from an early age is the ability to read the Qur'an, which begins with the introduction of hijaiyah letters. This ability is not only important as a provision for reading the Qur'an, but also supports the development of early literacy rooted in religious values [1].

However, the results of initial observations at ABA 55 Kindergarten in Semarang show that most of the children in Group A have difficulty in recognizing the shape and pronouncing the names of hijaiyah letters correctly. Children do not seem to be able to distinguish the shape of

the letters visually and are not phonetically trained in pronouncing them. This low ability has implications for delays in the learning process of reading the Qur'an. This problem is suspected to be caused by the lack of variety of learning methods used, the lack of interesting learning media, and the lack of an approach that is in accordance with early childhood learning styles that tend to be visual, auditory, and kinesthetic [2]. Children also seem to be less enthusiastic, easily bored, and inactive in the learning process.

In this context, the Tilawati method is seen as a potential solution. This method is an approach to learning to read the Qur'an that combines the principle of tartil, classical and individual learning, and the use of distinctive rhythms that attract children's attention [3]. The distinctive feature of Tilawati lies in the use of multisensory learning techniques that activate hearing, vision, and movement (*multi-sense*), as well as the presentation of material in a repetitive and fun manner through songs and interactive patterns. This approach is believed to be in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development and is able to increase their involvement in learning.

Several previous studies have proven the effectiveness of the Tilawati method in improving the ability to read the Qur'an and recognize hijaiyah letters. Research by Aisyah, Yuliati, and Munawaroh (2020) shows that the application of the Tilawati method significantly improves children's ability to recognize hijaiyah letters through a fun and interactive approach [4].

In addition, Nurhidayati (2019) also proved that this method is able to improve children's phonetic ability in reading hijaiyah letters through rhythm and repetition in accordance with early childhood learning styles [5]. Meanwhile, Ramadani and Ma'ruf (2021) concluded that the Tilawati method not only helps to introduce hijaiyah letters, but also increases children's focus and active participation during the learning process [6].

Based on this background, the problem to be answered in this study is how to improve the recognition of hijaiyah letters through the Tilawati method in Group A children at ABA 55 Semarang Kindergarten. The purpose of this study is to find out the effectiveness of the Tilawati method in improving children's ability to recognize and pronounce hijaiyah letters accurately and pleasantly. Meanwhile, the novelty of this research is the integration of the Tilawati method with multisensory learning media (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) systematically in the design of two-cycle PTK. The design of learning media formulated in this study (picture letter cards, Tilawati rhythm audio, hijaiyah letter puzzles) shows innovations in strengthening Tilawati principles through media enrichment that is in accordance with early childhood learning styles.

Theoretically, this research is based on the constructivism approach, which emphasizes that children build their knowledge through direct experience and active interaction with the environment, as well as the auditory-visual-kinesthetic (VAK) learning theory that underlies the importance of using various sensory modalities in the early childhood learning process. This research is expected to contribute to the development of a more innovative Islamic religious learning model and in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood students in the PAUD environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Researcher Anwar (2023) stated that the position of Islamic education is higher than other general education, even though in principle Islamic religious education has relevance to general education. However, morally Islamic religious education is higher because it can place degrees and existence. [7]. In line with this, the introduction of hijaiyah letters is one of the important aspects of Islamic religious education in early childhood as a basic provision for reading the Qur'an. In the early childhood developmental stage, known as the preoperational period according to Piaget, learning should be carried out with an approach that involves concrete and multisensory experiences so that children can understand and remember the

material well [8]. According to Nizar (2019), effective hijaiyah letter recognition must include visual aspects in the form of letter recognition, auditory aspects through proper pronunciation, and reinforcement with fun activities such as games and singing [9]. This is in line with the VAK (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic) theory which states that children learn better if the learning process involves various senses simultaneously [10].

The Tilawati method is one of the approaches to learning to read the Qur'an that integrates tartil techniques, classical and individual learning, and the use of distinctive rhythms that attract children's attention. This method utilizes multisensory techniques that encourage the involvement of hearing, vision, and movement in the learning process so that it is more easily accepted by early childhood [11]. This approach also emphasizes repetition and fun interaction between teachers and students, so that it can increase children's motivation and learning outcomes.

Several studies have proven the effectiveness of the Tilawati method in improving the ability to recognize and read hijaiyah letters in children. Isnaini (2022) found that the Tilawati method was able to significantly improve the ability to read hijaiyah letters of children aged 5–6 years [12]. Research by Maulida et al. (2023) shows that the application of the Tilawati method in PAUD can increase children's participation in learning the Qur'an and help them to get to know the hijaiyah letters better [13]. Sari and Maulana (2021) also reported that the use of the Tilawati method increased motivation and perseverance in learning to read the Qur'an rhythmically [14]. In addition, Hidayat (2020) proves that the Tilawati method is more effective than the iqro method in terms of pronunciation and recognition of hijaiyah letter forms [15]. However, most of these studies are still limited to children aged 5–6 years and the RA/MI level, while research that focuses on children aged 4–5 years, especially in kindergarten, is still very minimal. Therefore, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of Islamic religious learning strategies that are more innovative and in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood students in kindergarten.

## METHOD

This research is a Classroom Action Research (PTK) with a descriptive quantitative approach combined with qualitative analysis. PTK was chosen because it provides opportunities for teachers and researchers to make learning improvements in a reflective, systematic, and sustainable manner. The research was carried out in two cycles with reference to the action spiral model from Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which includes the stages of planning, acting, *observing*, and reflecting [16]. The main purpose of this study is to improve the ability to recognize hijaiyah letters through the application of the Tilawati method which is multisensory and rhythm-based, in harmony with the characteristics of early childhood learning. The quantitative approach is used to measure the increase in children's learning outcomes numerically, while the qualitative approach describes the learning process and dynamics in depth to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the actions taken.

This research was carried out at ABA 55 Semarang Kindergarten, an Islamic-based early childhood education institution. The subjects of the study were all 7 children of Group A, consisting of 1 boy and 6 girls, with an age range of 4–5 years. Subjects were selected purposively based on the results of initial observation and formative evaluation which showed that the children had difficulty in recognizing hijaiyah letters [17]. The selection of subjects and locations is based on the relevance of the context to the research objective, which is to improve early religious literacy as a foundation for reading the Qur'an at the next level of education. Children aged 4–5 years are also in the *golden age* of development, where the right stimulation will have a long-term impact on their academic and spiritual aspects.

The research design follows the principle of action spiral with two cycles. In the planning stage, the researcher compiled a learning scenario using the Tilawati method, designed media, prepared observation instruments and evaluation formats. The implementation stage involves learning activities in the classroom by applying the Tilawati method directly. Observations were carried out systematically to record children's involvement, their response to learning, and mastery of hijaiyah letters based on predetermined indicators. Reflection is then conducted at the end of each cycle to evaluate the effectiveness of the action, identify bottlenecks, and devise strategy improvements for the next cycle. This approach allows for flexible learning modifications, as well as encouraging the realization of reflective practices that are oriented towards improving the quality of learning.

Data collection techniques are carried out through direct observation, documentation, and assessment of children's performance. Observation is used to monitor the process and development of children during learning, by using observation sheets based on indicators of the ability to recognize hijaiyah letters, starting from differentiating, mentioning, to visually recognizing letter shapes. Documentation in the form of photos, videos, and teachers' diaries is used as supporting data in the qualitative analysis process. Performance assessments are carried out individually to measure children's ability to recognize and pronounce hijaiyah letters through direct practice. All instruments have been logically validated and compiled based on the principles of authentic assessment in accordance with the Independent Early Childhood Education Curriculum.

The learning media used in the application of the Tilawati method include colored and illustrated hijaiyah letter cards to stimulate children's visuals, colorful whiteboards and markers to clarify the shape of the letters, as well as audio recordings of the Tilawati method with distinctive tones to support children's auditory memory. In addition, illustrative pictures and kinesthetic aids such as letter puzzles or letter matching games are also used to stimulate motor movements. The entire medium is designed to support a multisensory approach combining the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses that has proven effective in helping early childhood understand abstract concepts in a concrete and fun way. [18].

Data analysis was carried out using quantitative and qualitative descriptive approaches. Quantitative analysis was carried out by calculating the percentage of children's developmental achievement based on developmental criteria: Not Yet Developed (BB), Starting to Develop (MB), Developing According to Expectations (BSH), and Developing Very Well (BSB). The success of the action is determined if at least 80% of the child reaches the BSH or BSB category at the end of cycle II [19]. Meanwhile, qualitative analysis was carried out on observation data, documentation, and teachers' reflection notes to understand changes in children's behavior, emotional responses, and involvement in the learning process. Data from various sources were analyzed triangulatively to increase the validity of the findings. The validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation of techniques and sources, involving partner teachers and principals in the reflection process, and consultation with PAUD experts to ensure the validity of the content of the instruments. This approach aims to ensure that the results of the study not only illustrate the increase in numerical achievements, but also show a meaningful and contextual learning process [20].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to improve the ability to recognize hijaiyah letters through the application of the Tilawati method in Group A children at ABA 55 Semarang Kindergarten. The research was carried out in two action cycles, each of which consisted of the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The data collection techniques used in this study are observation, documentation, and performance assessment. The data obtained were

analyzed in a quantitative descriptive manner based on the achievement of the indicators that had been determined at each stage.

### Pre-Action Results

Pre-action is carried out to determine the child's initial ability to recognize hijaiyah letters before being given treatment through the Tilawati method. Pre-action activities are carried out classically using conventional learning methods that are usually carried out by teachers in the classroom.

**Table 1.1 Results of the Percentage of Pre-Action activities**

Yes	Information	Sum Child	Result
1.	Not Yet Developed (BB)	5	71,43%
2.	Growing Up With Expectations (BSH)	2	28,57%
3.	Very Well Developed (BSB)	0	0%
Number of Children sum		7	100%

Based on the results of observations at the pre-action stage, it can be seen that most children have not shown mastery in recognizing hijaiyah letters. A total of 5 children (71.43%) were in the Undeveloped (BB) category, which is not able to distinguish and pronounce hijaiyah letters correctly. Only 2 children (28.57%) achieved the Developing as Expected (BSH) category. In addition, children also seem less enthusiastic in participating in activities, are easily distracted, and get bored quickly. The learning atmosphere tends to be monotonous and less interactive.

This condition shows that the learning approach used previously is not in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood learning which requires active, fun, and multi-sensory methods. According to Piaget, 4–5-year-olds are still in the preoperational stage, where they are more likely to understand things through concrete and visual experiences. Therefore, a more interesting and developmentally appropriate approach is needed to improve their engagement and learning outcomes.

### Results of Cycle I

After it was known that the results of the pre-action were not satisfactory, action was taken in the first cycle by applying the Tilawati method. Learning is focused on the recognition of hijaiyah letters through rhythmic activities, repetition of pronunciation, and visualization of letter forms using picture card media.

**Table 2.1 Results of Cycle I Activity Percentage**

Yes	Information	Sum Child	Result
1.	Not Yet Developed (BB)	2	28,57%
2.	Growing Up With Expectations (BSH)	5	71,43%
3.	Very Well Developed (BSB)	0	0%
<b>Number of Children sum</b>		7	100%

The results in the first cycle showed a significant increase compared to the pre-action stage. A total of 5 children (71.43%) have reached the category (Developing As Expected (BSH), while 2 children (28.57%) are still in the Not Developing (BB) category, despite showing progress in terms of activeness and attention during learning activities. The children seemed to start to get enthusiastic when they said the hijaiyah letters out loud to the rhythm of Tilawati, and began to remember the letter forms even though they were not completely correct.

This increase occurred because the Tilawati method combines a multisensory approach, which involves hearing (*audio*), sight (*visual*), and movement (*kinesthetic*). Tilawati activities that are repetitive but fun have proven to be more in line with early childhood learning styles. Children become more focused and enthusiastic when learning. In addition, the use of rhythm or tone when reciting letters makes it easier for children to remember and imitate.

However, not all children reach the expected category. Therefore, it is necessary to modify and improve the strategy in cycle II so that the results are more optimal.

### **Results of Cycle II**

In cycle II, learning is improved in terms of the variety of activities and media used. The teacher added educational games such as matching hijaiyah letter cards with pictures that have the initial letters, as well as increasing repetition with rhythm variations. Teachers also provide more opportunities for children to appear in front of the class, as well as positive reinforcement in the form of praise and star stickers for children who dare to try.

**Table 3.1 Results Percentage of Cycle II Activities**

Yes	Information	Sum Child	Result
1.	Not Yet Developed (BB)	1	14,3%



2.	Growing Up With Expectations (BSH)	6	85,3%
3.	Very Well Developed (BSB)	0	0%
<b>Number of Children sum</b>		7	100%

The observation results showed that as many as 6 children (85.7%) had reached the Developing As Expected (BSH) category, while 1 child (14.3%) was still in the Not Developing (BB) category, despite showing an improvement in quality. Children look more confident, active, and able to recognize and pronounce hijaiyah letters correctly in various game and question and answer contexts.

The success of the second cycle shows that the application of the Tilawati method which is carried out consistently and varied with a fun approach is very effective in improving the ability to recognize hijaiyah letters in early childhood. Children show development in terms of cognitive (ability to recognize letters), affective (enthusiastic learning), and psychomotor (pointing or writing letters correctly).

#### Recapitulation of the Results of Pre-Action Activities, Cycle I, and Cycle II

In the recapitulation of the results of pre-action activities, cycle I, and cycle II, observations were made on the development of children's ability to recognize hijaiyah letters through the application of the Tilawati method. Each child is categorized into three levels of developmental achievement, namely: Not Yet Developed (BB), Developing as Expected (BSH), and Developing Very Well (BSB). Children are said to be complete if they reach the BSH or BSB category. The results of the recapitulation of child development are presented as follows:

**Table 4.1 Table of Recapitulation of Hijaiyah Letter Introduction Results Pre-Action Activities, Cycle I, and Cycle II**

Yes	Stages of Activity	Number of Children	Not Yet Developed (BB)	Growing Up With Expectations (BSH)	Very Well Developed (BSB)	Number of Children Complete (BSH)	Completion Percentage Result (%)
1.	Pre-Actions	7	5	2	0	2	28,57%
2.	Cycle I	7	2	5	0	5	71,43%
3.	Cycle II	7	1	6	0	6	85,3%

The above results show a significant increase. In the pre-action, only 2 out of 7 children (28.57%) achieved completeness. After actions were taken in the first cycle, the completeness

increased to 71.43%. Then in cycle II, completeness increased further to reach 85.4%. This shows that the Tilawati method is effectively able to improve the ability to recognize hijaiyah letters in Group A children at ABA 55 Semarang Kindergarten.

This improvement shows the effectiveness of the Tilawati method in stimulating children's visual and auditory memory. Fun activities make children more active and enthusiastic in participating in learning. This is in line with the findings of Isnaini (2022) that the Tilawati method strengthens children's memory of the reading of hijaiyah letters through repetition and direct interaction [21].

In addition, these results also support the research of Maulida et al. (2023) who found that the Tilawati method is able to improve children's Qur'an reading ability at an early age due to its systematic presentation and in accordance with children's learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) [22].

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of class action research conducted in two cycles, it can be concluded that the application of the Tilawati method is effective in improving the recognition of hijaiyah letters in Group A children at ABA 55 Semarang Kindergarten. This is evidenced by the improvement of children's learning outcomes at each stage.

In the pre-action, observations showed that only 2 children (28.57%) were classified as Developing As Expected (BSH), while 5 children (71.43%) were still in the Undeveloped (BB) category. After the application of the Tilawati method in cycle I, there was a significant increase, with 5 children (71.47%) reaching the Developing As Expected (BSH) category, while 2 children (28.57%) were classified as Not Developing (BB) category. This increase continued in cycle II, where 6 children (85.7%) managed to reach the BSH category.

The Tilawati method which integrates tartil techniques, repetition, rhythm, and the use of multisensory learning media (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) has proven to be effective in attracting attention, increasing motivation, and making it easier for children to recognize and pronounce hijaiyah letters accurately and pleasantly. This approach is in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development and their learning styles that are more responsive to interactive and varied learning.

Therefore, the Tilawati method is recommended as one of the learning strategies in Islamic religious education at the kindergarten level, especially for the introduction of hijaiyah letters, in order to support the growth and development of early literacy skills based on Islamic values.

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## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

The author contributes fully in all stages of research, starting from problem formulation, instrument preparation, implementation of field actions, data collection and analysis, to the preparation of this scientific article. The author is also responsible for the authenticity of the



work and ensuring that all sources have been ethically cited and in accordance with scientific writing guidelines.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author states that there is no conflict of interest in the research and writing of this article.

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