

Innovative Learning Media 'Adzkiya': A Smart Breakthrough in Teaching Qur'anic Reading to Children Aged 5–6 Years

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Abstract

This study aims to improve students' learning outcomes in recognizing and reading Hijaiyyah letters using the Adzkiya method for Group B children aged 5–6 years at PG-TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School 3, Jakarta. The research employed the Research and Development (R&D) model, consisting of six cycles. Each cycle included six stages: information gathering, product design, design validation, design revision, product testing, and final product development. The study was conducted over four months, from May to August 2025, involving 15 Group B students. Data were collected through Google Form questionnaires and classroom observations. Based on the analysis and discussion, the results showed an improvement in the students' ability to read Hijaiyyah letters using melodies inspired by sholawat (Islamic chants). Observation notes revealed that children were able to read Hijaiyyah letters and showed joy, enthusiasm, and excitement during the learning process with the Adzkiya method. The conclusion of this study is that the ability to read Hijaiyyah letters with sholawat among Group B children aged 5–6 years can be significantly improved through the use of the Adzkiya method.

Keywords: Learning, Qur'an Reading, Hijaiyyah Letters.

1 INTRODUCTION

Learning to read **Hijaiyyah letters**—the Arabic alphabet used in the Qur'an—is a foundational step in the process of Qur'anic literacy. In principle, reading Hijaiyyah is not vastly different from learning to read Latin letters. Both require familiarity with individual characters, phonetic recognition, and gradual progression to reading complete words and sentences. However, Qur'anic reading involves a structured sequence, beginning with the recognition of Hijaiyyah letters and their associated *harakat* (vowel marks), which form the basis for accurate pronunciation, (Masykur, 2019).

Early childhood, often described as the "golden age" of human development, is a critical period in which a child's cognitive, emotional, linguistic, and spiritual capacities are most malleable and responsive to stimulation, (Al-Maliki, 2001). During this phase, children rapidly acquire foundational skills that shape their lifelong learning trajectory.

Among these foundational skills is literacy—the ability to recognize, understand, and interpret written symbols, (Ahmad, 2017). For Muslim children, literacy includes not only the ability to read in their native language but also the capacity to read **Hijaiyyah letters**, which are the basis of reading the **Holy Qur'an**.

Reading the Qur'an is not an instantaneous process. It involves **gradual, structured stages**, beginning with the introduction of individual Hijaiyyah letters and their phonetic components. Only after mastering letter recognition and vowel markings (*harakat*) can a child progress to reading full Qur'anic verses, (Surasman, 2002).

Children do not immediately start reading the Qur'an as a complete text. Instead, they undergo various stages that begin with identifying and memorizing Hijaiyyah letters, followed by learning their sounds and symbols, (Anita, 2015). Only after mastering these components can children proceed to read full verses. This staged approach is especially crucial for early childhood learners, where cognitive and linguistic development must be considered in the learning design, (Kadir, 2003).

Despite this structured method, many early childhood learners still face difficulties in learning to read Hijaiyyah. At **TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School**, it was observed that a significant number of Group B students (aged 5–6) demonstrated **limited proficiency in recognizing and reading Hijaiyyah letters**. These difficulties were evident in both guided reading sessions and independent exercises, where children showed a lack of confidence and fluency, (Jamaris, 2006).

Several factors contribute to these challenges. Firstly, the format of the teaching materials often presents barriers for young learners. For instance, the texts used tend to have small font sizes and dense layouts, making it hard for children to focus or identify individual letters. Such presentation is not developmentally appropriate for early learners who rely heavily on visual clarity and simplicity.

Secondly, many children struggle with randomized recognition of Hijaiyyah letters—being able to identify letters when they are not presented in sequence. This is compounded by the similar shapes of some letters (e.g., ت, ث, ب), (Sirojuddin, 2000) which require careful attention to diacritical marks and letter positioning. The similarity in forms poses a major obstacle for visual discrimination, a skill that is still developing at this age, (Masykur, 2019).

Observations conducted on 15 students in Group B confirmed these issues. Teachers reported that even with one-on-one guidance using the previous version of the Adzkiya learning book, students still experienced difficulties reading Hijaiyyah letters, especially in random order or when distinguishing visually similar characters. This gap suggests the need for a more engaging and developmentally suitable approach to Hijaiyyah literacy.

In response to these learning barriers, the Adzkiya Method was further developed with an innovative approach: incorporating melodic recitation (sholawat) into the Hijaiyyah learning process. Unlike traditional rote methods, this method introduces Hijaiyyah letters through rhythmic and melodic patterns, making the experience more enjoyable and memorable for children.

Sholawat, or devotional chants to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), are characterized by their pleasant melodies and rhythmic tones, (Hambali, 2016). This makes them ideal for young learners who respond positively to music and repetition. When applied to Hijaiyyah learning, the rhythm of sholawat helps children memorize letters more effectively while creating a joyful emotional atmosphere during lessons.

This approach is not merely pedagogical but also spiritual. The integration of sholawat in education aligns with Qur'anic encouragement found in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 56, which commands believers to send blessings upon the Prophet. Teaching children to love the Prophet through rhythmic learning encourages emotional engagement and instills Islamic values early in life.

Given these factors, this study aims to explore the development and implementation of the Adzkiya Qur'anic Reading Media to improve Hijaiyyah literacy among children aged 5–6. By addressing both pedagogical needs and spiritual dimensions, this method is expected to enhance children's ability to read Hijaiyyah letters with greater ease, enthusiasm, and accuracy. The research further investigates whether the integration of sholawat-based rhythms can improve recognition, retention, and emotional connection to Qur'anic reading in early childhood settings. Visual discrimination, however, is a skill still in development during early childhood. When the learning material does not support this developmental stage, confusion and frustration can arise.

To explore this issue further, the researcher conducted an observation involving 15 students in Group B. Even with one-on-one support, the students continued to show difficulties with letter recognition, especially when the letters were presented out of sequence. These findings highlighted a gap in the effectiveness of the current Hijaiyyah learning approach and emphasized the need for more age-appropriate and engaging instructional strategies.

In response, the researcher further developed the **Adzkiya Method**, incorporating elements of musicality and spirituality—specifically, integrating sholawat (devotional songs) into the Hijaiyyah learning experience. The rationale behind using sholawat is both

psychological and spiritual. Music, rhythm, and melody are known to enhance memory retention, especially in young children. When paired with learning content, musical patterns can create strong neural associations, (Ariana, 2020).

Sholawat, with its peaceful tone and repetitive structure, provides a calming and enjoyable learning environment. It can reduce anxiety, increase enthusiasm, and elevate the spiritual atmosphere of the classroom. The practice of singing sholawat is also rooted in Islamic tradition. Surah Al-Ahzab (33:56) commands believers to send blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), making this practice both beneficial and encouraged.

Introducing children to sholawat from a young age instills emotional connection and love for the Prophet. This emotional engagement can increase motivation to learn Qur'anic content and participate actively in religious learning, (Al-Hikmah, 2020). By combining rhythmic learning with spiritual content, the Adzkiya Method aims to make the Hijaiyyah learning process not only more effective but also more meaningful.

The learning media was redesigned to feature larger fonts, brighter colors, and more visually appealing pages. The layout was simplified to minimize distractions and help children focus on one concept at a time. Furthermore, characters and illustrations were included to depict familiar and comforting scenes—such as children reading the Qur'an in a mosque setting—to create a sense of connection and belonging, (Dimiyati & Mudjiono, 2006).

These improvements are designed to enhance children's engagement, comprehension, and retention of Hijaiyyah letters, (Emzir, 2013). The method seeks to address not only the mechanical aspects of reading but also the emotional and spiritual dimensions of Qur'anic learning. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the newly developed Adzkiya learning media in supporting Hijaiyyah literacy for children aged 5–6 at TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School 3.

Specifically, the research investigates whether integrating sholawat and developmentally appropriate visual design can improve letter recognition, learning enjoyment, and spiritual awareness in early Qur'anic education.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used in this study is development research or Research and Development (R&D), adapted from the model proposed by Borg and Gall (1989), which consists of ten stages: identifying potential and problems, data collection, product design, design validation, design revision, product testing, product revision, usage testing, final product revision, and mass production. Figure below shows the six stages of the development research carried out by the researcher.

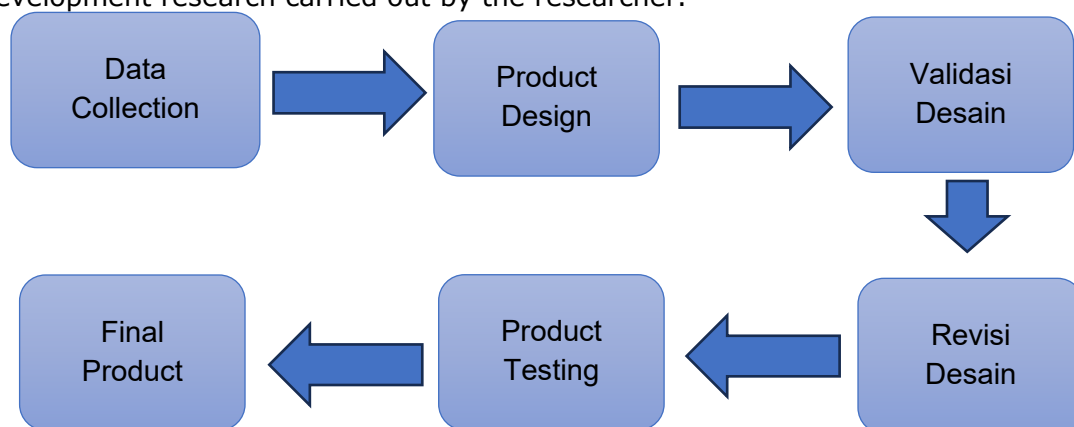


Figure 1. Stages of Product Research and Development
Source: Borg and Gall

The researcher adapted only six stages from the original ten stages due to certain limitations. The six stages implemented were: information gathering, product design, design validation, design revision, product testing, and the final product. This research was conducted at Jl. Raya Malaka No. 12B RT004/05, Cilangkap, Cipayung, East Jakarta, Postal Code: 13870. PG-TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School 3 Jakarta is a kindergarten under the coordination of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, with license number 1/A.1/31.75.10.1002.34.K-3/4/TM.08.28/e/2024 and NPSN number 70046811.

The design involves a series of planning and development activities for instructional media in the form of a book titled *Adzkiya*, aimed at early childhood education. The development plan focuses on introducing the Arabic alphabet (*huruf hijaiyyah*) with *fathah* vowel marks in an engaging manner through melodies resembling *shalawat*.

The *Adzkiya* Qur'an Reading Book is designed using the Rosem Uthmani script in large letters, with each page consisting of four lines and one subject heading. To attract children's interest in reading *Adzkiya*, the development also includes a classical media tool introducing the *huruf hijaiyyah* for children aged 5–6 years. The main objective of this stage is to ensure that the *Adzkiya* Qur'an Reading Book functions as intended in its expected usage context. Therefore, the researcher involved several experts in their respective fields—such as Qur'an experts, media experts, and language experts—to evaluate the *Adzkiya* Qur'an Reading Book being developed.

2 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School 3 Jakarta, specifically in Group B, consisting of 15 children aged 5–6 years. The focus of the study is to improve the ability to read *huruf hijaiyyah* (Arabic letters). The preliminary phase involved information gathering, which indicated that most children were still in the categories of "Needs Repetition" (Ulang), "Fairly Fluent" (Cukup Lancar/CL), and "Fluent" (Lancar/L).

The resulting product from this research was based on a needs analysis using the Research and Development (R&D) method. In order to test the effectiveness of the product and ensure it can be used more broadly within all branches of Buahati Islamic School, further development was deemed necessary.

The trial of the *Adzkiya* learning media, which had been developed, was conducted to evaluate its effectiveness and appeal. By testing the product on the target audience, the researcher was able to assess children's engagement and interest in *Adzkiya*, their comprehension of the content, the functionality of the media, feedback from the children and users, as well as its age-appropriateness. The trial phase was planned to be conducted on a limited scale with Group B1 at TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School.

The observation results showed that the children successfully reached the "Fluent" (L) category. Indicators demonstrated that the children could correctly and fluently recognize and understand *huruf hijaiyyah*, and there was evident enthusiasm in reading the *Adzkiya* Qur'an reading book.

3.1 Sub Result

The results of this study show an improvement in the ability to recognize *huruf hijaiyyah* fluently and clearly (*fashih*) among children aged 5–6 years at TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School, through the implementation of the *Adzkiya* Qur'an reading method. Out of 15 children, 14 (94.4%) achieved an optimal level of *huruf hijaiyyah* recognition skills, categorized as "Fairly Fluent" (CL), while only 1 child (6.6%) remained in a lower category.

Table 1. Recognition of Huruf Hijaiyyah Through the Adzkiya Qur'an Reading Method

Name	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	%	Description
Affandra	CL	CL	L	L	CL	L
Aiza	L	L	L	L	L	L
Allea	L	L	L	L	L	L
Anna	L	L	L	L	L	L
Athaya	L	L	L	L	L	L
Callu	L	L	L	L	L	L
Ghaniy	L	L	L	L	L	L
Hanif	L	L	L	L	L	L
Hazim	L	L	L	L	L	L
Kai	L	L	L	L	L	L
Naura	L	L	L	L	L	L
Rafardhan	L	L	L	L	L	L
Rasya	L	L	L	L	L	L
Uwais	L	L	L	L	L	L
Zaidan	L	L	L	L	L	L

3.2 Sub Discussion

Based on the results of using the latest version of the Adzkiya Qur'an reading method book, with an average score of 100%, the learning experience has become more enjoyable and engaging. The illustrations in the book make the learning process more fun and attractive. Children tend to be more enthusiastic and interested in colorful visuals, which can enhance their engagement and motivation in following the lessons.

Increasing the font size of the text helps to clarify the letters, making the material more visible and easier to focus on. This adjustment makes it easier for children to understand the content without feeling overwhelmed by too many words.

Encouraging children to sing *shalawat* (praises for the Prophet) daily before reading Adzkiya has a positive spiritual impact. It fosters love and faith in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), with the hope of receiving his intercession on the Day of Judgment, and strengthens their faith in Allah SWT. The design of the illustrations in the Adzkiya Qur'an reading method book is as follows:



Figure 2. The Adzkiya Qur'an reading method book

The background design for Adzkiya depicts a mosque setting with two students reading the Qur'an, creating a comfortable and familiar atmosphere for children. The simple background and transparent mosque ensure that the main focus remains on the hijaiyyah

letters displayed on each page. The presence of cloud illustrations adds an aesthetic touch and visual appeal without distracting from the text and core hijaiyyah content.

4 CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Adzkiya Qur'an reading method book is effective in improving the ability to recognize hijaiyyah letters for children aged 5-6 years at TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School 3 Jakarta. Initial conditions indicated that the children still had difficulties using the Adzkiya book designed for elementary school level. The Adzkiya Qur'an reading book is currently in its third edition of development, demonstrating the researcher's consistent efforts to innovate early childhood learning at TK Kreatif Buahati Islamic School.

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