

# **Innovation Of Daily Prayer Learning Based on Songs and Movements in Islamic Early Childhood Education in Ra Al-Manar Padang Sidempuan**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of daily prayer learning innovations based on songs and movements as a fun and easy-to-understand method for early childhood in RA Al-Manar Padang Sidempuan. The background of this research is the importance of instilling spiritual values from an early age through the introduction of daily prayers in children's lives. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the use of songs and movements in prayer learning can increase children's participation, memory, and understanding of the content of prayer. This innovation also makes it easier for teachers to convey religious materials that were originally considered difficult or boring for children. Learning becomes more active, interactive, and fun. In addition, the child's emotional and motor involvement in these activities accelerates the process of internalizing spiritual values in their daily lives.

**Keywords:** Prayer Learning, Songs, Movements, Innovation, Islamic PAUD

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## Introduction

Early childhood, or *golden age*, is a critical period in human development because children are susceptible to environmental influences and have high adaptability to external stimuli. At this stage, they learn most effectively through games, music, movement, and social interaction (Santrock, 2011). In addition to the cognitive and motor aspects, religious education—especially daily prayer learning—must also be creatively designed so that children not only memorize, but also understand and feel their spiritual value.

However, the practice of prayer learning in many Islamic PAUD institutions is generally still traditional: passive memorization, sitting still, and without positive integration with musical or kinesthetic elements. In fact, Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligence emphasizes that early childhood has a very dominant kinesthetic and musical learning style, so it requires a learning approach that combines music and movement to make learning more meaningful (Purhanudin & Nugroho, 2021).

Several studies show that the integration of music and movement in early childhood learning can improve various aspects of development, such as motor, social-emotional, and children's confidence. (Al & Desa, 2024)

The movement and song method succeeded in increasing the confidence of students by up to 90%. Other studies confirm that music and movement not only facilitate memorization, but also increase children's motivation and involvement in the learning process (Westhisi et al., 2024).

In the context of daily prayer teaching, research at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah even showed that the use of music as a medium for memorizing prayers increased learning effectiveness—students completed memorization from 23% in the pre-cycle to 100% after music intervention (Chakim, 2024).

Departing from these findings, RA Al-Manar Padang Sidempuan took the initiative to develop an innovation in daily prayer learning based on songs and movements. This innovation not only teaches prayer textually, but also enriches the child's experience by relating contextual tones, rhythms, and body movements. This concept is similar to *Dalcroze's eurythmic approach*, which is music learning carried out through rhythm and gestures, which has been shown to be effective in synergizing children's musical and motor perception (Dewi, Hartono & Ary, 2023).

The implementation of this innovation is in line with the objectives of the PAUD Thematic curriculum which includes spiritual, social, motor, and cognitive aspects in integrated activities (Purhanudin & Nugroho, 2021). In addition, the sustainability of learning songs and movements with prayer is expected to be able to build children's spiritual resilience, foster positive emotions, and increase their active participation in social interactions and prayer reciting.

Although it looks promising, studies related to music-based prayer innovation and movement in formal kindergarten/RA institutions are still very limited. Most of the literature still focuses on general music learning, social-emotional development, or motor improvement through movement and song. Therefore, this study will take analytical and descriptive steps to explore:

1. How the innovative structure of song- and movement-based prayer learning is applied;
2. How the process is implemented through teachers and children's interactions;
3. How does it affect motivation, understanding of prayer, and the frequency of prayer practice in children's daily lives?

Through this analysis, it is hoped that it can produce innovative models that are practical and have a significant impact, which can be further developed by other Islamic PAUD institutions. This research not only contributes to scientific studies in the field of religious

education and early childhood education, but also offers real practices to improve the quality of holistic, fun, and meaningful prayer learning.

### **Research Methods**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, because it aims to deeply understand the innovative process in learning daily prayers based on songs and movements in the Islamic PAUD environment. This approach allows researchers to describe phenomena naturally according to the context, without the manipulation of variables (Creswell, 2014).

The type of descriptive research was chosen because the focus is on the exploration of the processes, strategies, and impact of innovations carried out by teachers in a real context at RA Al-Manar. The goal is not to test hypotheses, but to explore the meaning and dynamics that occur during the implementation of the learning.

The research was carried out at RA Al-Manar Padang Sidempuan, an Islamic PAUD institution that has implemented daily prayer learning innovations based on songs and movements since the 2023/2024 school year. This location was chosen purposively because it is considered relevant to the research focus and is the place where the innovation practice takes place. The research subjects consist of class teachers, head of RA, and group students.

Furthermore, the data collection technique is carried out in 3 ways, namely Participatory Observation which is carried out in a moderate participatory manner, where the researcher is present as an observer but not directly involved in the learning process. Then, a semi-structured interview where the questions are open-ended so that the informant can explain extensively and in depth. Interviews are recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Documentation Study, the researcher used supporting documents in the research such as the Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH), Video recordings of song- and movement-based prayer learning, Teacher's reflection notes and Photos of activities This documentation was used to support and verify the data of observation and interview results.

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles & Huberman (2014) model, which includes three stages: Reduction of Selection Data and simplification of raw data into important information relevant to the focus of the research, such as activity descriptions, children's responses, and teacher reflections. Data Presentation Compile data in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, interview excerpts, and visual findings (documentation) to facilitate understanding and drawing conclusions. Drawing Conclusions, deducing patterns and themes from the data that has been analyzed, such as the effectiveness, challenges, and impact of learning innovations.

### **Research and Discussion Results**

This research was conducted for three weeks at RA Al-Manar Padang Sidempuan, involving two class group B (ages 5–6 years) with a total of 28 children, two classroom teachers, and one head of RA. Observations and interviews were conducted to explore the implementation, response, and impact of daily prayer learning innovations based on songs and movements. The results of the study are detailed as follows:

#### **4.1 Implementation of Daily Prayer Learning Innovation**

At RA Al-Manar, the innovation of daily prayer learning is carried out with a thematic and integrative approach. The teacher composed simple songs based on the daily prayers that the children usually read. For example:

- a) Prayer before meals: performed with cheerful rhythmic songs and hand movements such as holding a spoon and bribing.
- b) Prayer before study: sung while placing hands on your head and looking ahead, as a symbol of concentration.

- c) Wake-up prayer: accompanied by the movement of opening the eyes and stretching the arms upwards.
- d) Prayer of wearing clothes: accompanied by movements such as buttoning up a shirt.

Each song is composed with a short duration (about 15–30 seconds), using familiar notes that are easy for children to remember, such as the rhythm of the song "Balonku" or "Pelangi-Pelangi".

The delivery strategy is also carried out repeatedly every day, especially during the transition period of activities, such as before eating, after playing, or before going home. Teachers use hand puppets or other props to attract the child's attention.

#### **4.2 Students Response and Development**

From the results of observations and observations, it was found that:

- a) 85% of children are able to memorize 4–6 daily prayers within two weeks of using the song and movement method.
- b) Children show active participation, even children who were previously quiet sing and move along to the song.
- c) The children seem Enthusiasti, they often ask the teacher to repeat a prayer song or sing while playing outside of class hours.
- d) Children begin to practice these prayers spontaneously, for example before eating snacks or while waiting to be picked up by parents.

The teacher also noted that the children were more focused and responsive when prayer activities were packaged in the form of songs and movements compared to the previous method which was only verbal.

#### **4.3 The Role of Teachers in the Implementation of Methods**

Teachers are not only facilitators, but also role as song creators, movement models, and emotional companions of children. The teacher designs the song according to the child's ability level and makes modifications if the child seems to have difficulty following the movements or melody.

Teachers also provide a qualitative assessment of children's achievements, not only in terms of memorization, but also from daily behaviors such as politeness, patience when queuing, and spiritual readiness before learning activities.

#### **4.4 Parental Involvement**

Parents are involved through the class WhatsApp group. The teacher submits:

- a. Audio recording of prayer songs.
- b. Prayer movement videos.
- c. Prayer text in the form of songs.

Most parents welcome and report that children imitate prayers with songs at home and even teach them to younger siblings or other family members. Parents also find it easier to remind their children to pray by repeating songs taught at school.

#### **4.5 Challenges in Implementation**

Although the results were positive, several obstacles were found:

- a) Not all children can follow movements correctly, especially children who have motor delays.
- b) Teachers need time and creativity to compose appropriate songs.
- c) Parents with high busyness sometimes do not have time to follow up on prayer exercises at home.

However, in general, teachers and principals stated that this innovation was effective and worthy of further development on a wider scale.

## **4.6 Research Discussion**

### **4.6.1 Songs and Movements Improve Children's Memory**

The results showed that the use of songs and movements significantly helped children memorize daily prayers faster. Early childhood children generally learn best through media that suits their learning style, namely through music, visuals, and physical activities. In this context, songs serve as an effective memory aid because they rely on repetition and rhythm.

As Brewer (2007) points out, early childhood has a tendency to absorb information better when presented in the form of music and pleasurable movements, as this triggers the activation of parts of the brain related to language and emotions. (Brewer, J. A. 2007). Thus, the use of songs in prayer learning not only makes the activity more interesting, but also optimizes the retention of children's memory of the content of prayer.

### **4.6.2 Movement Helps Meaning and Emotional Engagement**

The movements that accompany the song are not only physical, but also give contextual meaning to the content of the prayer. For example, the bribery gesture when reading the meal prayer helps the child understand that the prayer is related to eating activities. When the child performs these movements while chanting the prayer, he builds associations between the words in the prayer and the daily activities, which help in the process of internalizing values. (Purnamasari, E. 2020)

This is in line with Piaget's view that early childhood is at a pre-operational stage, where they are better able to understand things concretely through direct experience and real action, rather than just through verbal explanations. (Piaget, J. in Suyadi & Ulfah, M. 2013)

### **4.6.3 Prayer as Part of a Pleasant Spiritual Habit**

The method of teaching daily prayer, which has tended to emphasize only on memorizing verbal texts, is often boring and difficult for children. However, when prayer is packaged in the form of songs and movements, the learning atmosphere turns into fun and active, so that children do not feel that they are "learning" in a formal sense.

According to Suyadi, the process of instilling spiritual values in children will be more effective if it is done through the method of play and fun, because play is the world of children. (Suyadi & Ulfah, M. 2013) In this context, the innovation of prayer learning with songs and movements has succeeded in combining educational and recreational elements in one meaningful activity.

### **4.6.4 The Role of Teachers as Creative Facilitators**

Teachers at RA Al-Manar not only play the role of teachers, but also as designers of learning activities. They create their own prayer songs with popular tunes and adapt them to the context of the child's development. The teacher also observes and evaluates each child based on his or her involvement in singing and practicing prayer.

As said by Fitri, in character and spiritual learning, teachers must be able to be value facilitators, not just informers, because character education emphasizes the process of example, habituation, and emotional involvement. (Fitri, A. Z. 2017)

### **4.6.5 Parental Involvement Supports Learning Consistency**

Parental involvement in these activities makes an important contribution to the consistency and sustainability of prayer learning outside of school. When parents get a recording of prayer songs and accompany their children to repeat them at home, the values instilled in school are strengthened in the family environment.

This supports the idea that early childhood education is not only the responsibility of the school, but also a collaboration between the school and the family in shaping the character of the child. (Fitri, A. Z. 2017)

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussions that have been conducted, it can be concluded that the innovation of daily prayer learning based on songs and movements applied at RA Al-Manar Padang Sidempuan has proven to be effective in improving children's understanding, memorization, and participation in daily spiritual activities. Children are more likely to memorize prayers, understand their meaning, and show positive habits such as spontaneous prayer before and after daily activities.

The use of simple and fun songs and concrete movements makes the learning process more in line with early childhood cognitive and motor development. In addition, this approach provides an enjoyable learning experience, increases emotional engagement, and forms positive associations with worship.

Teachers act as creative facilitators and role models, while parental involvement reinforces the success of these methods in the home environment. Thus, song- and movement-based innovations in prayer learning are not only pedagogically effective, but also make a significant contribution to shaping children's spiritual character from an early age.

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