

IQRA Learning in Early Childhood at Anisa Rahma Early Childhood Education, Klambir Lima Village, Kebun, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency

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Abstract

Learning Iqra in early childhood is a strategic step in instilling Islamic values from an early age and improving the ability to read hijaiyah letters as a basis for reading the Qur'an. This activity was carried out at PAUD Anisa Rahma, Klambir Lima Kebun Village, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency with the aim of providing educators and parents with an understanding of the importance of the Iqra method in Islamic religious education. The methods used in this socialization are interactive lectures, simulations of Iqra teaching, and open discussions with participants. The results of the activity showed high enthusiasm from the participants and increased awareness of the importance of structured Iqra learning. This socialization also encourages PAUD to integrate Iqra learning in daily teaching and learning activities. Thus, this activity is expected to be a model for strengthening religious character in early childhood through a fun and educational approach.

Keywords: Socialization, Iqra, Early Childhood, Islamic Religious Education, Character Development, Learning Methods

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Introduction

Islamic religious education in early childhood is fundamental in shaping character and moral values that will accompany children throughout their lives [1]. The early childhood period, typically between ages 0-6 years, is known as a critical period for learning and development, where children absorb and internalize values, behaviors, and knowledge from their surroundings [2]. One of the essential components of Islamic religious education is the ability to read the Qur'an, which begins with learning hijaiyah letters through the Iqra method [3].

The Iqra method is a systematic approach to teaching Arabic letter recognition and reading skills that forms the foundation for Qur'anic literacy. This method has been widely adopted in Islamic educational institutions across Indonesia due to its effectiveness and accessibility [4]. However, many early childhood education centers (PAUD) in rural areas, including Klambir Lima Village in Deli Serdang Regency, still lack comprehensive understanding of how to implement the Iqra method effectively [5]. PAUD Anisa Rahma, located in Klambir Lima Kebun Village, serves as an important educational institution for the surrounding community. Despite its commitment to providing quality education, the institution and parents faced challenges in understanding the systematic approach to Iqra learning and its significance in early childhood development [6]. This socialization activity was designed to bridge this knowledge gap and empower educators and parents with practical strategies for implementing Iqra learning in both formal and informal educational settings.

The primary objective of this community engagement activity is to enhance the understanding of educators and parents regarding the Iqra method, its pedagogical principles, and its role in Islamic character development. Additionally, the activity aims to provide practical simulation and demonstration of Iqra teaching techniques that can be immediately applied in the classroom and home environments. Through this collaborative approach, the activity seeks to strengthen the foundation for Qur'anic literacy while fostering a love for Islamic learning among young children.

Literature Review

2.1 Early Childhood Education and Islamic Values

Early childhood education (PAUD) serves as the initial platform for introducing academic, social, and moral values to children. In the Indonesian context, Islamic education is an integral component of the national curriculum, and its integration in early childhood settings helps establish religious awareness and ethical behavior from the foundational years [7]. Research by Kompasiana and Nafia (2022) demonstrates that children who receive consistent Islamic education in their early years show stronger moral compass and higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to their peers [8]. The role of parents and educators in transmitting religious values cannot be overstated. According to social learning theory by Bandura, children learn significantly through observation and imitation of role models, particularly parents and teachers. This emphasizes the importance of training and awareness programs for both groups to ensure consistent and effective transmission of Islamic values.

2.2 The Iqra Method: Historical Development and Effectiveness

The Iqra method was developed by As'ad Humam in the 1980s as a simplified, systematic approach to teaching Qur'anic reading in Indonesia [9]. The method is characterized by its structured progression, from recognizing individual letters to reading complete words and

sentences, emphasizing practical application over theoretical understanding. Unlike traditional methods that require extensive memorization before reading, the Iqra method allows learners to begin reading Qur'anic verses relatively quickly. Empirical studies on the Iqra method have shown promising results. A study conducted by Wijayanto (2019) in Yogyakarta found that 85% of early childhood learners using the Iqra method achieved basic Qur'anic reading competency within six months, compared to 62% for traditional methods. The method's effectiveness is attributed to its systematic letter-sound correspondence, visual aids, and progressive difficulty levels. The Iqra method comprises six levels (jilid), each introducing increasingly complex phonetic patterns and Qur'anic text structures. The progression allows children to develop confidence and motivation as they master each level, creating a positive learning experience. Furthermore, the method's flexibility enables adaptation to various learning contexts, from formal classroom settings to informal home-based learning.

Community engagement in education refers to the involvement of families and community members in supporting and enhancing educational outcomes. Epstein's framework of partnership identifies six types of involvement, including parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with community. Educational socialization activities, such as workshops and seminars, have been proven effective in increasing parental engagement and educator competency [20].

Research by Henderson and Mapp (2002) demonstrates that when parents and educators share common understanding and goals regarding educational methods, student achievement and motivation improve significantly [21]. In the context of Islamic religious education, socialization activities that target both parents and educators serve as crucial mechanisms for aligning their approaches and creating supportive learning environments [22].

Research Methodology

This socialization activity was designed as a participatory community engagement initiative aimed at capacity building for educators and parents at PAUD Anisa Rahma. The activity was conducted as a half-day workshop held in December 2024, involving comprehensive interactive sessions followed by practical demonstrations. A total of 32 participants engaged in the socialization activity, comprising 18 educators (classroom teachers and support staff) and 14 parents of students enrolled at PAUD Anisa Rahma. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria being: (1) current employment or parent status at the institution, (2) willingness to actively participate in the entire activity, and (3) interest in learning the Iqra method. The demographic composition reflected the local community, with predominantly female participation (88%) consistent with early childhood education workforce demographics. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board. Participant confidentiality was maintained throughout data collection and analysis, with all identifying information removed from transcripts and reports.

Results

4.1 Participant Demographics and Attendance

All 32 registered participants attended the complete socialization activity, achieving 100% participation rate. The educator cohort (n=18) comprised 16 classroom teachers and 2 support staff, with an average teaching experience of 6.4 years (SD = 4.2). The parent cohort

(n=14) included mothers (n=12) and fathers (n=2), with children's age at PAUD ranging from 3-6 years. Pre-activity assessment revealed limited baseline knowledge regarding the Iqra method. Mean score for "understanding of Iqra method" was 2.38 (SD = 0.91) on the 5-point scale, indicating minimal prior knowledge. Post-activity assessment showed significant improvement across all measured domains. Paired t-tests revealed statistically significant improvements in all domains ($p < 0.001$), with the largest gain observed in "awareness of importance" (mean difference = 1.71), followed by "understanding of Iqra method" (mean difference = 1.94) and "confidence in implementation" (mean difference = 1.82).

4.2 Participant Engagement and Satisfaction

Observational data documented consistently high engagement throughout the activity. During interactive lectures, 91% of participants posed clarifying questions or contributed to discussions. During practical simulations of Iqra teaching, participants demonstrated active engagement through role-playing exercises, with 28 of 32 participants (88%) volunteering to lead simulated teaching sessions. Post-activity satisfaction ratings were notably positive: 96% of participants rated the activity as "very useful" or "extremely useful," 94% indicated they would recommend this activity to colleagues/other parents, and 100% expressed interest in receiving follow-up support or advanced training in Iqra teaching methods. Focus group discussions revealed strong implementation intentions among both educators and parents. Eight of twelve FGD participants (67%) articulated concrete plans to integrate Iqra learning into daily routines within the next month. Representative quotes include: *"I now understand that Iqra doesn't have to be complicated. I can start with the children we have now, teaching them even just two letters a day. This makes me confident I can do it."* (Educator participant) *"As a parent, I want to support my child's learning at home. The practical demonstration showed me exactly how to help them practice without pressure, making it fun instead."* (Parent participant).

Identified implementation barriers included: limited teaching materials (mentioned by 7 participants), insufficient dedicated classroom time (mentioned by 6 participants), and need for ongoing guidance and mentoring (mentioned by 5 participants). Participants requested follow-up mentoring sessions every two weeks for the first two months of implementation. Following the socialization activity, PAUD Anisa Rahma's leadership formally committed to integrating Iqra learning into the institution's daily curriculum structure. The headmaster documented this commitment in institutional planning documents, allocating 30 minutes daily for Iqra instruction and designating one educator as the Iqra learning coordinator. This institutional-level adoption represents significant organizational change resulting from the socialization activity.

Discussion

The results of this socialization activity demonstrate substantial and statistically significant improvements in participants' knowledge, understanding, and confidence regarding the Iqra method in early childhood education. These findings align with established literature on the effectiveness of capacity-building interventions in educational contexts.

The dramatic increase in understanding of the Iqra method (from 2.38 to 4.32 on a 5-point scale) reflects the accessibility and clarity of the pedagogical approach presented during the activity. The Iqra method's systematic, visual, and progressive nature makes it inherently teachable and learnable, even for educators and parents with limited prior formal training in

language instruction [40]. This democratization of Islamic literacy instruction is particularly significant in contexts where access to formal teacher training is limited.

The even larger gain in "awareness of importance" (1.71 point increase) suggests that participants arrived at the activity with latent motivation but lacked clear understanding of why structured Iqra learning matters for early childhood development. The socialization successfully activated this intrinsic motivation by connecting Iqra learning to broader goals of character development, Qur'anic literacy, and Islamic identity formation. This is crucial because sustained behavioral change often depends more on motivation and perceived relevance than on technical skill acquisition. The high engagement during practical simulations (88% voluntarily participating in role-play) and strong implementation intentions (67% with concrete implementation plans) indicate that the experiential learning components were particularly effective. This aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of concrete experience and active experimentation in learning. Educators and parents needed to experience "what Iqra teaching looks like" rather than merely hearing about it.

However, several important limitations warrant discussion. First, the activity lacked a control group, limiting causal inference regarding the effectiveness of the specific socialization intervention versus other contextual factors. Second, the relatively short duration (half-day workshop) may produce gains in immediate knowledge and enthusiasm but potentially limited sustained behavioral change without follow-up support. The identified need for ongoing mentoring (mentioned by 5 FGD participants) underscores this concern.

Third, while baseline intentions to apply learning were strong, actual implementation outcomes were not measured in this study. Future longitudinal follow-up would strengthen understanding of whether the high stated intentions translate into sustained classroom practices and ultimately improved student Qur'anic reading outcomes. Fourth, the overwhelmingly positive participant feedback may reflect social desirability bias, with participants reluctant to criticize the activity immediately after completion. More candid feedback might have emerged through anonymous written evaluation or delayed follow-up interviews.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable evidence that well-designed socialization activities targeting both educators and parents can effectively increase capacity and commitment for implementing evidence-based early childhood Islamic education approaches. The institutional-level adoption of structured Iqra learning represents meaningful impact beyond individual participant learning.

Conclusion

This socialization activity successfully enhanced the knowledge, understanding, and confidence of educators and parents regarding the Iqra method in early childhood education. Statistically significant improvements were documented across all measured domains, with participants demonstrating high satisfaction and strong intentions to apply their learning. The Iqra method emerges as a practical, effective, and accessible approach to early childhood Islamic literacy education that can be implemented in diverse contexts with appropriate training and support. The high levels of participant engagement and institutional commitment to curriculum integration suggest genuine potential for this approach to strengthen Islamic character development and Qur'anic literacy among young children in the Deli Serdang region and beyond. This activity offers practical insights for PAUD leaders and educators: (1)

systematic teacher/educator training in Iqra methods should be prioritized in professional development plans, (2) parental engagement initiatives specifically addressing Iqra and Qur'anic literacy can mobilize family support for religious learning, (3) practical, experiential learning approaches (simulations, demonstrations) are more effective than lecture-based training, and (4) institutional-level commitment and resource allocation are essential for sustained implementation. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track actual implementation practices and student learning outcomes over extended periods. Comparative studies examining the Iqra method's effectiveness in different cultural and institutional contexts would strengthen evidence regarding its generalizability. Additionally, research investigating optimal frequency and duration of follow-up support for sustaining behavioral change would inform design of more effective capacity-building interventions.

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