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## IMPROVING CHILDREN'S EARLY LITERACY SKILL USING MAHARAJA CIRCLE MEDIA

Endang Puji Astuti<sup>1</sup>, Sri Nurhayati<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> IKIP Siliwangi, Cimahi, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>alvie.astuti@gmail.com

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### Abstract

The main objective of this study would be to explain how early literacy learning is implemented for early childhood children aged 5-6 years through the maharaja's circle media. By arranging cards and mattresses in pictorial circles, the maharaja's circle media introduces syllables to form words. In media circles, the maharaja begins by singing the sounds of the syllables on the maharaja's card to the child after he or she has memorized and grasped the concept of syllable sounds, and then plays with the maharaja's circle mat. The method of research is qualitative descriptive. Observation, interviewing, and documentation were used to collect data. The data analysis technique employed in this study was data reduction and visualization. This study established the value of using the maharaja's circle media for early literacy learning in early childhood. The findings of this study are expected to aid educators in the development of early childhood literacy skills through the use of exciting and fun media from the maharaja's circle.

**Keywords:** Early literacy, media, Maharaja's circle

### Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan implementasi pembelajaran keaksaraan awal anak usia dini usia 5-6 tahun dengan menggunakan media lingkaran maharaja. Media lingkaran maharaja adalah media untuk mengenalkan suku kata hingga membentuk kata dengan menggunakan kartu dan matras yang berbentuk lingkaran bergambar. Dalam penggunaan media lingkaran maharaja diawali dengan mengenalkan bunyi suku kata pada kartu maharaja melalui bernyanyi, setelah anak hafal dan faham akan konsep bunyi suku kata, dilanjutkan dengan bermain menggunakan matras lingkaran maharaja. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah reduksi data dan display data. Hasil penelitian ini, menunjukkan bahwa media lingkaran maharaja layak digunakan untuk pembelajaran keaksaraan awal pada anak usia dini. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat bermanfaat bagi para pendidik dalam mengembangkan kemampuan keaksaraan awal anak usia dini yaitu dengan menggunakan media lingkaran maharaja yang seru dan menyenangkan.

**Kata kunci:** Peran Lembaga Mitra, Kemitraan Triple helix, Standar Mutu Satuan PKBM

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### INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the education provided to children prior to entering the next primary school. Early Childhood Education is defined in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the national education system as a level of primary education that is an effort made on behalf of children from birth to the age of six years through the provision of educational stimulation to aid in physical growth and development, as well as spiritual development, so that children are prepared to continue their education. Typically, children between the ages of four and six years are enrolled in early childhood education institutions. They interact and learn with their peers

and educators, with the goal of growing and developing in ways that correspond to their chronological age abilities. It is based on the Early Childhood Education Curriculum, which states that in order for children to develop optimally, religious-moral, physical-motor, social-emotional, coercive, language, and art aspects must be considered. This aspect must be developed in accordance with the early childhood curriculum, specifically in the context of play (Kemendikbud, 2014)

As long as children attend ECE institutions, six dimensions of their growth and development should gradually improve with age. One aspect concerns language abilities. According to the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia's Regulation 137 of 2014 on the standard of early childhood education, children aged 5-6 years in literacy can already "mention known letter symbols, know the sound of the initial letters of the names of objects around them, and mention groups of objects" (Kemendikbud, 2014). Early literacy is one of the skills developed in the language aspect. Early literacy is one of the skills developed in the language aspect. According to Yulaelawati, there are three stages in the development of language: comprehension, expression, and literacy. Yulaelawati continued, "Early childhood literacy is critical because it lays the groundwork for mastering the ability to read, write, and calculate." Language can have an effect on other facets, such as cognitive facets (Aisyah & Khotimah, 2003). Thus, a educator should be able to detect his or her students' initial literacy ability in order to provide appropriate stimulation based on their age and stage of comprehension of the concept of literacy. By conducting early detection, educators can innovate their instructional methods and media to increase children's interest in and comprehension of literacy materials. According to Schickedanz A.J.(Wartomo, 2017), early detection of early childhood literacy skills will provide information about reading and writing difficulties, indicating that children's early literacy skills must be detected early in order to provide the best stimulation. Educators can utilize a variety of methods and media in the learning process to ensure the success of learning process activities. The learning methods and media used should be appropriate for the child's developmental stage, whereas the use of learning aids in the form of appropriate, appropriate, and diverse media can increase children's enthusiasm and interest in the ongoing learning activity process. According to (Nuraeni, 2015), educators are professional educators whose primary responsibility is to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate learners on formal, non-formal, and informal pathways of early childhood education. Educators are one of the most strategic educational factors, as they are the most decisive in teaching and learning (Septiadiningsih et al., 2019). As early childhood educators, educators must understand how children grow and develop according to their age and characteristics. Thus, it can effectively meet the educational needs of each child based on their abilities and characteristics.

The ability to master literacy skills in early childhood is critical for success in life. As a result, it must be planted early. Many people believe that early childhood should not learn to read because they fear that children will become too saturated and lazy to read. The concern can be avoided by teaching literacy to children through creative learning methods and educational media, so that when children play without realizing it, they are already engaged in a learning activity. Learning media can be used to transmit messages from the educator to students or children, stimulating their thoughts, feelings, attention, and interests, and directing their attention in such a way that the learning process occurs and occurs more efficiently. Selecting a learning media for educational activities should not be taken lightly, as the media must meet specific criteria in order to be used to stimulate children's thinking and curiosity during educational activities.

Media criteria for learning can support the subject matter's content, be easily understood by educators, and correspond to students' thinking abilities. According to Badru Zaman, media can aid and support the learning process, as well as develop all aspects of child development and provide opportunities for children to acquire new knowledge (Guslinda & Kurnia, 2018). According to the reality of the field, researchers discovered that children are not fully capable of recognizing letters and connecting them to form sounds or words, even if only a small part is present. When compared to the level of achievement indicators for the development of literacy ability in children aged 5-6 years, it becomes clear that the child's ability has not been as expected. Three children (23 percent) in paud Dahlia XV received the category of developing grades as expected in literacy, three children (23 percent) received the category of grades began to develop, and seven children (54 percent) received the category of undeveloped grades. This demonstrates that children's literacy abilities have not developed optimally. In response to the aforementioned issues, the author conducted research to improve literacy skills through the use of media that corresponded to the stages of child development. One of the media outlets used is the maharaja's circle media.

## **METHOD**

This is a qualitative descriptive research in which research steps are used to uncover facts in writing. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is a naturalistic research method in which research is conducted under natural conditions in order to obtain detailed data and data that contain the true meaning of data (Sugiyono, 2019).

This research was conducted at PAUD Dahlia XV, which is located at Ciherang No. 144 RT 01 RW 06, Wadas Village Telukjambe Subdistrict, Karawang Regency—with as many as eight meetings beginning in early April 2021. The study included 13 children between the ages of 5 and 6, seven boys and six girls.

This study collected data through observations, interviews, and documentation. Observation is participatory observation, in which researchers engage directly in the observed activities in order to obtain a more complete, sharp, and understandable picture of visible behavior. According to (Sugiyono, 2017), a good technique for data collection is triangulation, which combines various data collection techniques and existing data sources. The act of observation of the research object, in this case, is students aged 5-6 years at the paud Dahlia XV institution while they are engaged in learning activities.

To supplement the study's findings, two educators at paud Dahlia XV were interviewed. In terms of data collection, this was accomplished through the collection and examination of documents, both written and visual, as well as electronic, conducted against paud Dahlia XV institutions, managers, and four educators. Numerous indicators are used in the instrument grid's arrangement, including the ability to mention the letters a-z, the maharaja's syllable (ma-ha-ra-ja-na-ga-ca-da-la-ba-pa-sa-ya-ka-ta-wa), and composed meaningful words from the maharaja's syllables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

As a result of the observations, it was determined that educators use group methods in their daily learning activities, specifically educators dividing students into one class into three groups for development activities. Taken from six facets of early childhood development, including moral and religious values, social and emotional development, cognitive

development, language development, motor development, and artistic development. According to interview findings, early literacy is typically introduced to the meharaja's circle media in the second month of the first semester following the start of the new school year. The goal is for educators to be able to observe in advance each child's initial literacy skills and the type of learning that child engages in. maharaja circle media are introduced gradually to children aged 5-6 years. The first stage is to familiarize children with the concept of letters from a to z through singing. While singing, the educator directed students' attention to a letter poster on the classroom wall. Following the singing, the educator will instruct the child to copy the educator's reading of the letter a - z.

The educator then introduces the syllables on the maharaja's card, which has been taped to the classroom wall in the form of syllable-filled poster images. Every day, children were tasked with memorizing the maharaja's syllables through song. (ma-ha-ra-ja-na-ga-ca-da-la-ba-pa-sa-ya-ka-ta-wa) with the song's lyrical accompaniment all the way to the summit. At this point, the child was also asked to match the syllable writing on the card to the syllable writing on the mat of the maharaja's circle. According to educators, children can memorize the maharaja's syllables in approximately one month.

After the child has memorized the Maharaja's syllables, the child will be invited to begin learning how to use the Maharaja's circle mat. Before beginning this circle of maharaja, the educator was required to prepare fragments of the maharaja's cards to be distributed to the children later. The most exciting activity and the one that requires the most creativity on the part of the educator occurs during the distribution of this card. For instance, cards can be distributed through flying card games, hiding cards, random cards, and unplug cards, among others, depending on the educator's creativity. After each child receives a two-card deck, they will circle the maharaja's mat and sing the maharaja's song, with each child mentioning one syllable. When the educator signals a halt, the final child sings and must advance in a circle to jump according to the syllable card he is holding. Prior to jumping, the child will be asked to mention and display his card. When the educator jumps, he or she will ask other children if the syllable circle that the child stepped on earlier is following the card he or she is holding. If the jump is accurate, the child's friends will give him a big pat on the back.

The fourth stage of the game requires the child who stood jumping earlier to write syllables on the maharaja's card he was holding on the board, then sit back and continue singing to determine the next player.

After the child has mastered the syllables ma-ha-ra-ja-na-ga-ca-da la-ba-pa-sa-ya-ka-ta-wa, the fifth stage introduces the syllables ending in I, U, E, and O using the same song lyrics as stage 2 above and pointing to the classroom wall-mounted syllable poster. After the child comprehends two syllables ending in A, I, U, E, O, O, the child is introduced to two syllables and a closed syllable through chants of mana-man, hana-han, rana-ran, jana-jan, nana-nan, gana-gan, cana-can, dana-dan, lana-lan, bana-ban, pana-pan. Thus, the final consonant letter is substituted as necessary.

Learning through the aforementioned games is an excellent way to stimulate the development of early childhood or children under the age of five, given that early childhood is defined as a child who enjoys playing and has a strong right to play, and play is one of the tools or means for stimulating the development of early childhood or children under the age of five. The researchers observed an increase in children's ability in percentage terms after using the maharaja's circle media in early literacy learning activities for group B children in PAUD

Dahlia XV for one month. Seven children (54 percent) developed the category of grades as expected, five children (38 percent ) developed the category of values as expected, and only one child (8 percent ) developed the category of values as expected.

**Table 1.** Stages of Maharaja's circle media implementation

STAGE	ACTIVITIES NAME	DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	PICTURE
1	Getting to know the Alphabet	Habituation sings the letter A-Z while pointing at the letter poster board	
		Search and mention found letters	
		Copying letters found on a whiteboard	
2	Getting to know the maharaja's syllable	Habituation sings the maharaja's syllable song while pointing towards the maharaja's poster	
		Play shuffles and unplug the maharaja's cards	
		Mentioning syllables obtained from the results of the plugged cards	
		Find and match the maharaja's card with the picture on the maharaja's circle mat (Give praise to every child who manages to do his job well)	
3	Remembering the maharaja syllables	Playing flying cards, hiding cards or unplug cards to get 2 cards	

STAGE	ACTIVITIES NAME	DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	PICTURE
		Determine the player by singing the maharaja's song while moving objects (sticks, when small and so on) in a relay. When the educator says stop then the child holding for the object should be prepared to stand outside the mat.	
		Prepare to jump or jump with one foot on the mat according to the card he gets while mentioning the syllables he stepped on.	
4	Copying the maharaja syllables	After jumping according to the syllable card held, the child attaches to the whiteboard and copies syllables on the board	
		Give praise (great pat while called the name of his child) for the child who has successfully completed his task.	
5	Know the syllables of Maharaja ending I, u, e and o	Singing the Maharaja's song on the syllables ending a, I, u, e and o while pointing to posters	
		Playing stacking words with small syllable cards, previously children are asked to get two cards, 4 cards and so on through a game of flying cards, hide cards or unplug cards.	
6	Get to know open and closed syllables	Singing the maharaja's open and closed syllable song while pointing towards posters	
		Copying open and closed syllables on a whiteboard according to educator's instructions or syllables that are already known by the child	

## Discussion

The process of implementing early literacy learning through activities such as playing maharaja's circle is guided by educational experts' theories. Frobel, Plato, and Aristotle all stated that playing/games can help children develop their attention and knowledge during their early childhood (Aminah et al., 2021). According to research, Maharaja's circle media can be used as a fun learning medium for early childhood. Following the use of such media in literacy learning activities, there is an increase in early literacy ability in percentage.

The feasibility of props is determined by whether or not they are used in classroom instruction. According to Afriyanto, the feasibility of props must be determined by the curriculum, the shape and performance of the props must be interesting, and the subject being studied, props must be easily understood by learners and the readability of simple tools, and props must be easy to use. The maharajas' media circle includes props that meet the preceding criteria, namely:

1.) Props must be curriculum-aligned.

The maharaja's circle media introduced letter and sound symbols and organized them into words. This is in accordance with the level of language development achieved in early childhood. According to the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia's Regulation 137 of 2014 on the standard of early childhood education, children aged 5-6 years can "mention known letter symbols, know the sound of the initial letters of the names of objects around them, and mention groups of images." (Permendikbud, n.d.)

2.) The shape and performance of the props should be appealing and appropriate for the subject being researched (students). Because the age of ECE is the age of play, it must be developed through active, creative, and enjoyable games (Yudiwinata & Handoyo, 2014). The maharaja's circle media is visually appealing due to its shape, color, and image, and a child will easily fall in love with it upon first sight. Additionally, the game begins with singing and exciting games involving the division of maharaja cards.

3.) Props are simple for learners to comprehend, and tools are easily readable.

The Maharaja's Circle's media are extremely simple to understand and can be played by children in a guided manner. Its vibrant design, which features images of objects associated with early childhood, makes it easier to recall them. The method, or how to play the maharaja circle, is extremely adaptable to the educator's creativity. The most critical aspect is to create an exciting and enjoyable environment for playing. Suyadi and Maulidya define play as a form of early childhood education that makes use of interesting strategies or media materials and can be easily followed by children (Zaini, 2019). By introducing literacy to early childhood through the media circle maharaja, we can investigate children's literacy abilities and maximize each child's potential.

4.) Props should be simple to operate.

Utilizing the maharaja's circle media in literacy learning activities is simple because it takes the form of a large mattress with the addition of aids such as picture cards and how to memorize by singing, which makes these props extremely popular with children. Sundayana discusses the characteristics of good props, which include being durable, interesting, simple, adhering to the material's concept, serving as the foundation for children's development of abstract concepts, and promoting active and independent learning (Mariyah et al., 2017). According to the maharaja's circle, media researchers deserve to be used as a medium for early literacy

learning in the classroom because they adhere to the curriculum, their form and performance are engaging, and they are easy to understand and use for early childhood.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to this research, the use of meharaja circle media improves children's ability to recognize early literacy. As stated in the introduction, the early literacy ability of group B children prior to using the maharaja's circle media is 8. Three children (23%) are classified as developing grades, three children (23%) as beginning to develop grades, and seven children (54%) as undeveloped grades. After one month of learning activities utilizing the maharaja's circle media, children's literacy increased to 7 children (54%) receiving the category of developing grades, 5 children (38%) receiving the category of grades beginning to develop, and only 1 child (8%) receiving the category of undeveloped grades. According to the results of the percentage value in early literacy learning activities before and after using the maharaja's circle media at the time of the study, the media circle of maharaja can be applied in the institution paud Dahlia XV. As a result of this, it can be concluded that the maharaja circle learning media can be used to improve early childhood literacy skills in ECE institutions as a medium of instruction, and researchers recommend its use in early literacy learning activities to introduce children to literacy in an exciting and fun way.

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