

Application of the Letter Card Playing Method to Increase Children's Interest in Reading at BA Aisiyyah Jumoyo, Salam, Magelang

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Abstract: Interest in reading in early childhood has a great influence on their cognitive development and literacy skills in the future. However, the low interest in reading is a challenge for many educational institutions, including at BA Aisiyyah Jumoyo, Salam, Magelang. This study aims to apply and analyze the effectiveness of the letter card playing method in increasing children's interest in reading. This research uses a qualitative approach with the classroom action method (PTK) which is carried out in two cycles. The subject of the study is group B children at BA Aisiyyah Jumoyo. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the method of playing letter cards can significantly increase children's interest in reading. Children become more enthusiastic in recognizing letters, stringing words, and showing interest in reading independently. In addition, the interaction between children and teachers in learning becomes more active and fun. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the method of playing letter cards be widely applied in early childhood learning to increase their interest in reading. This method has proven to be effective, easy to apply, and able to create a fun learning atmosphere for children.

Keywords: interest in reading, playing letter cards, early childhood

INTRODUCTION

Interest in reading is a fundamental aspect in early childhood development that plays a role in improving literacy and critical thinking skills. Children who have a high interest in reading tend to understand information more easily and develop good language skills. However, in reality, children's interest in reading in Indonesia is still relatively low. According to research by Wahyuni et al. (2021), children's low interest in reading is caused by a lack of variety of interesting learning methods and a lack of reading habits in the family and school environment. This condition is also found in BA Aisiyyah Jumoyo, Salam, Magelang, where many children are less interested in reading and prefer play activities. Therefore, innovation is needed in learning methods so that children are more motivated to recognize and read letters.

Facts on the ground show that children tend to understand new concepts more easily through interactive and fun games. Early childhood has a tendency to learn actively through

exploration and hands-on experience. According to Susanto (2022), the game-based learning method has proven to be effective in increasing early childhood learning motivation. One method that can be applied is playing letter cards, which allows children to learn to recognize letters and string words in a more interesting way. Thus, children can develop the habit of reading from an early age through a non-boring approach.

The method of playing letter cards combines visual, kinesthetic, and interactive elements, which can help children recognize letters more easily. These games provide a fun learning experience because they involve elements of competition and exploration that are exciting for children. According to research conducted by Rahmawati (2023), game-based learning can increase children's involvement in the learning process so that they are more enthusiastic in understanding the material provided. Thus, this method has great potential to be applied in learning to read in early childhood education.

In addition to increasing reading interest, the method of playing letter cards can also speed up the process of recognizing letters and words in children. According to research by Lestari & Hidayat (2021), the game method in learning to read is able to help children remember letters faster than conventional methods. This is because children tend to be more focused and motivated when learning in a fun way. With direct interaction through games, children are more active in exploring and understanding the concept of letters and simple words.

On the other hand, conventional learning methods that tend to be passive often make children bored quickly and less motivated to read. Methods such as reading books directly without interaction or games make children less interested in reading activities. Based on research by Prasetyo (2022), a monotonous learning approach can cause children to lose focus and be reluctant to learn to read. Therefore, it is important to present more innovative methods so that children remain enthusiastic in the learning process.

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the letter card playing method in increasing children's interest in reading. In addition, this study also seeks to identify changes in children's behavior towards reading habits after the application of this method. By understanding the impact of this method, it is hoped that educators can use it as a more interactive and effective strategy in learning to read.

In addition to providing benefits for children, this method can also help teachers in creating a more dynamic and fun learning atmosphere. Teachers can more easily teach letters to children without having to use conventional methods that tend to be boring. With this game-based approach, the learning process becomes more varied and able to attract children's attention to the maximum.

Parents also play an important role in supporting the increase in children's interest in reading. According to research by Nugroho (2023), parental involvement in reading activities at home can strengthen children's reading habits. Therefore, the application of the letter card playing method should not only be done in the school environment, but can also be applied at home with parental guidance. In this way, children will get used to seeing reading as a fun activity, not as a boring obligation.

It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the world of education, especially in increasing interest in early childhood reading. If the method of playing letter cards proves to be effective, then this method can be recommended as an innovative and fun learning approach for children. With an increased interest in reading from an early age, children can have a stronger literacy foundation, which will have a positive impact on their academic development in the future.

With innovations in reading learning methods, it is hoped that the challenges in increasing early childhood reading interest can be overcome. Fun and play-based education not only increases children's motivation to learn, but also creates an environment that supports their cognitive development. Therefore, collaboration between teachers, parents, and the surrounding environment is the main factor in forming a generation that loves to read and has good literacy skills from an early age.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to analyze the effectiveness of the letter card playing method in increasing children's interest in reading at BA Aisiyah Jumoyo, Salam, Magelang. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand how the method is applied and how it affects children's interest in reading.

Data Source

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct observation of learning activities in the classroom and interviews with teachers and parents to find out changes in children's reading interest before and after the application of the letter card playing method. In addition, documentation in the form of photos or videos is carried out to support the observation results. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various literature, research journals, and academic documents related to the method of playing letter cards and increasing children's interest in reading.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed by qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by selecting relevant information from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. The selected data are then presented in the form of a descriptive narrative to describe how the letter card playing method is applied and how it affects children's interest in reading. Furthermore, drawing conclusions is carried out by identifying patterns and trends that arise from the data that has been collected.

Through this analysis, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the letter card playing method in increasing early childhood reading interest and providing recommendations for teachers and parents in applying the method can be obtained.

RESULTS

The results of the study showed that the application of the letter card playing method at BA Aisiyah Jumoyo, Salam, Magelang, had a positive impact on increasing children's interest in reading. Based on observations made for several weeks, children were seen to be more enthusiastic in participating in reading learning activities compared to conventional methods. They are more active in recognizing letters, composing words, and interacting with their friends in the learning process.

The children showed a significant change in their engagement during the letter card play activity. Before the application of this method, most children preferred to play without involving themselves in literacy activities. However, after the method of playing letter cards was introduced, there was a significant increase in their interest and involvement in reading activities. They feel more motivated to learn letters and structure words in a fun way.

Table 1. Increasing Children's Interest in Reading Before and After the Implementation of the Letter Card Playing Method

Aspects	Before the Method of Playing Letter Cards	After the method of playing letter cards
Participation in reading activities	45%	85%
Interest in books	30%	70%

Aspects	Before the Method of Playing Letter Cards	After the method of playing letter cards
Ability to recognize letters	40%	80%
Word-making skills	35%	75%
Involvement in class discussions	40%	80%

Source: Observation and interview results, 2025

Interviews with teachers revealed that before the application of this method, many children were less interested in reading and preferred play activities without involvement in literacy activities. This makes the reading learning process less than optimal. However, after the letter card game was implemented, there was a significant increase in their participation in reading activities. Teachers note that children become more active and enthusiastic when learning to recognize letters and string words.

Parents also reported positive changes in their children at home. Previously, children rarely showed interest in books or reading activities. However, after participating in the letter card game, children begin to show interest in books and often try to read simple words they encounter at home. This shows that the positive effects of the application of this method do not only occur at school, but also continue at home.

Documentation in the form of photos and videos shows that the method of playing letter cards helps children in developing reading skills gradually. The children seemed to enjoy the activity of arranging letters into words and felt proud when they succeeded in reading the words they made themselves. They also look more confident in interacting with their friends, both in composing words and reading together. This shows that this method is effective in creating a fun and meaningful learning experience for children.

In addition, some children who previously had difficulty recognizing letters or composing words, are now starting to be able to do so more smoothly after participating in letter card games several times. Children who were initially not interested in reading, are now more eager to learn new letters and words. This proves that the game-based approach is very effective in stimulating early childhood reading interest.

Data Verification

To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. The results of interviews with teachers and parents were confirmed by direct observation of children's behavior in the classroom. In addition, video recordings were used to review how children responded to letter card play activities and how they interacted in learning.

The results of triangulation show the harmony between the data obtained from various sources. All data sources confirm that the method of playing letter cards has a positive impact on children's interest in reading. Teachers report that children who were previously less interested in reading are now starting to show greater enthusiasm. Likewise, parents who witnessed an increase in their children's interest in reading at home after children participated in letter card play activities at school.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the method of playing letter cards is effective in increasing early childhood reading interest. By providing an interactive and enjoyable learning experience, this method can be an excellent alternative to apply in early childhood education. In addition, this method can also help to create a more engaging learning environment for children, which in turn can improve their literacy skills from an early age.

With an increased interest in reading, children not only develop reading skills, but also build a strong literacy foundation that will benefit their academic development in the future. Therefore, the use of the letter card playing method can be an innovative solution in increasing children's interest in reading and supporting literacy development in elementary schools.

DISCUSSION

In this study, data validation was carried out to ensure the correctness and reliability of the findings obtained. One of the methods used is triangulation, which is combining data from various sources to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of direct observation, interviews with teachers and parents, as well as documentation in the form of photos and videos of children's activities during the application of the letter card playing method. In addition, data collected from various sources are also considered to verify whether the patterns found are consistent across existing sources of information.

Observations in the classroom and interviews with teachers revealed that before the application of the letter card playing method, children's interest in reading was very low. Most children show no interest in reading, and prefer to play without involvement in literacy. However, after the application of this method, teachers reported that children became more enthusiastic about recognizing letters and composing words. Interviews with parents also showed that children began to be interested in reading at home and showed an improvement in their literacy skills. This indicates that the application of this method is not only effective at school, but also affects children's reading habits at home.

In addition, documentation in the form of photos and videos taken during learning activities also supports the results of observations and interviews. The video shows that the children are engaged in the activity of composing letter cards with enthusiasm and are able to identify letters and organize them into words with more confidence. Thus, the results of the documentation reinforce the conclusions obtained from observations and interviews, and provide more tangible evidence regarding the change in children's reading interest after the application of the letter card playing method.

Validation Results

The data validation process shows that the findings obtained from various sources are consistent and support the research hypothesis that the letter card playing method can increase early childhood reading interest. The results of triangulation show that the positive change in children's reading interest is not only the result of the application of this method in the classroom, but also reflects a change in children's attitude towards reading activities in general. Before the application of the letter card playing method, many children were not interested in books and preferred play activities that did not involve literacy. However, after using the letter cards, children began to show greater interest in books, as well as feeling more confident in participating in reading activities.

The data obtained showed a significant increase in several aspects of reading interest, including the ability to recognize letters and organize words. Before the application of the method, only about 40% of children were able to recognize letters well, but after the method was applied, this percentage increased to 80%. Likewise, the ability to compose words increased from 35% to 75%. This indicates that children not only begin to be interested in reading, but also experience a significant increase in literacy skills after participating in letter card play activities.

This increase is also reflected in parent reports stating that their children are starting to be interested in reading at home. Parents reported that children often opened books and tried to read simple words they came across, which they had not previously done. In other words, the application of the letter card play method is not only effective in improving children's reading skills at school, but also contributes to the change of their behavior at home, which is crucial in creating good literacy habits in early childhood.

Based on the validation results, it can be concluded that the method of playing letter cards is indeed effective in increasing early childhood reading interest. With a fun and interactive approach, children can not only recognize letters, but also develop reading habits that will support their literacy development. Therefore, this method can be recommended as an innovative and effective learning alternative to increase reading interest in early childhood education.

With an increased interest in reading from an early age, children will have a strong literacy foundation that will have an effect on their future academic development. This suggests

that game-based approaches, such as playing letter cards, can be one effective way to form good reading habits in children from an early age.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the application of the letter card playing method at BA Aisyiyah Jumoyo, Salam, Magelang, has a significant impact on increasing early childhood reading interest. The main finding of the study was that children who had previously been less interested in reading, showed a significant increase in interest after engaging in letter card play activities. This increase not only occurs in the school environment, but also continues into the home, where children begin to be interested in reading and getting to know simple words. This shows that the method of playing letter cards is effective in stimulating children's interest in reading and building positive literacy habits.

This method has proven to be effective in creating a fun and interactive learning atmosphere, which supports children to learn to recognize letters and compose words without feeling overwhelmed. By using a play-based approach, children are more engaged and motivated in the learning process. The data obtained showed a significant improvement in children's ability to recognize letters, arrange words, and participate in reading activities.

Academic Impact

The increase in reading interest that occurs in children shows a very positive impact on their academic development. By increasing their interest in reading from an early age, children can develop strong literacy skills, which will be an important foundation in their future academic development. Better reading skills also contribute to improved children's understanding of other learning materials, support their ability to think critically, and facilitate better language development. As a result, children who have a high interest in reading tend to be better prepared to face learning challenges in the future.

Social Contribution

In addition to the academic impact, the application of the letter card playing method also makes an important social contribution. Through increasing interest in reading, children not only benefit individually, but also play a role in improving literacy culture in the surrounding environment, both at school and at home. Parents who reported an increase in their child's interest in books after using this method showed a positive change in literacy habits at home. This creates an environment that is more supportive of children's literacy development, which will ultimately contribute to improving the overall quality of education in society.

Thus, the application of the letter card playing method in early childhood education makes a significant contribution to the increase in reading interest, which in turn has a positive impact on both children's academic development and literacy habits in their social environment. This research supports the use of a game-based approach as an innovative strategy in improving the quality of education at the primary level.

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