

# Exploring The Impact of Religious Song Singing on the Development of Children's Art Skills in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** This study explores the implementation of religious songs as a medium for stimulating musical and character development in early childhood education. Conducted at a Kindergarten in Indonesia, the research examines how songs such as "Alamate Anak Sholeh" and "Walisongo" are integrated into weekly learning activities through structured pedagogical methods, including demonstration, repetition, multimedia engagement, and reflective discussion. Using a qualitative approach supported by observations, interviews, and documentation, the study analyzes teaching practices and the effectiveness of checklist-based assessments aligned with the school syllabus. Results show that religious songs serve as a tool for developing musical expression—such as pitch, rhythm, and vocal strength—and enhance children's confidence and understanding of moral values. From a group of 21 students, a majority were assessed as either "Developing as Expected" or "Developing Very Well," indicating measurable progress in musical and behavioral competencies. The findings highlight the potential of culturally relevant song-based learning in fostering holistic child development. The study recommends continued integrating local religious content into early childhood pedagogy, supported by formative assessment to track and tailor learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** early childhood education, religious songs, musical development, kindergarten, character education

## 1 Introduction

The Indonesian Constitution defines early childhood education as the guidance and development of children aged 0–6 years, aimed at nurturing their full potential. This educational phase is implemented through formal, non-formal, and informal pathways. It focuses on six developmental domains: religious and moral values, physical-motor skills, language, socio-emotional abilities, arts, and cognitive development[1]. Given that each child progresses at a unique pace—some developing rapidly while others more gradually—educational methods must be adapted to match each child's developmental stage and potential [2]. The early years, often called the "golden age," are crucial for introducing diverse learning experiences that holistically support children's growth[3].

Among these developmental aspects, the artistic domain plays a vital role in shaping creativity and expression during early childhood [4], [5]. Artistic activities—such as dance, drama, music, and visual arts—help children explore and strengthen their creative capacities. Numerous studies show that participation in the arts positively influences learning outcomes

and children's behavior and emotional wellbeing [6], [7]. In early childhood education (ECE), play-based learning is central to fostering creativity[8], and music-based activities—especially those involving songs—are effective in stimulating children's enjoyment and development in artistic expression [9]. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 137 of 2014 on the Standard Level of Child Development Achievement, the development of artistic skills in children aged 5–6 years includes enjoying melodies and sounds and participating in artistic activities.

The artistic aspect is one of the essential elements in early childhood development, as developing this aspect in early childhood education (ECE) is part of building foundational skills to enhance children's abilities and creativity according to their developmental stages. [4] Art itself has various branches of activities that children can do to help develop aspects of art in children, namely dance, drama, music, and visual arts. It has been proven that children's learning about art can influence the achievement of learning outcomes and children's behavior, which supports children in learning in the future. [5] Learning through ECE play activities encourages children's development of creativity and artistic skills. Playing also has an important role in children's education, especially stimulating children's development in music from a fun perspective so that through music and songs, children's educational skills and artistic development can be improved through music and songs. [6] The scope of developing the artistic aspect for children aged 5-6 years is outlined in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 on the Standard Level of Child Development Achievement (STPPA), including children's ability to enjoy various melodies or sounds and their interest in artistic activities. [7]

Music, in particular, is a powerful medium in early childhood learning. It is a universal language expressing emotion and thought through melody and rhythm[10], [11]. As noted by Hayati, singing allows children to explore tones, rhythms, and body movements, making it a fundamental musical activity in ECE[12]. Singing is frequently used in early childhood classrooms to support instructional goals, enrich learning experiences, and create joyful, student-centered environments[13], [14]. Beyond fostering engagement, singing enhances auditory skills, enriches vocabulary, and strengthens cognitive development. It has been associated with increased self-confidence[15], improved critical thinking[16], and better emotional regulation in children[17].

The importance of music in early childhood is further emphasized by Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which recognizes musical intelligence as one of the key areas of cognitive development[18]. Music in ECE is not merely a source of entertainment but also an effective pedagogical tool. Singing supports language acquisition, memory retention, and phonological awareness while reinforcing moral and social-emotional development[19], [20]. In the Indonesian context—where cultural and religious diversity is prominent—religious songs serve as both a cultural expression and a vehicle for character building. For instance, songs like "Alamate Anak Sholeh" promote values of piety and obedience, aligning with religious and familial expectations. These songs help children internalize ethical behavior and strengthen their cultural and religious identity[21].

Religious songs are characterized by simple lyrics and memorable melodies, which aid in language development and memory retention. Songs such as "Walisongo" introduce historical Islamic figures, familiarize children with cultural heritage, and stimulate interest in religious

learning. Singing activities are often conducted in group settings, encouraging social interaction, cooperation, and respect for others. Additionally, the rhythmic nature of singing aids in emotional expression and regulation, making religious songs an effective and holistic educational tool.

This study was conducted at an early childhood institution in Jember, Indonesia, with facilities supporting arts-based learning through singing. The research focused on a group where educators regularly incorporate singing activities using both modern and religious songs, including "Alamate Anak Sholeh" and "Walisongo." These songs were selected for the study due to their cultural and religious relevance, as the school is affiliated with an Islamic boarding school (Pesantren), and such songs are frequently heard in the surrounding environment. Moreover, local culture in Jember strongly embraces the use of religious songs during both educational and leisure activities.

Observations revealed that children enjoy and can easily recall the lyrics to these songs. The children responded enthusiastically when playing through audiovisual media, such as YouTube on Smart TV, demonstrating familiarity and joy even when singing without music or media support. Initially unfamiliar with the songs, some students gradually memorized them through repetition and peer interaction. These findings suggest that religious songs facilitate musical art development, memory enhancement, and social learning. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding musical technicalities such as pitch and rhythm, as most early childhood learners have yet to grasp these formal musical elements fully.

Based on the background and observations above, this study aims to explore whether singing religious songs can significantly contribute to developing musical art skills in early students.

## **2 Method**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, using a phenomenological research design to explore and interpret the experiences and meanings behind singing religious songs in early childhood education. The purpose is to understand how singing activities, particularly religious songs, contribute to developing children's musical art skills from the perspective of both educators and students.

The research was conducted at a kindergarten institution in East Java, Indonesia. The research subjects included one teacher and 21 students from the kindergarten, selected through purposive sampling based on their active participation in music-related learning activities. The teacher was chosen for their direct involvement in song-based lessons, while the students represented the primary participants in singing activities.

Data collection was conducted using three qualitative techniques:

1. Observation, to capture children's engagement, behavior, and musical responses during singing sessions.
2. Interviews were held with the class teacher to gather in-depth insights into planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.

3. Documentation involving analysis of lesson plans, checklists, and audiovisual materials used during instruction.

The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three main stages:

1. Data reduction: organizing and selecting key information from raw data.
2. Data display: presenting data in descriptive and visual formats (e.g., charts, tables).
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: identifying patterns, drawing inferences, and validating findings based on triangulation from the three data sources.

This methodological approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how singing religious songs—specifically "Alamate Anak Sholeh" and "Walisongo"—affects early childhood musical development, particularly regarding rhythm, melody, expression, and engagement.

### **3 Result**

At the kindergarten, daily singing activities are one of the teacher's routine strategies to stimulate children's artistic development. These activities are integrated into the opening session of the learning process and function as a means to condition the classroom environment. The primary goal is to capture the children's attention, foster a positive emotional climate, and enhance their enthusiasm before formal instruction begins. In practice, the singing sessions predominantly feature religious songs, serving as instructional media and tools for developing musical artistic skills. Through repeated exposure to melody, rhythm, and lyrical content, children are encouraged to engage with musical elements, thereby supporting their artistic growth and cognitive and affective engagement during learning.

From the research results, to effectively develop children's artistic abilities through religious song activities, several steps are necessary, as outlined below:

#### **3.1 Step 1: Planning**

Before the teaching and learning process begins, a teacher must prepare a plan to ensure that it is well-directed and that the objectives are achieved. Learning planning involves formulating what goals will be achieved by a teaching activity, what methods will be used to assess these goals, what materials will be presented, how to convey them, and what tools or media are needed.

Based on observations, Teachers' planning includes preparing the lesson plan, preparing checklist assessments, and implementing learning media that is agreed upon by all teachers. When developing the plan, the teacher considers the children's characteristics and their ability to remember and understand during the learning process and conducts a weekly meeting to discuss plans. Singing religious songs such as "Alamate Anak Sholeh" and "Walisongo" constitutes the core activities in the lesson plan for Quran recitation lessons scheduled on Friday, May 3 and 10, 2024. The learning media used for these religious singing activities is a Smart TV. With YouTube accessible via the Smart TV, the learning activities are well-supported and effectively facilitated.

### 3.2 Step 2: Implementation

Implementing learning is executing the Lesson Plan, which includes introductory, core, and closing activities. Implementing the learning activities at the kindergarten involves introducing religious songs using the singing method. This activity stimulates the children's musical arts development. Singing religious songs, particularly "Alamate Anak Sholeh" and "Walisongo", occur every Friday after the children complete their Dhuha prayers in the auditorium. The song "Alamate Anak Sholeh" is included in the May 3, 2024 lesson plan, while "Walisongo" is scheduled in the May 10, 2024 lesson plan.

The similarities between the two songs used as learning materials for children are both religious themes, and both are sung in Javanese. In addition, they are also frequently played on social media and TV channels. Many have also re-sung or covered both songs on YouTube channels, so children are familiar with the rhythm. However, the content and meaning are slightly different. The first song ("Alamate Anak Sholeh") talks more about the morals and ethics of a child following the personal traits of the Prophet Muhammad. At the same time, the second song (Walisongo) aims to make it easier to memorize the names of ulama figures in the history of the spread of Islamic teachings in Indonesia.

The songs were chosen because they were recently trending, making them frequently listened to and sung by children and adults alike. The song Alamate Anak Sholeh was composed by K.H. Rois Yahya Dahlan, the caretaker of Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Ulum in Pati. The lyrics of Alamate Anak Sholeh are derived from the Busyrol Karim Book and convey the meaning of signs or characteristics of a righteous child. Additionally, the lyrics contain character education values that can be applied in daily life. Meanwhile, the song Gus Ahans Mahabie created Walisongo. By singing Walisongo, children can learn the names of the nine saints (Walisongo) who played a significant role in spreading Islam. Both songs use the Javanese language and are presented with cheerful and engaging musical rhythms, making children enjoy these religious songs.

During the learning activities, the teacher first explains the material. Then, the teacher introduces the song to the children and demonstrates how to sing it. This approach makes it easier for the students to follow the learning activities. In the classroom, the teacher plays a crucial role as a model, demonstrating the song first so the students can imitate and follow along easily. After the demonstration, to optimize the learning experience, the teacher plays a YouTube music video of the religious song several times on a Smart TV. The children are seated neatly on the carpet, listening attentively to the song. Once they have listened, the children are asked to repeat the religious song several times until they memorize it in harmony with the rhythm and music accompaniment. Since these religious songs are familiar to the children, many students can remember the lyrics, though some still struggle with pronunciation. The teacher encourages children who have memorized the song to sing confidently in front of the class. Finally, the teacher and students discuss the content and meaning of the song together, helping them understand the values and messages conveyed through the lyrics.

### Song 1: “Alamate Anak Sholeh Song”

Alamate anak sholeh iku papat, Bakdane mukmin anut ing syariat  
 2<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>3</sup>4<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>  
 Kang dihin lisane alus ngendikane, Kapindo mulyaaken ing wong tuwane  
 2<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 5<sup>6</sup> 4<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 3<sup>3</sup>

Ya Rasulallah ..... Salamun 'Alaik, Ya rofi'assya niwaddarajii  
 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>  
 Athfatayaji ..... Rotal 'alami, Ya uhailalju diwal karomi  
 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>

Kaping telu asih, Ing bocah cilik cilik, Ugo marang sedulur ..... gawe becik  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 2<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 5<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 5<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>  
 Kaping telu asih, Ing bocah cilik cilik, Ugo marang sedulur ..... gawe becik  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 2<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 5<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 5<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>  
 Kaping papat ngamal, anut ing ilmune, Dadi tanggung jawab, ora ngawulane  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> 5<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>  
 Kaping papat ngamal, anut ing ilmune, Dadi tanggung jawab, ora ngawulane  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> 5<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>

Iku Saking Ulama, Aweh pitutur, Alamate bocah ..... Ingkang dadi jujur  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 4<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 5<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 3<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 5<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>  
 Iku Saking Ulama, Aweh pitutur, Alamate bocah ..... Ingkang dadi jujur  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 4<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 5<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> 3<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 5<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>

Mugo mugo kito biso ngelampahi..., Dunyo akhirat Nganemuhi billahi  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 4<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 3<sup>3</sup>  
 Mugo mugo kito biso ngelampahi..., Dunyo akhirat Nganemuhi billahi  
 3<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 4<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 3<sup>3</sup>

Ya Rasulallah ..... Salamun 'Alaik, Ya rofi'assya niwaddarajii  
 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>  
 Athfatayaji ..... Rotal 'alami, Ya uhailalju diwal karomi  
 3<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>7</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> 4<sup>3</sup>

Fig. 1. The Lyrics of Alamate Anak Sholeh Song

The melodies in the songs Alamate Anak Sholeh and Walisongo are composed in a simple and easy-to-remember manner, with a pitch range that is neither too high nor too low, making them easy for the group to sing. The varied yet consistent melodic patterns help the children recognize changes in pitch and melody. Additionally, the stable rhythm trains the children to follow the tempo of the songs. These cheerful and energetic religious songs encourage the student group to participate in learning actively. The combination of various musical elements in these songs ensures that Alamate Anak Sholeh and Walisongo's singing can be carried out as planned.

### Song 2: "Walisongo"

1 2/ 4 5 5 2/ 5 4 4 2/ 2 1      1 2/ 4 5 6/ 5 2/ 4 5 2/ 4      1 1 2/ 2/ 2/ 4 2 1 6./ 1 1  
 Sunan Gresik Maulana Malik Ibrahim      Sunan Ampel Raden Rahmat      Sunan Giri Muhammad Ainul Yaqin  
 1 2/ 4 5 2/ 5 4 2/ 2 1      1 2/ 4 5 6/ 2/ 4 5 2/ 4      1 1 2/ 2/ 2/ 4 2 1 6./ 1 1  
 Sunan Bonang Maulana Maqdam      Sunan Drajad Raden Gosim      Sunan Kalijogo Raden Syahid  
 1 2/ 4 5 2/ 5 4 2/ 2 1      1 2/ 4 5 6/ 5 2/ 4 5 2/ 4 2      1 1 2/ 2/ 2/ 4 2 1 6./ 1 1  
 Sunan Muria Raden Umar, Sunan Kudus Ja'far Shodiq      Sunan Gunung Jati Syarif Hidayatullah  
 1 2/ 4 5 2/ 5 4 2/ 2 1      1 2/ 4 5 6/ 5 2/ 4 5 2/ 4 2      1 6./ 1 2 4 4 5 4 2/ 4 2      1 6./ 1 2 4 4 5 4 2/ 4 2      1 6./ 1 1 1  
 Yaa rosuulallaah salaamun 'alaik, yaa roff'assyaani waddarojl.      Athfatan yaa jiirotal alami, yaa uhailal juudi wal karomi.  
 2' 2'/ 2' 1' 1' 1' 1' 6/ 5 6/ 1'      1' 2' 1' 6/ 6/ 6/ 1' 6/ 5 1' 6/      6/ 1' 6/ 5/ 5/ 5/ 5 4 5 4 5 5/  
 Sunan Gresik kondang ngelmu dagange      Sunan Ampel falsafah mah limone      Sunan Giri tembang dolalane  
 5/ 5/ 5 5/ 5/ 5/ 5/ 6/ 5/ 5      2' 2'/ 2' 1' 1' 6/ 5 6/ 1' 1' 1' 2' 1' 6/ 6/ 6/ 1' 6/ 5 1' 6/  
 Sunan Bonang musisi gamelane      Sunan Drajat pepali pitune, Sunan Kalijogo wayangane  
 6/ 1' 6/ 5/ 5/ 5/ 5 4 5 4 5 5/ 5/ 5/ 5 5/ 5/ 5/ 5 4 5 5/ 5/ 5/ 5 4 5 5/ 2'/ 4' 2'/ 2' 4' 2' 1' 6/ 2' 2'/ 2' 1' 6/ 1' 1'  
 Sunan Muria ngemu tradisine, Sunan Kudus gede toleransine      Sunan Gunung Jati politike, Ayo podo... eling saklawase

Source: Youtube.com/Melodica FM

Fig. 2. The Lyrics of Walisongo Song

### 3.3 Step 3: Evaluation

In the learning system, evaluation is an important component and stage that must be taken to determine learning effectiveness. The results are used as a reference in improving and perfecting learning programs and activities.

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the assessment technique involves gathering information about the children's development in learning activities. Teachers use a checklist assessment technique during daily learning, marking the achievement of specific indicators with checkmarks. The checklist contains indicators of developmental achievement, where singing activities indicate learning objectives aimed at expressing various artistic processes. These indicators are based on the school syllabus.

The checklist assessment technique helps teachers measure each child's developmental achievement level and monitor their progress and learning outcomes. This approach allows teachers to adjust learning plans and implementations according to each child's abilities. From the checklist assessments, it can be concluded that singing religious songs effectively stimulates the musical arts development of the children.

The following is data on the results of achieving artistic development through singing religious songs, namely:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Data on Arts Development Achievements

Through Singing Religious Songs

No	Children's Initials	Learning Objectives	The Student's Development After Singing Activities
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			Type 1 Song	Type 2 Song
1	AB	Expressing various art processes	Developing as Expected	Developing Very Well
2	AF		Developing as Expected	Developing as Expected
3	DH		Developing as Expected	Developing as Expected
4	ANN		Developing as Expected	Developing as Expected
5	AR		Developing as Expected	Developing Very Well
6	VN		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
7	DG		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
8	FL		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
9	SF		Developing as Expected	Developing Very Well
10	KV		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
11	KNN		Developing Very Well	Developing as Expected
12	KR		Developing Very Well	Developing as Expected
13	AM		Developing as Expected	Developing as Expected
14	AZ		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
15	HR		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
16	ZK		Developing as Expected	Developing Very Well
17	NR		Developing as Expected	Developing as Expected
18	RN		Developing as Expected	Developing as Expected
19	RD		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
20	TS		Developing Very Well	Developing Very Well
21	ZL		Developing as Expected	Developing as Expected

*Source: processed from checklist assessment*

Descriptions:

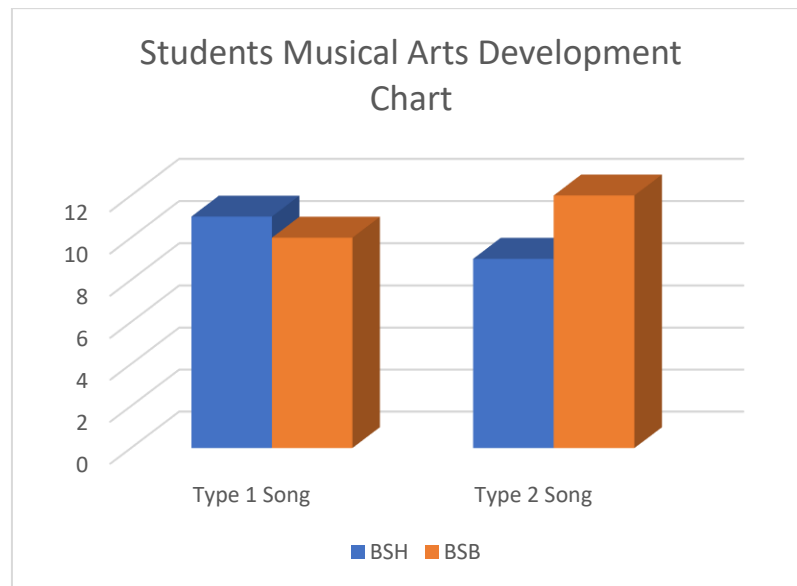
Type 1 song = “Alamate Anak Soleh”

Type 2 song = “Walisongo”

Out of 21 students singing Song 1, 11 children were categorized as DEVELOPING AS EXPECTED (*Berkembang Sesuai Harapan*), meaning they sang well, but their voices were not loud enough, or they had not fully memorized the lyrics. Meanwhile, 10 children were categorized as DEVELOPING VERY WELL (*Berkembang Sangat Baik*), indicating they



ultimately met the singing indicators. For Song 2, 9 children fell into the DEVELOPING AS EXPECTED category, while 12 were categorized as DEVELOPING VERY WELL. The evaluation criteria for singing the two songs (“Alamate Anak Sholeh” and “Walisongo”) were identical. To further illustrate the role of religious song-singing activities in developing the musical aspects of the children, refer to the following graph:



**Fig. 3.** Student Competency Levels in Musical Arts Domains

The results show that the students responded positively to the activity of singing religious songs. The children expressed joy and enthusiasm during Friday lessons, aligning with the Learning Implementation Plan. They thoroughly enjoyed the songs, often requesting them to be played and singing along spontaneously with excitement, loud voices, and teamwork. That demonstrates that singing activities make learning more enjoyable, allowing children to feel happy and engaged while understanding the song's meaning.

## 4 Discussion

### Planning

The findings highlight the structured approach taken by the teacher in preparing for Quran recitation lessons, reflecting a high level of pedagogical intentionality and alignment with best practices in early childhood education. The planning process involves the development of lesson plans, assessment tools (e.g., checklist assessments), and selecting appropriate learning media. This preparation phase aligns with the fundamental principle in instructional design: ensuring coherence between learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment methods[22].

Notably, the teacher demonstrates a reflective and collaborative planning approach by incorporating weekly meetings with fellow educators, fostering professional dialogue and shared accountability. This collaborative element not only enhances the consistency of instruction across classrooms but also exemplifies a professional learning community model, which has been shown to improve teaching quality and student outcomes[23], [24].

Moreover, the teacher's sensitivity to students' developmental characteristics—such as memory retention and comprehension—suggests using child-centered pedagogical principles, echoing constructivist theories that emphasize learner readiness and individual needs[25], [26].

The integration of digital media, particularly Smart TVs with YouTube access, as a tool to support religious singing activities (e.g., “Alamate Anak Sholeh”, “Walisongo”) illustrates the meaningful use of technology to enhance engagement and accessibility. That reflects a growing trend in digital pedagogy, where technology is used not merely for substitution but to transform and enrich the learning experience[27].

### **Implementation**

The study describes a structured implementation of religious song-based learning activities in a kindergarten setting, aligning with the lesson plans scheduled for specific dates (May 3 and May 10, 2024). The pedagogical strategy employed includes auditory, visual, and kinesthetic elements—demonstration by the teacher, audiovisual support via YouTube, and student performance—suggesting a multimodal approach to early childhood learning.

From the early childhood education standards perspective, this implementation supports the development of musical intelligence and religious character formation, two core areas often emphasized in holistic curriculum models[28]. The teacher's role as both a facilitator and model aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where guided participation helps scaffold children's learning[29], especially in cultural and moral domains.

Furthermore, integrating digital tools such as Smart TVs and YouTube indicates an effort toward digital adaptation in the classroom, aligning with broader goals of 21st-century learning. The activity structure—from introduction, demonstration, repetition, to reflection—reflects the "I do–We do–You do" teaching model, which is developmentally appropriate for young learners.

### **Evaluation**

The study highlights the implementation of checklist assessment techniques to evaluate kindergarten children's musical development through singing activities. This method, aligned with the school syllabus, ensures that learning objectives and developmental indicators are systematically monitored. The checklist approach effectively captures individual progress, providing a structured framework for assessing performance across specific indicators.

The evaluation results indicate a promising level of developmental achievement among the students. In singing Song 1, approximately 52% of the children fell under the "Developing as Expected" (Berkembang Sesuai Harapan) category, while 48% achieved the "Developing Very Well" (Berkembang Sangat Baik) standard. Similarly, for Song 2, 43% were categorized

as "Developing as Expected" and 57% as "Developing Very Well." These findings suggest incremental improvement and stronger overall performance with Song 2.

In assessing learning activities in early childhood education, the educators applied an authentic assessment approach[30]. This type of assessment is conducted in a measurable, systematic, objective, continuous, and comprehensive manner, focusing on the outcomes and the learning process. The aim is to evaluate the children's abilities based on observable facts and to describe, analyze, and interpret what occurs during the learning process. Therefore, the evaluation is not solely intended to measure the children's learning outcomes but also to review the overall learning process.

Findings from the checklist assessments reveal that singing religious songs contributes positively to children's musical and expressive development, as evidenced by their vocal performance, memorization, posture, emotional expression, and confidence. The data from two distinct songs—"Alamate Anak Sholeh" and "Walisongo"—indicates a relatively even distribution between the categories "Developing As Expected" and "Developing Very Well," with a slight increase in the latter group for the second song. This progression may indicate an adaptive learning curve or increased familiarity and comfort. These indicators suggest that when embedded with religious-cultural content and supported by a structured pedagogical approach, musical activities can effectively enhance early childhood development in both cognitive and affective domains[5], [31].

Singing activities in learning can develop children's musical arts skills. Children's singing activities can help them explore and express themselves, use imagination through movement, music, drama, and other arts such as painting, visual arts, and crafts, and develop the ability to appreciate art[32], [33]. In conclusion, singing religious songs plays a significant role in supporting children's development. For example, the cognitive development of the B1 group was evident as they were able to memorize the names of the Walisongo. Additionally, it enhanced their social-emotional development as they sang together in harmony and followed the rhythm of the music.

## **5 Conclusion**

The results of this study demonstrate that integrating religious songs into early childhood education contributes significantly to the development of children's musical and spiritual growth. Through structured activities—comprising modeling, repetition, multimedia support, and reflective discussion—students were able to engage meaningfully with the content. Songs such as "Alamate Anak Sholeh" and "Walisongo" effectively stimulated musical intelligence and character values, as evidenced by the student's ability to sing in tune, display appropriate expressions, and perform confidently.

The evaluation phase used checklist-based assessments aligned with the syllabus, allowing teachers to monitor each child's progress. Findings indicated that most students reached developmental benchmarks, with a notable number achieving the "Developing Very Well" category. The gradual improvement from the first to the second song suggests that repeated exposure and guided learning support the mastery of musical and moral content.

This research underscores the importance of culturally relevant and pedagogically appropriate strategies in early childhood education. It also highlights the value of formative assessment tools in supporting individualized learning. Moving forward, educational institutions should consider integrating religious and local cultural content through artistic methods to promote holistic child development.

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