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Submission date: 22-Apr-2025 05:14PM (UTC+0300)

Submission ID: 2592634299

File name: JPUD-PB-191-1-8.docx (494.11K)

Word count: 3706

Character count: 23901



Alphabet Mystery Box Media to Improve Early Reading Literacy in Early Childhood

Waode Lili^{1,2*}, Nur Hayati², Marth Christianti³
Early Childhood Education, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of using the alphabet mystery box media on early reading skills in early childhood. The literature review was conducted using Google Scholar, Google Search, hyperlinks, and ResearchGate. A total of 13 peer-reviewed publications, dated between 2020 and 2024, were included in the review, which included studies in English and Indonesian. Data analysis used content analysis to examine findings related to the Alphabet Mystery Box media and its effect on early childhood reading skills, contextualized in relevant theories and previous research. The results of the study indicate that early reading skills through the use of alphabet box media for early childhood have a significant impact on early literacy skills. The use of "magic box" learning media can improve children's cognitive and language skills, including recognizing numbers, alphabets, and colors. This article aims to optimize the reading skills of children aged 0-6 years, which is considered a critical developmental period. This study can assess how integrating traditional and digital media affects the engagement and effectiveness of early reading instruction.

Artikel History

Submission : December 6, 2024

Received : April 16, 2025

Accepted : April 30, 2025

Keywords:

Alphabet Mystery Box; Early Childhood;

Early Reading;

Doi: [10.21009/jpud.v19i1.49908](https://doi.org/10.21009/jpud.v19i1.49908)



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*CONTACT Corresponding: Waode Lili, Early Childhood Education, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Email: waodelili.2023@student.unj.ac.id

1. Introduction

Increase ability literacy read beginning is one of development basic in PAUD institutions. Permendikbud Number 137 of 2014 level achievement development child age 5-6 years in scope literacy namely: 1) mentioning symbols known letters, 2) recognize voice letter beginning from the names of existing objects around it, 3) mention group image that has sound letter / letters same beginning, 4) understanding connection between sound and shape letters, 5) reading one's own name, and 6) writing one's own name (Permendikbud, 2014)

Early reading literacy is a stage of reading development characterized by proficiency in reading the alphabet, but is limited to reading each letter, understanding the alphabet, and combining letters into syllables to make one word. (Ramadanti et al., 2021). Learning the alphabet, numbers and symbols is the first step in the cognitive process of early reading. Therefore, early reading involves children starting their activities by recognizing the alphabet using symbols. Improving young children's reading skills is very important because children's IQ increases along with their level of linguistic development. Based on description the so application that can used in develop ability read the beginning child that is with use method read the basis for using *Alphabet Mystery Box Media* (Asiah N 2020).

Early reading is the initial stage where children learn to recognize letters and sound symbols and pronounce them, as a basis for further reading learning (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2020). Literacy read beginning is stage beginning child Study know letters and symbols sound and voicing it, as base in learning read next. Ability read beginning study This referring to list the opinion above is ability For know letters and mention letters vocal and also consonants taught in a way planned in children preschool as base in learning furthermore (Dita Mailinda et al., 2023; Danita et al., 2023)

Literacy read beginning started from ability child to build motion eye from left to right, ability associate letter with sounds the language it represents, reading words and sentences simple and read is one of the most important aspect in ability language, reading is also a runway main as efforts made by someone to be able to understand other learning processes (Nora Fatmawati Ningrum et al., 2023). Read the beginning is reading taught in a way programmed to child preschool (Ismawati et al., 2022). If the teacher is in the learning process teach No use variation, then will boring child, attention reduced, sleepy, lazy and the consequences objective Study No achieved. Three variations That is style teaching, media, and materials learning, interaction between teacher and child. Third variation That emphasis on process variation not product. If third component the combined in its use so will increase attention child, raise desire and will learn. All child No to wish existence boredom in Study Because matter the no pleasant (Islamiya et al., 2024).

Media *Alphabet Mystery Box* is a modified version of the chain word guessing game. *Alphabet mystery box* is a fun learning tool to introduce letters to children. Children will guess the letters while learning by feeling the objects in the box. *Alphabet Mystery Box media* is a fun educational game for preschool and kindergarten children. This game helps children learn the *Alphabet*, letter recognition, and fine motor skills (Marini Handriani et al., 2020).

The purpose of this study was to improve early reading skills through the alphabet mystery box media that has been done in previous studies. This study contributes to the field of early childhood education and literacy development by demonstrating the practical application and effectiveness of the alphabet mystery box as a teaching medium to improve early reading skills. This study builds on previous research by refining the use of this medium, providing evidence-based insights into its impact on young learners. In addition, it offers educators an innovative and engaging tool to improve phonemic awareness and alphabet recognition, addressing common challenges in early reading instruction. The findings of this study not only validate the utility of the alphabet mystery box but also provide a replicable model for integrating interactive and game-based learning strategies into the literacy curriculum. By bridging theory and practice, this study contributes to the development of effective teaching methodologies and promotes a more inclusive approach to early literacy education.

2. Method

Methods used in the research This is Literature Review. Literature Review is method systematic, explicit, and can reproduced For identify, evaluate, and synthesize results from work completed and by researchers, academics and also practitioner (Arlene Fink, 2020). The method used in this study is a literature review, focusing on evaluating existing research related to early reading skills through the use of alphabet mystery box media for early childhood education. This approach involves systematic identification and analysis of relevant references to provide a foundation and benchmark for this study. Data from the reviewed articles were arranged and analyzed using a matrix, with the results summarized in the table (Appendix).

Review Types This research uses a narrative review approach, which synthesizes previous knowledge qualitatively without aiming for generalization or cumulative knowledge reviewed (Lau et al., 2017). The population for this review consisted of all journal articles that discussed early reading skills, while the sample was specifically focused on studies that explored the use of alphabet mystery boxes as the independent variable and their impact on early reading skills as the dependent variable. This study used descriptive analysis to systematically analyze and explain the data. The author use sources from *Google Scholar*, *Google Search*, and *Research Get*, articles are selected based on their relevance to the topic and availability in full-text PDF format, which can help find publication use source from their database. Relevant articles with condition selected and then analyzed. A total of 13 peer-reviewed publications, dated between 2020 and 2024, were included in the review, covering studies in English and Indonesian. Data synthesis was conducted through narrative techniques, classifying and comparing data extracted from the research objectives and findings to obtain comprehensive insights and conclusions. The inclusion criteria for the literature search are in Table 1.

Table 1 Literature Search Inclusion Criteria

Aspect	Inclusion
Research Objectives/Keywords	Research focused on learning media and developing children's early reading literacy.
Population	Early childhood
Intervention	Programs or strategies that aim to use <i>alphabet mystery box learning media</i> to improve reading literacy in children aged 5-6 years, such as learning media skills teaching programs, psychosocial support from teachers and parents.
Results	Early reading literacy such as the ability to name vowels, name the letters AZ, and read one's own name.
Study Design	Qualitative study designs, such as case studies or phenomenology, to explore individual experiences in the context of children's early reading literacy.
Document Type	Journal articles, books, or research reports that provide data or analysis relevant to the case study or phenomenology
Publication Year	2020 to 2024
Language	English and Indonesian

3. Result

From the results of several literature studies that have been conducted, early reading skills through the use of alphabet mystery box media have been proven to have an influence on children's early reading skills. The data analysis matrix in the article is presented in Table 2. The data analysis matrix in the article used in the literature study.

Tabel 2 Analysis Matrix For The Articles Used In *Literature Review*:

Author, Title, Journal	Method	Results
(Nur Asiah, 2020) "Development of Alphabet Mystery Box Learning Media to Introduce Letters to Group A Kindergarten"	The method used in this journal is the ADDIE method, which stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation.	The results of the study indicate that the "Alphabet Mystery Box" learning media is suitable for use in introducing letters to children aged 4-5 years in group A of Kindergarten. It shows that the learning media developed pays attention to aspects of material and media, so it is suitable for use in learning to recognize letters.
(Erfiani Ramadanti and Zuhairansyah Arifin, 2021) "Strategy for Improving Beginning Reading Ability through Picture Card Media for Early Age Children in an Islamic Frame and the Perspective of Education Experts."	The method used in this study is the library research method, which is taking data from books and journals. This study consists of two important sources, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources.	The results revealed in the article include: The Importance of Picture Media; Picture Cards as a Teaching Tool; Learning Strategies; Development of Reading Skills;
(Muhammad Reza Andhika Dwinusa and Sari Susanti,	The journal method used is the research and	The journal results show that all features of the developed educational game function as

2021) "Development of Educational Games for Learning Alphabet Letters in Early Childhood Using."	development method (Research & Development).	expected. In addition, this game is expected to improve the quality of learning and children's reading skills in a fun and interactive way.
(Karin Pramuwitya Gutni, Fatrica Syafri, Deni Febrini, 2024) "The Influence of Magic Box Game Media on the Letter Recognition Ability of 5-6 Year Old Children."	The research method used in this journal is the experimental method. The design used is the Post-Test Control Group Design (Non Equivalent Control Group Design).	The results of the study showed that the use of the "magic box" game media can improve the ability to recognize letters in children aged 5-6 years at Kemala Bayangkari 26 Kindergarten, Bengkulu City. After treatment, there was a significant increase in children's ability to recognize letters, which confirms that this game media is effective and fun in helping children understand and remember letters.
(Khoridatul Islamiya, Ahmad Nurefendi Fradana, M.Pd., 2024) "The Role of Magic Letter Box Teaching Media on Improving Reading Learning in Low Grade Student [The Role of Magic Letter Box Teaching Media on Improving Reading Learning in Low Grade Students]."	The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative research method.	The results of the study on the learning media "Magic Letter Box" showed a significant positive influence on students' motivation and reading skills. Most students expressed enthusiasm in using the media, and this study concluded that the Magic Letter Box is effective in improving reading skills in early childhood students.
(Dita Mailinda, Sarifah, Ahmad Rathomi, 2023) "The Influence of the Letter Box Game on Children's Early Reading Ability in Tarbiyatul Islam Kindergarten for the 2020-2021 Academic Year."	The method used in this journal is comparative research with a quantitative approach.	The results of the study show that: Early reading ability of children in the experimental group after participating in the letter box game. This shows that children's early reading ability is only at the beginning of development stage; Early reading ability of children in the control group who did not participate in the letter box game; There is no significant difference between the early reading ability of children in the experimental group and the control group.
(Nora Fatmawati Ningrum, Nurlita, Defni Satria, 2023) "The Influence of Alphabet Fishing Media on the Reading Ability of 5-6 Year Old Children at Mawar Putih Kindergarten, Singingi Hilir District, Kuantan Singingi Regency."	The method used in this journal is experimental research. The research design applied is a pre-experimental model with a one group pretest posttest design.	The results of this study indicate that there is a significant influence of the use of Alphabet Fishing media on the reading ability of children aged 5-6 years at Mawar Putih Kindergarten, Singingi Hilir District, Kuantan Singingi Regency. This study confirms the effectiveness of Alphabet Fishing media in improving the reading ability of early childhood.
(Putri Ismawati, Lina Sri Widyawati, 2022) "Journal title: "The Influence of Kofabar Media (Alphabet Boxes and Pictures) on Children's Early Reading Skills at RA Muslimat Babul Ulum Gumulan Kesamben Jombang."	The research method used in this study is: Research Design: Pre-experimental with One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design type.	The results of this journal show that: Improved Reading Ability: There is a positive and significant influence of the use of Kofabar media on children's early reading ability; Skill Development: Children show progress in recognizing vowels and consonants, connecting pictures with words, and arranging syllables into words. It can be concluded that regular and repeated use of Kofabar media has a great influence on children's early reading development.
(Khairunnisa Ulfadhilah, Suyadi, 2021) "Using Box of Number and Alphabet Media	The methods used in this study are as follows: Qualitative Approach.	The results of the study showed that the use of media box of numbers and alphabets can improve children's cognitive and language

to Improve Cognitive and Language Abilities in Recognizing Numbers and Alphabets.”		abilities, including recognizing numbers, alphabets, and colors. Children are able to mention numbers and letters, and insert pieces of numbers and letters according to the available boxes. In addition, this media also helps create a fun and non-monotonous learning atmosphere, so that children are more focused and enthusiastic in learning.
(Anna Kartika Wahyuningrum Linda Dwiyaniti, 2022) “Development of Educational Learning Media <i>Mystery Box</i> for Children’s Development in Recognizing Letters.”	The method used in this journal is Descriptive Qualitative. Data collection techniques used include observation, interviews, and practice (data triangulation).	The results of the study showed that the use of APE (Educational Game Tools) mystery box media is effective in improving the ability of children aged 4-5 years in recognizing letters. This media makes learning more fun and interactive, so that children are more active and understand the material better. This study also shows a positive impact on children’s involvement and interest in learning, and suggests that teachers utilize this media in the learning process to facilitate explanations and increase children’s involvement.
Heru Kurniawan, Kasmia, Amalia Nurbaiti, Laely Mukaromah Faizatin Amanah, 2022, Early Reading Skill Development Early Children Through Letters Board Games.”	The method used in the journal is a document-descriptive research approach, which involves reviewing and analyzing documents related to letter board games and early childhood reading skills.	The results of the research indicate that developing early reading skills in children can be effectively achieved through letter board games. These games are enjoyable for early childhood and involve various steps based on the introduction of letters and words. The specific early reading skills developed through playing with letter games include picture reading skills, narration skills, letter reading skills, and syllable and word reading skills.

4. Discussion

Based on the results of a literature study of 17 articles or journals mentioned in table 1, the role of alphabet media as a mystery box and improving early childhood reading skills. Are two topics studied by the interrelated foundations. The development of this relationship is the result of the development of alphabet mystery box media in the form of learning media in the form of boxes with attractive colors and capital letters packaged in the form of AZ letters using the main material, namely cooking oil cardboard glued with flannel cloth. At the analysis stage, the stages carried out are: what is done is analyzing children’s needs and analyzing media. One of them is when the teacher’s learning process often only uses letter card media to improve early reading skills in children, when using letter card media, most children are not focused and get bored quickly, so that learning is less effective in improving early reading skills in children.

The results of the literature review found several relevant studies that have been discussed showing that the alphabet mystery box media or mystery letter box is effective in stimulating and improving early reading skills in early childhood (Asiah 2020; Mailinda et al., 2023). The Alphabet mystery box media developed has the characteristics of materials that are easily obtained, can be recycled (environmentally friendly), and have an attractive design. Environmentally friendly media is very much needed to support sustainable development programs, teachers can also teach children to use recyclable materials, with this teachers can also teach the character of loving the environment, and can innovate faster and more creatively, the media developed is in the form of (Wahyuningrum et al., n.d.) Alphabet mystery box media which can be used by teachers and to facilitate the learning process, especially in early reading (Windayanti, 2024)). Next, if the letters are arranged like the word cards that are taken, the child is asked to read the letters one by one and then read one word. The teacher helps the child if the child has difficulty reading letters and words (Anna Kartika Wahyuningrum et al., 2022).

By using the alphabet mystery box media, children are able to enrich their spoken language and develop all aspects of language. Children can also read and discuss in groups and can add information that students have according to their respective experiences. Children can enjoy learning activities using the alphabet mystery box media. There is an increase in children’s early reading skills after using the alphabet mystery box media. (Rosyida et al., 2024). From the research, it can be concluded that early reading skills through the use of alphabet mystery box media in early childhood have a significant influence on early reading skills in early childhood. (Rosyida et al., 2024)

5. Conclusion

The Alphabet Mystery Box has been proven to be an effective and engaging tool for improving early childhood reading skills. The interactive, multisensory approach encourages letter recognition, phonemic awareness, and memory while improving fine motor skills and building children's self-confidence.

Its eco-friendly and adaptable design makes it suitable for a variety of learning contexts, both at home and in schools. By combining elements of fun and creativity, this medium not only supports literacy development but also instills values of environmental responsibility. Future research could expand on this foundation by examining the long-term impact of *Alphabet Mystery Box* use, its customization for different learners, integration with digital devices, and effectiveness across cultural contexts. Additionally, research could explore its impact on emotional and social development, teacher implementation practices, and the sustainability of its eco-friendly design, ensuring broader adoption and scalability of the device in early childhood education.

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