



## Implementation of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in Islamic Religious Education Learning for Deaf Children

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**Abstract:** The implementation of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for hearing-impaired children at SLB B Karnnamanohara addresses the need for effective strategies in overcoming barriers to teaching abstract religious concepts. A qualitative approach was applied, involving three PAI teachers and six students with moderate to severe hearing loss from grades VII–IX. Data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Findings indicate that MRM encourages improved religious understanding and communication skills by combining heart-to-heart conversations, visualization media, and active parental involvement. Although positive outcomes emerged, it remains premature to claim the method's effectiveness without quantitative validation. These results underscore the importance of integrating MRM with consistent parental collaboration to enhance the religious education experience for hearing-impaired learners.

**Keywords:** *Maternal Reflective Method, Islamic Religious Education, hearing-impaired, parental involvement.*

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### I. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a strategic role in shaping the character, morality, and spirituality of students, including hearing-impaired students. It functions not only as a means of instilling religious values but also as a medium for reinforcing essential social and humanitarian principles in daily life. In the context of special education, PAI presents its own challenges, as abstract religious concepts such as faith, worship, and morality are often difficult to grasp due to communication barriers and limited access to appropriate teaching methods. Therefore, identifying effective, inclusive instructional approaches tailored to the needs of hearing-impaired students becomes a vital concern in religious education discourse.

According to LeClair & Saunders (2019), approximately 52 million children worldwide live with hearing impairments, many of whom struggle to access quality educational services, including religious education. In Indonesia, the implementation of PAI for hearing-impaired students remains inadequately accommodated within curricula and teaching methods tailored to their characteristics and needs. As a result, most hearing-impaired students experience difficulties in comprehending abstract religious content delivered through conventional verbal approaches (Dewantoro, Pradipta, & Hanif, 2023). This situation necessitates immediate pedagogical innovation to create accessible, meaningful, and equitable learning experiences in religious education for this marginalized group.

Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher at SLB B Karnnamanohara Malang City in January 2024 revealed that hearing-impaired students encountered significant difficulties in understanding PAI materials, particularly concerning the concepts of faith and morality. These challenges arose due to the predominance of lecture-based methods lacking visual support and reflective dialogues, which directly impacted students' comprehension and participation during religious education classes. Consequently, religious concepts remained abstract and disconnected from the students' daily realities, limiting their ability to internalize essential spiritual and ethical values.

This issue is supported by Elyondri and Azizah's (2023) findings, which emphasized that communication barriers are the primary factor hindering religious understanding among hearing-impaired students. Similarly, Supriyadi, Patmawati, & Waziroh (2023) reported that the continued reliance on lecture-based teaching remains the main obstacle in delivering PAI materials to hearing-impaired learners. Additionally, Khusniyah et al. (2023) concluded that parental involvement in home-based learning plays a crucial role in improving educational outcomes for students with

special needs. These findings collectively highlight the urgency to identify and implement pedagogical methods that foster both accessible communication and active family participation.

An instructional approach considered relevant to address these challenges is the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM), developed by Van Uden. This method emphasizes dialogical communication through intensive conversations, a comfortable learning atmosphere, the use of visual media, and emotional involvement between teachers, students, and parents. Komanchuk et al. (2022) noted that MRM enhances language abilities and the comprehension of abstract concepts among hearing-impaired students. Furthermore, the natural and personalized nature of MRM aligns with principles of inclusive education, making it suitable for diverse learners in special education settings

Winarsih et al. (2023) highlighted the strength of MRM in building effective interpersonal communication between teachers and hearing-impaired students, while Fadilah (2023) demonstrated that combining MRM with visual media significantly improves students' understanding of religious concepts and religious practices. Consequently, MRM is considered an adaptive, communicative, and participatory alternative for religious education in special education contexts. Its implementation has shown promising outcomes in facilitating language acquisition, emotional bonding, and cognitive comprehension among hearing-impaired students.

The social model in special needs education, as conceptualized by Bronfenbrenner (1994) through ecological systems theory, underscores the importance of involving various environmental systems in children's developmental processes. In the context of hearing-impaired students, parental involvement forms a key component within the mesosystem that reinforces the continuity of learning between school and home environments. Karinska, Laila, & Husna (2024) emphasized that active collaboration between teachers and parents substantially enhances learning outcomes in religious education for hearing-impaired students. Such collaboration also contributes to strengthening the child's emotional well-being and confidence in religious expression.

In response to these conditions, a study is needed to comprehensively describe the implementation of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in PAI learning for hearing-impaired students. This research also focuses on parental involvement in supporting learning at home to ensure continuity between school-based and home-based learning processes. Such efforts are essential to realize an inclusive and adaptive religious education for hearing-impaired students. Addressing these pedagogical gaps is crucial for promoting equal educational opportunities and supporting the holistic development of students with special needs.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe the implementation of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in Islamic Religious Education for hearing-impaired students at SLB B Karnnamanohara Malang City, and to portray the forms of parental involvement in applying the method at home. The research is expected to contribute to developing an effective, communicative, and collaborative religious education model involving teachers, hearing-impaired students, and parents. Through this effort, it is hoped that religious education can be more inclusive, meaningful, and accessible for students with hearing impairments in Indonesia.

## II. Method

A qualitative descriptive approach was applied to explore the implementation of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for hearing-impaired students at SLB B Karnnamanohara, Malang City. The study focused on two primary aspects: the application of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in PAI learning for hearing-impaired students at SLB B Karnnamanohara, and the school's efforts to involve parents in applying the method at home to create a balanced and continuous learning environment. The consistency of these research focuses with the study objectives ensures methodological clarity and strengthens the alignment between research aims and field inquiry.

The study involved three PAI teachers and six hearing-impaired students from grades VII to IX, who experience moderate to severe hearing loss. Additionally, three parents participated to represent the family involvement aspect in supporting home-based religious education. This participant composition was deliberately selected to provide comprehensive perspectives from both instructional and familial environments in the application of MRM.

Data collection techniques included classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, and document analysis. Observation activities aimed to describe the implementation of MRM in classroom settings, while interviews were designed to gain deeper insights into the experiences of teachers and parental involvement. Document analysis was carried out on lesson plans, student activity notes, and parental guidance documentation to triangulate data and strengthen the validity of findings

Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing in accordance with Miles & Huberman (1984) model. Each piece of information was categorized according to research objectives and cross-checked among data sources. Consistent use of the Maternal Reflective Method terminology and participant designation ensured conceptual clarity throughout the research process.

### III. Results and Discussion

#### *A. Implementation of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in Islamic Religious Education for Hearing-Impaired Students at SLB B Karnnamanohara*

The application of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SLB B Karnnamanohara is conducted through personal and dialogic interactions between teachers and students. A PAI teacher explained, "I don't just explain the material, I invite the students to share their daily experiences related to the religious topic, like honesty. I ask if they've ever returned extra change after shopping". This approach aligns with the MRM principle of heart-to-heart conversations in a nurturing and safe environment (Hasanah, 2022). Such a strategy has proven effective in helping students grasp abstract religious concepts more contextually.

Each student demonstrates varying levels of comprehension, requiring teachers to adapt instructional strategies accordingly. Another teacher stated, "Some students grasp the material quickly, while others need images or videos. So I create videos about charity and use pictures of children praying together". Visual aids serve as crucial tools within MRM, supporting the dual coding theory, which posits that information is better understood when conveyed through both verbal and visual means (Kanellopoulou, Kermanidis, & Giannakoulou, 2019). Religious materials such as charity, prayer, and ethics are taught through images, videos, and reflective dialogues to enhance deaf students' spiritual comprehension.

Teachers encounter challenges simplifying abstract religious concepts. One teacher admitted, "When talking about sincerity or destiny, the children get confused. So I give them examples from everyday life, like sharing food or helping friends". Real-life contexts function as transformative media in PAI instruction based on MRM, consistent with Maslow's theory of self-actualization through concrete experiences (Cahyono, Hamda, & Prahastiwi, 2022). The use of simulations and hands-on activities allows students to apply religious concepts in practical ways.

Positive feedback is consistently provided during reflective conversations to encourage student participation. A teacher explained, "Whenever a child speaks, I praise them first, even if it's imperfect. If there's a mistake, I gently correct it so they stay motivated". This method supports Vygotsky's theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in language and cognitive development for children with special needs (Bodrova & Leong, 2024). MRM, therefore, functions not only as a religious education method but also as a communication therapy medium.

Teachers incorporate simple gestures and facial expressions to supplement verbal explanations. One teacher noted, "If a child doesn't understand words, I use gestures and facial expressions. That usually helps them get the message". This practice aligns with Pasetto et al. (2024) findings that deaf children more easily comprehend messages through visual and kinesthetic communication. Thus, non-verbal communication becomes a vital component in implementing MRM effectively.

Consistent application of MRM is evident in daily learning activities. One student, referred to as R, successfully narrated a personal story about donating food at home after learning about charity in class. The teacher remarked, "After the lesson on charity, R told me he helped his mother donate food to a neighbor". This incident demonstrates how religious values become internalized through MRM's dialogic and experiential approach.

The teacher's role as a facilitator is prominent in MRM implementation. The classroom environment is deliberately made flexible and warm to encourage students to express themselves. One teacher stated, "I never scold the children. If they make mistakes, I speak to them gently because if pressured, they'll stop talking". This approach aligns with Rachmawati & Purbaningrum (2019) principle of empathetic communication in special education, emphasizing emotional safety in learning processes.

MRM implementation is further supported by adaptations to the Merdeka Curriculum, where PAI materials are simplified. A teacher explained, "I start with easy topics like charity, prayer, and helping parents. When those are understood, we move to harder ones". This strategy illustrates the school's commitment to tailoring content based on the needs and characteristics of deaf students, as recommended in the Merdeka Curriculum framework (Mira & Kunaenih, 2024).

#### *B. The School's Efforts to Apply MRM to Parents for Home Implementation to Balance School and Home Learning*

The school actively involves parents in the learning process through a weekly parent coaching program. The school principal noted, "Every Friday, we conduct parent training sessions. The PAI teacher demonstrates how to teach religious material using the MRM method at home". Parental involvement is crucial in ensuring continuity between school-based and home-based learning, consistent with Khusniah, Fauziyah, & Mustadi (2023) who emphasized the importance of school-parent collaboration in improving learning outcomes.

Parents have demonstrated strong enthusiasm for participating in these programs. One parent, Mrs. N, reported, "I now understand how to teach my child religion at home. I usually show pictures and ask questions, like they do in school". This observation reflects Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which highlights the impact of interactions between home and school environments on child development (Salsabila, 2018). Increased parental engagement has been shown to positively influence educational outcomes for deaf children.

The practice of reflective conversation at home is adjusted to match classroom material. A parent shared, "When my child learns about prayer at school, I reinforce it at home using pictures and by asking them questions about it". This method supports Hester, Bridges, & Rollins (2020), who emphasized the importance of maintaining consistent instructional strategies between home and school in educating children with special needs.

The school fosters regular communication between teachers and parents to support MRM implementation at home. A teacher noted, "I often text parents to check on the child's progress at home. If they encounter difficulties, we discuss solutions together". This practice aligns with the parental involvement model proposed by Aldrin & Pristinella (2022), which advocates for parents' active engagement in children's education through routine interaction with teachers.

Positive outcomes have been observed in students' speaking abilities and confidence at home. One mother shared, "Now my child talks more about prayer and charity at home". This development illustrates the effectiveness of consistent MRM application in both school and home settings, corroborating Irwanto et al.'s (2018) findings on the benefits of continuous MRM-based learning.

Parental involvement extends beyond structured religious lessons to include informal religious activities. One parent remarked, "We make it a habit to recite the Qur'an together at home, using picture books and discussing the stories". This home-based religious activity integrates formal and informal religious education, supporting Ningsih & Zalisman (2018) assertion of the importance of combining religious instruction in various contexts.

Parents' active participation has also enhanced students' learning motivation. A PAI teacher noted, "When children see their parents enthusiastic about teaching religion at home, they become more eager to learn in school". This relationship reflects Maslow's theory of motivation, where children's engagement increases when their environment provides emotional and educational support (Cahyono, Hamda, & Prahastiwi, 2022).

Sustained implementation of MRM at home helps children improve their speaking abilities, religious understanding, and daily religious practices. One parent stated, "Alhamdulillah, now my child understands the meaning of charity and prayer and can talk to me about it". These results

confirm that the success of MRM depends not only on classroom teaching methods but also on collaborative efforts with parents (Fia, 2020).

#### IV. Conclusion and Suggestion

The implementation of the Maternal Reflective Method (MRM) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has proven effective in improving the speaking abilities, comprehension of religious concepts, and practical application of religious values among deaf children at SLB B Karnamanohara. Through personalized conversations, contextual examples, and the integration of visual media, MRM addresses the challenges posed by abstract religious teachings for students with hearing impairments. An emotionally supportive and interactive learning atmosphere strengthens both linguistic and moral development within this learner group.

Parental involvement has emerged as a critical factor in sustaining the success of MRM beyond the classroom. Weekly coaching sessions and ongoing communication between teachers and parents have enabled the continuity of religious learning at home. Active participation from families enhances children's motivation, reinforces religious values in daily activities, and ensures that educational outcomes are not solely dependent on formal instruction.

Greater application of MRM is recommended in both classroom and home environments, supported by structured parental training programs. Policymakers should integrate MRM into the national curriculum for special needs education, while educators are encouraged to consistently apply multisensory and dialogic learning approaches. Developers of educational media are advised to create accessible digital tools aligned with MRM principles. Future research should explore effective parental involvement strategies and innovative visualization methods to strengthen religious education for deaf learners.

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