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The Efforts to Improve Learning Outcomes of Islamic Religious Education on the Material of Asmaul Husna using the Index Card Match Method in Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Low learning outcomes and classroom passivity in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), particularly concerning the material of Asmaul Husna, persist due to conventional lecture methods that induce student boredom and lack of motivation. **Objective:** This study aims to evaluate and improve fourth-grade students' learning outcomes and active comprehension of Asmaul Husna through the implementation of the Index Card Match method at SDN 08 Seluma. **Method:** Utilizing a Classroom Action Research model across two structured cycles, this study investigated 10 fourth-grade students. Data collection involved formative tests and peer observations, evaluated using individual mastery (minimum score 70) and classical mastery (85% absorptive capacity). **Result:** Student academic performance surged significantly. The average formative test score rose from 54.00 (54% mastery) in Cycle I where students struggled with writing and memorizing divine attributes to 81.00 (100% classical mastery) in Cycle II, with all students scoring between 7 and 10. **Conclusion:** The Index Card Match method is an effective, interactive, and transformative solution that successfully overcomes learning barriers, eliminates boredom, and enhances both cognitive and affective mastery of Asmaul Husna. **Contribution:** This research provides empirical evidence on cooperative learning, a replicable two-cycle classroom action design, and practical institutional solutions to elevate elementary Islamic education quality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamentally one of the most essential efforts in human resource development. In the context of education in Indonesia, education is expected to produce superior human resources. The learning process within the classroom constitutes a very important part of education. The learning process in educational units is organized in an interactive, inspirational, enjoyable, challenging, and motivating manner to encourage students to participate actively while providing adequate space for initiative, creativity, and independence in accordance with the talents, interests, and physical as well as psychological development of students (Ilhami & Syahrani, 2021; Siregar et al., 2021; Sukardjo et al., 2021; Rohiani, 2020).

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Teachers as professional personnel are stated to function to elevate dignity and roles as learning agents to improve the quality of national education. A professional teacher certainly possesses competence in their field. Aside from possessing professional competence, which means mastering the subject they teach, a teacher must possess pedagogical competence, namely mastering teaching methodologies, including curriculum mastery, instructional process design, instructional process execution, learning evaluation and analysis, and the implementation of follow-up programs (Kosim & Subhi, 2016). In addition, teachers are required to possess personality competence and social competence (Lestari & Purwanti, 2018). Certainly, teachers must possess the ability to communicate well with their environment (Sari et al., 2022). The quality of students achieved by teachers, viewed from the potential as stated above, has its starting point in nothing other than the learning activities conducted by the teacher alongside their students as learning subjects (Suludani, 2020). Learning is the process of interaction between students and educators and learning sources within a learning environment. Therefore, the learning process driven by teachers must be planned and executed solidly so as to achieve learning goals and outcomes maximally.

Based on experience acquired through preliminary study research, the average grade of learning on the material of Asmaul Husna remains low. The average grade obtained should naturally become a shared concern, considering that Asmaul Husna pertains to the obligatory attributes of Allah, which constitutes an important matter that must be understood by children. The grade obtained is not merely cognitive in nature, but the expected grade is reflected in children's affective attitudes. High grades accompanied by good attitudes and behaviors in life represent a shared hope. A good teacher is one who is capable of selecting and utilizing appropriate methods, strategies, and media in learning. In the reality on the ground, the primary constraint in determining method utilization frequently lacks alignment with instructional goals. The lecture method often serves as a mainstay. In fact, various other methods still exist that are more appropriate according to instructional goals. Problems commonly occurring in schools involve the learning process, where numerous issues still transpire, such as students lacking motivation to learn (Haryanti et al., 2022), feeling shy to ask questions and paying less attention to lessons (Saputro et al., 2022), and lacking involvement in the learning process (Marpaung & Cendana, 2020). This likely happens because students feel bored with the lecture method applied by the teacher, the learning atmosphere lacks seriousness, and learning remains purely one-way.

Various previous studies and research concerning innovations in Islamic Religious Education learning have widely explored the effectiveness of media utilization and interactive models to increase student engagement. A number of studies confirm that the application of cooperative learning methods has proven capable of fostering individual and group responsibility as well as creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere (Annisa & Marlina, 2019; Taufik, 2020). Related research also demonstrates that the use of question-and-answer card matching search strategies provides space for students to help one another actively understand material concepts (Hakiki & Cinta, 2021; Ali, 2021). These studies generally focus on increasing general activeness in religious subjects at the elementary school level.

Although various prior studies have examined the effectiveness of cooperative learning methods in improving learning outcomes, studies specifically testing the application of the Index Card Match method to overcome learning fatigue and difficulties in understanding the material of Asmaul Husna still require development. This material not only demands cognitive mastery through the introduction and comprehension of the meanings of Allah SWT names, but also the internalization of affective values in daily life, particularly for fourth-grade elementary school students.

By observing learning outcomes that remain below average and the broad characteristics of the material of Asmaul Husna, the application of the Index Card Match method constitutes an urgent novelty to be tested in order to solve conventional learning fatigue problems and comprehensively bridge the attainment of student learning outcomes (Nugraha & Masykuri, 2013). Unlike conventional rote-memorization drills or monotonous one-way lectures that frequently induce classroom passivity, this method introduces a structured, game-based kinetic dynamic. By pairing questions and answers through physical movement and peer interaction, the method transforms tedious memorization tasks into an engaging collaborative challenge. Consequently, this pedagogical innovation directly addresses the dual challenge of preventing mental fatigue while ensuring thorough mastery of extensive theological vocabulary.

This study possesses high significance in providing empirical and practical contributions to the development of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in elementary schools, while serving as an empirical reference for improving the quality of the teaching and learning process within related educational unit environments. Empirically, the findings enrich the body of knowledge on cooperative learning by offering measurable evidence of how paired-card mechanics elevate both academic scores and student confidence. Practically, this research provides educators with a replicable, low-cost instructional framework to replace teacher-centered routines. Furthermore, for

elementary schools especially those in regional settings facing similar pedagogical constraints these insights offer a validated reference for optimizing curriculum absorptive capacity and cultivating an interactive, student-centered learning culture.

This study aims to determine the improvement of Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes in the material of Asmaul Husna through the Index Card Match method among fourth-grade students of SDN 08 Seluma, Talo Kecil Sub-district, Seluma Regency, with a deep study focus on the effectiveness of classroom action in optimizing student activeness and learning outcome attainment.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing a classroom action research model. According to Utomo et al. (2024), classroom action research is a research activity conducted by teachers through testing a cycle in the form of action (activities) within a real situation (in the classroom) in a study group to improve and enhance the quality of learning, as well as to improve and enhance student learning outcomes at school.

2.2 Research Subject

This classroom action research was conducted in Class IV of SDN 08 Seluma, Talo Kecil Sub-district, Seluma Regency, in the year 2024. Overall, the students who became the focus of attention in this study totaled 10 students, consisting of 5 male students and 5 female students, with the research conducted classically.

This research was conducted on the subject of Islamic Religious Education specifically focusing on the material of Asmaul Husna. The implementation of this classroom action research will be carried out by following an action scenario. In its progression, should weaknesses be discovered, they will be corrected in accordance with existing conditions in the field. Through these activities, it is expected that the execution of the research will run smoothly and achieve the desired goals.

2.3 Data Analysis

The calculation method to determine student learning mastery within the teaching and learning process is as follows: Recapitulating test results. Calculating the total score achieved and its percentage for each individual student using the learning mastery formula found in the assessment technical guidebook, where a student is stated to achieve individual mastery if they obtain a minimum score of 70, whereas classically, learning mastery is stated to be achieved if the number of individually mastered students reaches 85% who have achieved an absorptive capacity of greater than or equal to 65%. Analyzing the observation results conducted by peers regarding teacher and student activities during the teaching and learning process.

2.4 Procedures

This preparation activity includes: (1) literature review, (2) formulation of research design, (3) field orientation, and (4) preparation of research instruments. Implementation Stage: At this research implementation stage, activities carried out include: (1) data collection through tests and observations conducted per cycle, (2) discussions with observers to resolve deficiencies and weaknesses during the teaching and learning process per cycle, (3) analyzing research data results per cycle, (4) interpreting data analysis results, and (5) collaborating with observers to determine improvement steps for the subsequent cycle. Completion Stage: In the completion stage, activities carried out include: (1) compiling the research report draft, (2) consulting the research report draft, (3) revising the research report draft, (4) compiling the research report manuscript, and (5) duplicating the research report. In order to compile and process the collected data so that it can produce an accountable conclusion, quantitative data analysis is utilized, while qualitative data is utilized for the observation method.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Results of Cycle 1

Under initial conditions of low learning outcomes, students' interest and motivation in following Islamic Religious Education learning remained lacking; students lacked the courage to ask questions, struggled with practicing questions, lacked the courage to express opinions, and were less active. These served as benchmarks to increase

student interest and motivation so that better learning processes and outcomes could be obtained, particularly regarding efforts to improve Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes in the material of Asmaul Husna. Based on the learning test results carried out at the end of the cycle I learning process, it can be seen that the average student formative test score was 54.00, meaning that the learning mastery requirement established for the Islamic Religious Education subject, which is 70.00, was not achieved. This unachieved mastery needs to be analyzed based on each part of Asmaul Husna that was written or memorized.

Action Planning consisted of: a. Preliminary Activities, b. Core Activities where students were divided into groups consisting of 2 or 3 students, c. Closing. 2. Action Implementation: actions were carried out using learning through the Index Card Match method on the material of Asmaul Husna. 3. Learning Outcomes: Based on the table above, it can be seen that the average formative test score of student tests was 54.00, meaning that the learning mastery requirement established for the Islamic Religious Education subject, which is 70.00, was not achieved. This unachieved mastery needs to be analyzed from each part of Asmaul Husna written or memorized, which also means that the learning outcome scores were not as expected. 4. Reflection Results: Based on the observation results of learning activities, observation of student activities in teaching and learning activities, from the learning test results of the first meeting and second meeting of cycle I actions, the following matters can be reflected:

a) Learning activities by applying the Index Card Match method were good, although there were still students and questions that had not achieved mastery. The unmastered questions turned out to be due to students lacking the ability to write and memorize the names of Asmaul Husna.
b) Student activities in teaching and learning activities were quite active, although there were still students who did not understand how to find partners, felt shy sitting in pairs, and lacked the courage to present the readings on the cards.
c) Based on the analysis of teacher observation results, student observation results, and student learning outcomes, it can be known that in cycle I the indicators of success had not been achieved, so corrective action needed to be held in cycle II so that student learning outcomes could be improved.

Table 1. Student Learning Test Results of Cycle I

No	Score	Frequency (people)	Score X Frequency	Percentage
1	10	0	0.00	0.00
2	9	0	0.00	0.00
3	8	1	8.00	10.00
4	7	2	14.00	20.00
5	6	2	12.00	20.00
6	5	2	10.00	20.00
7	4	1	4.00	10.00
8	3	2	6.00	20.00
9	2	0	0.00	0.00
10	1	0	0.00	0.00
11	0	0	0.00	0.00
Total		10	54.00	
Average		54.00		

Based on the observation results of learning activities, observation of student activities in teaching and learning activities, from the learning test results of cycle I and cycle II actions, the following matters can be reflected:

a) Learning activities applying the Index Card Match method were very good. From the findings obtained through teaching and learning activities carried out over 2 cycles through observation of student activities in teaching and learning activities and formative assessments, it can be stated that learning using the Index Card Match method is effective in the material of Asmaul Husna.
b) Unmastered questions involved writing the names of Asmaul Husna; it turned out students lacked the ability to write names, but after cycle II was implemented, the researcher had been able to overcome these difficulties.
c) Student activities in teaching and learning activities increased very well, although in the first cycle they lacked the courage to present the readings on the cards. In cycle II, children already possessed the courage to present the readings on the cards. The existence of student worksheet exercises and students presenting their results in front of the class provided opportunities for teachers to discover student receptivity toward teaching materials, and student misconceptions could be controlled to become better and correct.

d) Student learning test results increased from Cycle I by 54% to 81% in Cycle II. Classroom actions using the Index Card Match method can be stated as successful with the indicator of an average score increase above 70.00, which is 81.00.

From several findings mentioned above, it means that the Index Card Match method can be utilized as one of the learning models to improve student test score results, particularly in Islamic Religious Education subjects; therefore, learning activities utilizing the Index Card Match method have succeeded and do not need to be continued further.

3.1.2 Results of Cycle 2 Research

Based on learning test results carried out at the end of the cycle II learning process, it can be seen that the average student formative test score is 81.00, meaning that the learning mastery requirement established for the Islamic Religious Education subject, which is 70.00, is achieved. This indicates that the application of the Index Card Match method effectively improves student learning outcomes, considering that in the previous cycle learning outcomes were 54%.

Table 2. Student Learning Test Results of Cycle II

No	Score	Frequency (people)	Score X Frequency	Percentage
1	10	2	20.00	20.00
2	9	1	9.00	20.00
3	8	3	24.00	30.00
4	7	4	28.00	40.00
5	6	0	00.00	0.00
6	5	0	00.00	0.00
7	4	0	00.00	0.00
8	3	0	00.00	0.00
9	2	0	00.00	0.00
10	1	0	00.00	0.00
11	0	0	00.00	0.00
Total		10	81.00	
Average		81.00		

Based on Table 2, Student Learning Test Results of Cycle II, overall evaluation results indicate a very good and significant level of learning mastery. Out of a total of 10 students in the class, all of them achieved scores ranging from 7 to 10, with details of 4 students obtaining a score of 7, 3 students obtaining a score of 8, 1 student obtaining a score of 9, and 2 students obtaining a score of 10, so that no more students remained below the Minimum Mastery Criteria. This achievement resulted in a total cumulative score of 81.00 with the class average score reaching 8.10, indicating that the application of action in Cycle II successfully optimized students' comprehension and material mastery classically.

3.2. Discussion

The application of the Index Card Match method in Islamic Religious Education subjects regarding the material of Asmaul Husna among fourth-grade students of SDN 08 Seluma demonstrated a significant improvement in learning outcomes from cycle I to cycle II. Based on data analysis, the primary findings of this study indicate that students' average learning outcomes experienced a sharp surge, moving from the mastery percentage in cycle I to a high mastery level in cycle II. This improvement proves that cooperative learning strategies based on paired-card games are capable of transforming an initial classroom condition that was passive, low in motivation, and dominated by the lecture method into an interactive and participatory learning environment.

Analysis of internal mechanisms indicates that the primary factor behind the success of this learning outcome improvement lies in students' active physical and mental engagement through searching for matching question-and-answer cards. In cycle I, the primary obstacles encountered included students' difficulties in writing and memorizing the names of Asmaul Husna, shyness when sitting in pairs, and hesitation in presenting work results in front of the class. Through reflection and action improvement in cycle II, the provision of student worksheets (LKS) alongside the habituation of small-group presentations provided teachers with a control space to directly correct misconceptions, thereby fostering both individual and group responsibility in comprehending complex material.

The linkage of these findings to cooperative learning theory confirms that small-group learning activities can stimulate students' cognitive activeness and social skills (Maemona et al., 2025). In line with the view that cooperative learning models require students to work together and foster a sense of responsibility for what is learned, the Index Card Match method facilitates positive interactions among students (Asmaniah & Utomo, 2024; Fatmawati, 2021). The card-matching process between the names of Asmaul Husna and their meanings not only trains memory (cognitive aspects), but also builds an enjoyable learning atmosphere so that psychological barriers such as shyness and boredom can be minimized (Fajriyah & Aoliah, 2025).

When compared with previous studies, the results of this research reinforce the findings of relevant prior research. For instance, studies concerning the application of paired-card strategies demonstrate high effectiveness in enhancing comprehension of broad and abstract material concepts (Bahari et al., 2025; Fitri et al., 2026; Kenia & Suhardini, 2022). Other research also confirms that interactive methods based on cooperative games are capable of overcoming student learning fatigue in religious and science subjects at the elementary school level (Anisa et al., 2024; Gobay et al., 2026). However, the primary differentiator of this study lies in the specificity of the research object: the specific integration of the Index Card Match method for theological material (*aqidah* / Asmaul Husna) which demands a balance between cognitive memorization mastery and the internalization of the meanings of Allah's attributes.

The novelty of this study fills an empirical gap by addressing a specific problem namely, the difficulty faced by elementary school students in memorizing and writing the broad categories of Asmaul Husna, which one-way lecture methods have historically failed to resolve. Through the synthesis of two action cycles, this method has proven to be a practical renewal instrument that bridges the gap between Islamic Religious Education curriculum demands and the real conditions of student learning fatigue in rural areas such as Seluma Regency. This aligns with the view that cooperative learning emphasizing cooperation and student-to-student interaction is a relevant strategy to be systematically implemented in Islamic religious education at the elementary level (Nurlaili et al., 2025; Hafiza et al., 2026).

Conceptual critical analysis demonstrates a paradigm shift from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning. This shift positions teachers as facilitators who design learning conditions, while students construct their own understanding through cooperation and peer interaction (Yanti, 2026; Handayani et al., 2024). This transformation changes the role of students from passive listeners who easily grow bored into active subjects who hold control over finding solutions through peer collaboration. This conceptual shift confirms that the mastery of religious materials involving memorization can be achieved more effectively through enjoyable tactical approaches rather than conventional rote doctrines.

The significance of this study provides knowledge information in the field of Islamic education at the elementary unit level, while opening space for the alternative explanation that the success of score improvements is not solely due to increased study time, but rather results from structured cognitive task designs packaged in structured collaborative games. Overall, the synthesis of the discussion confirms that the application of the Index Card Match method is a valid, effective, and transformative pedagogical solution in improving the quality of the learning process and outcomes for students in Islamic Religious Education subjects.

4. IMPLICATIONS AN CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The application of the Index Card Match method in Islamic Religious Education subjects regarding the material of Asmaul Husna has significant theoretical and practical implications for elementary education. Theoretically, these findings reinforce cooperative learning theory, demonstrating that active student engagement through game-based collaborative approaches can enhance cognitive comprehension while fostering positive affective attitudes toward abstract religious materials. Practically, the implications of this study indicate that Islamic Religious Education teachers in elementary schools need to move away from the dominance of conventional lecture methods, which tend to induce boredom, and transition toward interactive learning strategies that provide space for students to cooperate, write down, and memorize course concepts in an enjoyable manner.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study provides concrete contributions across three main domains: 1) Empirical Contribution: Provides real data and field evidence regarding the effectiveness of classroom actions in improving elementary school students' learning outcomes on theological materials, particularly Asmaul Husna, moving from a low mastery rate to optimal

classical achievement; 2) Methodological Contribution: Offers a systematic two-cycle classroom action design model utilizing paired-card media, which can be replicated by educators or other researchers to address the problem of student passivity in the classroom; 3) Practical Contribution for Institutions: Provides alternative solutions for elementary educational units, particularly in regional areas such as SDN 08 Seluma, in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process and raising the standard of Islamic Religious Education curriculum absorptive capacity attainment.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

5.1 Research Limitations

Although this classroom action research successfully improved student learning outcomes significantly by cycle II, several limitations must be acknowledged:

a) Limited Subject Scope: This study involved a total of only 10 students in class IV of SDN 08 Seluma, meaning that the generalization of findings to a broader population or different school characteristics still requires further investigation.
b) Narrow Material Focus: The scope of the material was specifically limited to the subject matter of Asmaul Husna, meaning that the effectiveness of the Index Card Match method on other normative-theoretical or jurisprudential (*fiqh*) Islamic Religious Education materials has not been thoroughly tested in this study.
c) Action Time Limitation**:** Action cycles conducted in only two cycles limited long-term observations regarding students' memory retention of the materials learned.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Based on these limitations, several directions are recommended for future research development: 1) Sample and Location Expansion: Future researchers are advised to involve a larger number of subjects or compare the effectiveness of this method across schools to obtain stronger external validity; 2) Islamic Religious Education Material Variation: Subsequent research can explore the utilization of the Index Card Match method across different Islamic Religious Education material scopes, such as Islamic cultural history or practical worship procedures; 3) Technology and Digital Media Integration: It is recommended for educational practitioners and future researchers to begin combining conventional card methods with the utilization of digital media or interactive applications to enhance learning quality and student learning outcomes more comprehensively.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on classroom action research implemented across two cycles, the application of the Index Card Match method proved to be a highly effective and transformative pedagogical solution in improving Islamic Religious Education learning outcomes on the material of Asmaul Husna for fourth-grade students of SDN 08 Seluma. The utilization of this paired-card media successfully overcame students' learning barriers, particularly in comprehending, writing, and memorizing the names and meanings of Asmaul Husna, which previously constituted major constraints in conventional learning processes.

This successful improvement in learning outcomes was driven by positive changes in the classroom atmosphere, which became much more interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered. The activity of searching for matching question-and-answer cards not only eliminated student boredom and shyness regarding participation, but also fostered shared responsibility and strengthened memory retention through small-group cooperation. Therefore, this study concludes that the Index Card Match method is highly feasible and recommended for sustainable application by teachers in efforts to optimize the quality of the teaching process and learning achievements of Islamic Religious Education in elementary schools.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author declares that all authors discussed the results, contributed to the final manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Yeyen Mardanita: Conceptualization, Methodology, Classroom Action Implementation & Data Collection, Data & Result Validation, Writing of the Main Manuscript Draft. Kasmantoni: Conceptualization, Review, Editing & Final Refinement of the Manuscript, Research Supervision.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized QuillBot solely for language editing, grammar refinement, and stylistic adjustments to meet academic standards. All conceptual ideas, data analyses, and scientific content remain entirely the original intellectual work of the authors. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the JIPPG GenAI Tool Usage Policy, with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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