



## Efforts to Improve Learning Outcomes of Aqidah Akhlak with the Index Card Match Method for Class III Students of MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve the learning outcomes of Akidah Akhlak through the application of the Index Card Match method in class III students of MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang in the 2024/2025 academic year. This study is a classroom action research that uses four steps, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subjects of this study were class III students of MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang. The research data were obtained through observation, learning outcome tests, and interviews with students and teachers. The data analysis techniques used in this study were qualitative and quantitative descriptive analysis. The results of the study showed that the application of the Index Card Match method can increase student activity in learning, improve understanding of the concept of Akidah Akhlak, and significantly improve student learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Learning outcomes, Aqidah akhlak, index card match method, Islamic education.

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### INTRODUCTION

The study of Akidah Akhlak holds a crucial place in the Islamic education curriculum, as it forms the foundation of moral and ethical development in students. Akidah refers to the fundamental beliefs in Islam, while Akhlak pertains to noble character and ethical behavior. Teaching these subjects effectively is essential to shaping students' understanding of faith and their ability to apply moral values in daily life. However, challenges persist in engaging students and ensuring that they fully grasp and internalize the lessons. One of the key issues faced in teaching Akidah Akhlak is the lack of student engagement due to traditional rote learning methods. Many students struggle to stay attentive during lessons, which affects their comprehension and retention of the material. Conventional lecture-based teaching often results in passive learning, where students become mere recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in the learning process. This highlights the need for innovative teaching strategies that promote active learning and deeper comprehension. The Index Card Match method is one such strategy that has gained attention for its potential to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. This method involves the use of index cards containing key terms and corresponding definitions, which students match through interactive activities. By incorporating movement, collaboration, and problem-solving elements, the Index Card

Match method transforms learning into an enjoyable and meaningful experience for students.

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of the Index Card Match method in improving the learning outcomes of Akidah Akhlak among third-grade students at MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang in the 2024/2025 academic year. The research investigates how this method enhances students' engagement, comprehension, and retention of Akidah Akhlak concepts compared to traditional teaching approaches. Furthermore, the study examines the impact of the Index Card Match method on students' ability to apply Akidah Akhlak principles in their daily lives. By actively engaging in the learning process, students are expected to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and demonstrate improved moral and ethical behaviors. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of Akidah Akhlak. Therefore, it is important to assess educators' perspectives on the implementation of the Index Card Match method. The study seeks to gather insights from teachers regarding the effectiveness, feasibility, and challenges of incorporating this method into the Akidah Akhlak curriculum. Additionally, parental involvement is an important factor in students' moral development. The study explores parents' perspectives on their children's progress in Akidah Akhlak learning and their observations of any behavioral improvements resulting from the use of the Index Card Match method. The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the development of more effective teaching methodologies in Islamic education. By identifying best practices for teaching Akidah Akhlak, educators can create a more engaging and impactful learning experience for students, ultimately fostering a generation with strong moral character and deep-rooted faith.

In Islamic education, the integration of interactive teaching methods can lead to a more meaningful understanding of religious concepts. This study seeks to determine whether the Index Card Match method facilitates this integration by making abstract theological concepts more accessible and relatable to young learners. Another important aspect to consider is the impact of the learning environment on student outcomes. A dynamic and interactive classroom setting, facilitated by the Index Card Match method, may contribute to a more positive learning atmosphere, encouraging students to participate actively and enjoy their lessons. The research also delves into the cognitive and social benefits of using interactive learning strategies. The Index Card Match method not only promotes knowledge retention but also enhances students' problem-solving skills, teamwork abilities, and critical thinking capacities, all of which are essential for holistic educational development. Moreover, given the increasing integration of technology in education, the study explores how digital adaptations of the Index Card Match method could further enhance student engagement. Digital tools and applications can be utilized to create virtual index card matching activities, making the learning process even more interactive and accessible. As education continues to evolve, it is imperative to develop teaching strategies that cater to diverse learning styles. The Index Card Match method accommodates different types of learners, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners, ensuring that all students benefit from the instructional process.

The study also considers the potential scalability of the Index Card Match method beyond Akidah Akhlak instruction. If proven effective, this method could be adapted for teaching other subjects within the Islamic education framework, such as Fiqh, Seerah, and Quranic Studies. Furthermore, student motivation is a key determinant of academic success. This research investigates whether the Index Card Match method increases students' intrinsic motivation to learn Akidah Akhlak, leading to sustained interest and enthusiasm for religious studies. By fostering a student-centered learning approach, the Index Card Match method empowers students to take an active role in their education. This shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-driven learning has the potential to improve long-term retention and application of Akidah Akhlak principles. The study also aims to address the challenges teachers face in implementing innovative teaching strategies. By identifying obstacles and solutions, the research provides valuable insights

into how educators can effectively incorporate interactive methods into their classrooms. Moreover, classroom management plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of interactive learning strategies. The study examines how the Index Card Match method influences classroom dynamics and student behavior, particularly in maintaining discipline while promoting active participation.

Collaboration among students is another important element in the learning process. The Index Card Match method encourages peer interaction, allowing students to learn from one another and build a supportive classroom community based on mutual respect and shared knowledge. The research also explores how assessment methods can be adapted to align with interactive learning strategies. Traditional assessments may not fully capture the benefits of methods like Index Card Match, necessitating the development of alternative evaluation techniques that measure student progress effectively. Finally, this study seeks to provide practical recommendations for educators, administrators, and policymakers in Islamic education. By highlighting the advantages and challenges of using the Index Card Match method, the research aims to contribute to the continuous improvement of teaching methodologies in Akidah Akhlak and beyond. Through this research, educators can gain a deeper understanding of how interactive learning methods influence student engagement, comprehension, and moral development. The findings will offer valuable insights into best practices for enhancing Akidah Akhlak instruction in Islamic schools.

By integrating innovative teaching approaches, such as the Index Card Match method, Islamic education can remain relevant and effective in nurturing students' religious understanding and ethical values. This study serves as a step toward achieving that goal by exploring the potential of interactive strategies in shaping a more dynamic and impactful learning experience for young learners. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of continuous improvement in educational practices. By exploring and implementing innovative methods, educators can create enriching learning environments that inspire students to develop a strong foundation in faith and morality, preparing them to become responsible and ethical individuals in society. The study's findings will not only benefit students and teachers at MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang but also provide a valuable framework for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to enhance their Akidah Akhlak curriculum through engaging and effective teaching methodologies.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a classroom action research (CAR) methodology to examine the effectiveness of the Index Card Match method in improving students' learning outcomes in Akidah Akhlak. Classroom action research is a systematic approach aimed at identifying and solving educational challenges within the teaching and learning environment. The research was conducted in three cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researchers designed lesson plans incorporating the Index Card Match method and prepared relevant learning materials. The action stage involved implementing the strategy in the classroom, while the observation stage focused on monitoring student engagement, participation, and learning outcomes. Finally, the reflection stage allowed researchers to assess the effectiveness of the method and make necessary improvements for subsequent cycles. A total of 30 students from the third-grade class at MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang participated in this study. The research utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, including classroom observations, student assessments, teacher interviews, and student questionnaires.

Pre-test and post-test assessments were conducted to measure students' learning progress before and after implementing the Index Card Match method. The results from these assessments provided quantitative data on the improvement of students' comprehension and retention of Akidah Akhlak concepts. Teacher interviews were

conducted to gather qualitative insights into their experiences using the Index Card Match method. The interviews explored teachers' perspectives on the benefits, challenges, and feasibility of incorporating the method into their teaching practices. Student questionnaires were distributed to assess their perceptions of the learning experience. The questionnaire included questions regarding their level of engagement, enjoyment, and perceived effectiveness of the Index Card Match method in enhancing their understanding of Akidah Akhlak. The data collected from multiple sources were analyzed using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data from assessments were analyzed using statistical techniques to determine the significance of student learning improvements, while qualitative data from observations, interviews, and questionnaires were thematically analyzed to identify key patterns and insights. By employing a comprehensive research methodology, this study aims to provide a well-rounded evaluation of the effectiveness of the Index Card Match method in enhancing Akidah Akhlak instruction. The findings from this study will offer valuable recommendations for educators and policymakers in Islamic education, contributing to the continuous improvement of teaching methodologies in religious studies.

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## RESULTS

Assessment following the first cycle showed modest improvements in learning outcomes. The class average score increased from 65.3 on the pre-test to 71.2, with 57.1% of students meeting the minimum competency standard compared to the initial 46.4%. Classroom observations revealed increased enthusiasm among students, though some confusion and hesitation remained. Student feedback indicated that while they enjoyed the activity, some found it challenging to understand all the questions on the cards. Reflection on the first cycle highlighted several areas for improvement. The language used on the cards needed further simplification to accommodate varying reading abilities among third-grade students. The physical arrangement of the classroom required modification to facilitate smoother movement during the matching process. Additionally, clearer instructions and demonstrations were needed to ensure all students understood the process. These insights informed modifications for the second cycle.

The second cycle incorporated improvements based on first cycle reflections. Cards were redesigned with simpler language and more visual cues. The teacher provided a clearer demonstration of the process before beginning the activity. The classroom was arranged to create wider pathways for movement, and a timer was introduced to add an element of gentle competition. The teacher also implemented a buddy system where stronger students were paired with those who had shown confusion during the first cycle. Assessment following the second cycle demonstrated significant improvement. The class average score increased to 77.8, with 75% of students meeting the minimum competency standard. Classroom observations showed more confident participation from all students, improved time management, and enhanced ability to explain concepts during the sharing phase. Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing increased interest in the subject matter.

Reflection on the second cycle identified further refinements to enhance the effectiveness of the method. While student participation and understanding had improved substantially, there remained opportunities to deepen the learning experience through follow-up activities. The reflection also noted that some concepts required additional reinforcement beyond the card matching activity. These insights guided adjustments for the third and final cycle. The third cycle built upon previous successes while addressing identified areas for improvement. In addition to the refined card matching activity, the implementation included follow-up activities such as creating illustrated mini-books about matched concepts and role-playing scenarios that demonstrated the application of Islamic values in daily life. The teacher also incorporated regular review sessions using the matched cards as reference materials. The third cycle yielded impressive results, with the class average score reaching 83.7 and 89.3% of students meeting or exceeding the minimum competency standard. Classroom observations revealed confident, engaged students who not only understood the concepts but could articulate how these applied to their daily lives. Student feedback indicated enhanced enjoyment of the subject and improved retention of key concepts. Teacher reflections noted a transformative change in the classroom atmosphere during Akidah Akhlak lessons.

The comprehensive implementation of the Index Card Match method, refined over three cycles, demonstrated its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes in Akidah Akhlak among third-grade students. The method proved particularly effective in transforming a previously passive learning environment into an active, engaging classroom experience. Key findings included: (1) A significant increase in class average scores from 65.3 to 83.7; (2) A dramatic rise in the percentage of students meeting minimum competency standards from 46.4% to 89.3%; (3) Enhanced student engagement and participation; (4) Improved retention and application of Islamic concepts. The notable improvements observed can be attributed to several elements of the Index Card Match method. First, the method's game-like structure created an enjoyable learning environment, reducing anxiety and increasing motivation among young learners. Second,

the physical movement involved in finding matching pairs accommodated the kinesthetic learning needs typical of this age group. Third, the collaborative nature of the activity promoted peer learning and social skills development alongside academic growth. Fourth, the process of explaining matched concepts to classmates reinforced understanding through verbalization. These findings align with existing literature on active learning strategies, particularly for elementary-aged students. The success of the Index Card Match method in this context supports constructivist theories that emphasize active knowledge construction over passive reception. Additionally, the results reinforce the value of incorporating playful elements into religious education, challenging traditional notions that serious subjects require somber teaching approaches. The study also highlights the importance of adapting teaching methods to suit the developmental stage of learners. For educators of Akidah Akhlak and similar subjects, this research offers practical insights into implementing effective teaching strategies. The detailed documentation of the adaptation process across three cycles provides a valuable blueprint for teachers seeking to implement the Index Card Match method in their classrooms. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that relatively simple, low-cost interventions can yield significant improvements in student learning outcomes, making it accessible for schools with limited resources.

Despite the positive outcomes, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted with a relatively small sample size of 28 students from a single school, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings. The three-month implementation period, while sufficient to demonstrate immediate improvements, does not allow for assessment of long-term retention. Additionally, as the researcher was also the implementing teacher, there is potential for researcher bias in the interpretation of results. Based on the findings, several recommendations can be offered to educators teaching Akidah Akhlak and similar subjects: (1) Incorporate the Index Card Match method as a regular component of instruction, particularly for concept-heavy topics; (2) Ensure cards are designed with age-appropriate language and visual cues; (3) Implement the method as part of a broader active learning approach rather than in isolation; (4) Include follow-up activities that allow students to apply matched concepts; (5) Adapt the complexity of cards and matching process according to student progress and confidence. This study opens several avenues for future research: (1) Longitudinal studies examining the long-term retention of concepts learned through the Index Card Match method; (2) Comparative studies exploring the efficacy of the method across different grade levels; (3) Research investigating the transferability of skills developed through the method to other subject areas; (4) Studies examining the impact of digital adaptations of the Index Card Match method; (5) Research exploring cultural adaptations of the method for Islamic education in diverse cultural contexts.

Traditional approaches to religious education have often emphasized memorization and passive reception of knowledge, particularly in subjects like Akidah Akhlak that deal with foundational beliefs and values. This research challenges such approaches by demonstrating that active learning methods can enhance not only academic understanding but also the internalization of religious concepts. By engaging with Islamic principles through an enjoyable, interactive process, students developed a more positive relationship with the subject matter, potentially laying the groundwork for lifelong learning and practice. Beyond the measurable improvements in academic outcomes, the implementation of the Index Card Match method positively transformed classroom dynamics during Akidah Akhlak lessons. Students who had previously been reluctant to participate became more confident in sharing their ideas. The collaborative nature of the activity fostered more supportive peer relationships, with students helping one another understand difficult concepts. These improved dynamics created a more positive learning environment that extended beyond the specific activities related to the Index Card Match method.

The action research process itself provided valuable professional development for the implementing teacher. The cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection enhanced pedagogical skills and deepened understanding of student learning processes. The experience of systematically documenting and analyzing teaching interventions developed research competencies that can be applied to future classroom challenges. This highlights the dual benefit of action research as both an improvement strategy for student learning and a professional development pathway for educators. An unexpected outcome of the research was increased parental interest and involvement in their children's learning of Akidah Akhlak. As students shared their positive experiences with the Index Card Match method at home, many parents requested information about how they could support this learning. In response, a parent workshop was organized to demonstrate the method and provide simplified versions of the cards for home use. Parental feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many reporting that their children were spo

In addition to improving student learning outcomes, this research resulted in the development of a comprehensive set of Index Card Match materials specifically designed for Akidah Akhlak education at the third-grade level. These materials, including carefully crafted question and answer cards covering the entire curriculum, represent a valuable resource for other educators teaching this subject. The materials have been compiled into a teacher resource pack that can be shared with other Madrasah Ibtidaiyah schools in the region. A key factor in the success of the implementation was the careful contextualization of the Index Card Match method to align with Indonesian Islamic educational traditions and local cultural contexts. The content of the cards incorporated local examples and references familiar to students from their community. This cultural relevance enhanced student connection with the material and demonstrated that active learning methodologies can be effectively adapted to respect and incorporate traditional Islamic educational values while improving engagement and outcomes.

The research revealed that beyond improving academic outcomes, the Index Card Match method contributed positively to students' Islamic identity formation. By engaging actively with fundamental concepts of faith and morals in an enjoyable, non-threatening environment, students began to internalize these concepts as part of their developing identities. Teachers and parents observed increased confidence among students in expressing their Islamic values and applying moral principles from Akidah Akhlak lessons in their daily interactions. The success of this intervention inspired the formation of a professional learning community among Islamic education teachers at MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang and neighboring schools. Regular meetings were established to share experiences with active learning methods in religious education. This collaborative approach to professional development has created a supportive network for teachers seeking to innovate in their classrooms and has extended the impact of the research beyond a single classroom or subject area. An important observation during the research was that the Index Card Match method helped address educational equity issues within the classroom. Students who had previously struggled with traditional teaching methods, including those from less educationally advantaged backgrounds and those with different learning abilities, showed particular improvement. The method's multi-sensory approach and reduced emphasis on reading proficiency made the content more accessible to all learners, narrowing the achievement gap that had been observed in the subject.

## **DISCUSSION**

The classroom action research conducted with third-grade students at MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang during the 2024/2025 academic year demonstrated significant improvements in Akidah Akhlak learning outcomes through the implementation of the Index Card Match method. This study, which involved 28 students across three complete action research cycles, produced compelling evidence for the effectiveness of active learning approaches in Islamic religious education for young learners. Before the intervention, the initial

conditions revealed concerning issues: a class average score of only 65.3, with just 46.4% of students meeting the minimum competency standard (KKM) of 70. Student participation was notably low, with most children displaying minimal engagement and poor retention of key concepts. The conventional lecture-based teaching methods previously employed appeared inadequate for capturing students' attention and fostering meaningful learning experiences in this essential subject area.

The implementation of the Index Card Match method during the first cycle yielded modest but promising improvements. The class average increased to 71.2, with 57.1% of students reaching the KKM. While student enthusiasm showed positive signs, with many expressing excitement during the card-matching activities, several challenges emerged. Some students struggled to understand the questions printed on the cards, others found the procedure confusing, and time management proved problematic as children adjusted to the new learning approach. These observations guided the refinements implemented in the second cycle, which included simplifying the language on the cards, adding illustrative images, rearranging the classroom to facilitate movement, and providing clearer demonstrations of the procedure. These adaptations produced more substantial improvements, with the class average rising to 77.8 and 75% of students achieving the KKM. Student participation increased dramatically, with all children actively engaging in the card-matching process and beginning to demonstrate greater facility in explaining the concepts represented on their cards.

The third cycle represented the most refined implementation of the Index Card Match method, enhanced by the addition of follow-up activities such as creating illustrated mini-books and role-playing scenarios related to the matched concepts. These enhancements aimed to deepen understanding and facilitate application of Islamic values in daily life. The results were remarkable: the class average climbed to 83.7, with 89.3% of students meeting or exceeding the KKM. Classroom observations revealed confident, engaged learners who not only understood the core concepts but could articulate their relevance to everyday situations. The transformation in the learning environment was profound, shifting from a passive, teacher-centered classroom to an active, dynamic space characterized by student initiative, positive peer interactions, and genuine enthusiasm for the subject matter.

The significant improvement in cognitive learning outcomes can be attributed to several factors inherent in the Index Card Match method. First, the active learning approach required students to engage in higher-order cognitive processes such as analysis, matching, and explanation, rather than merely listening passively. Second, the multi-sensory nature of the method accommodated diverse learning styles: visually through colorful cards with text and images, auditorily through discussions and presentations, and kinesthetically through physical movement while searching for matching pairs. Third, the repetition of key concepts across different phases of the learning process (during matching, presentation, and follow-up activities) strengthened retention. Fourth, contextualizing Akidah Akhlak concepts through real-life examples and role-playing scenarios made the learning experience more meaningful and accessible to young learners.

Beyond cognitive gains, the research documented substantial improvements in student participation and motivation. The percentage of actively engaged students increased from 53.6% in the first cycle to an impressive 92.9% by the third cycle. Students displayed visible enthusiasm during learning activities, in stark contrast to the boredom and disengagement observed prior to the intervention. By the third cycle, many students had begun taking initiative in their learning, asking insightful questions and seeking additional information about the topics covered. The method also fostered positive social interactions among students, building collaborative skills and creating a supportive learning community. This motivational enhancement represents a critical factor in the overall success of the intervention, as engaged, enthusiastic learners are more likely to invest effort in understanding and internalizing the material presented.

Several key elements contributed to the successful implementation of the Index Card Match method in this context. The appealing design of the cards, featuring bright colors and age-appropriate illustrations, captured the attention of third-grade students who are still in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development. The game-like aspect of finding matching card partners reduced anxiety and created an enjoyable learning atmosphere, aligning with the play-oriented preferences of 8-9 year-old children. The integrated follow-up activities reinforced understanding while accommodating multiple intelligences and learning preferences. The gradual, cyclical approach to implementation allowed for thoughtful adaptations based on ongoing observations and reflections, ensuring the method evolved to meet the specific needs of the students. Finally, the careful arrangement of the learning environment to support student mobility and positive interactions created a conducive climate for the matching activities.

Despite its overall effectiveness, the implementation of the Index Card Match method presented several challenges that required thoughtful solutions. The variation in reading abilities among third-grade students meant that some struggled to comprehend the text on the cards, necessitating language simplification and the addition of illustrative images. Classroom management issues emerged due to the dynamic movement involved in the matching process, which was addressed through clear rules and appropriate physical arrangements. Initial implementations required more time as students adapted to the new procedures, though efficiency improved in subsequent cycles. Ensuring that the method fostered deep understanding rather than merely functioning as an engaging game required careful attention to follow-up activities and discussions. Finally, promoting balanced participation among all students, particularly those who were shy or less confident, demanded thoughtful grouping strategies and individualized guidance.

This research has important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it supports social constructivist learning theories that emphasize knowledge construction through social interaction and concrete experiences. It reinforces Gardner's multiple intelligence theory by demonstrating the value of accommodating diverse learning modalities in religious education. It also provides empirical evidence for the effectiveness of active learning approaches in Islamic education contexts, challenging traditional notions that religious subjects require primarily passive, transmission-based pedagogies. Practically, this study offers a detailed implementation model that can be adapted by other Akidah Akhlak teachers, highlights the importance of methodological variety in religious education, underscores the need for developmentally appropriate teaching approaches, and demonstrates how playful elements can be integrated into religious instruction without compromising substantive content or sacred values.

The findings align with previous research on the Index Card Match method in Islamic education contexts, while making several unique contributions. Similar to Mahmudah's 2022 study in a public elementary school, this research documented significant learning improvements (28.2% increase), confirming the method's effectiveness in Islamic education settings. Fathurrohman's 2023 study on enhancing motivation in fiqh education found 82% active student participation, while this study achieved an even higher rate (92.9%) by the third cycle. Rochmatika's 2021 research on developing Index Card Match media for Akidah Akhlak confirmed the importance of attractive, culturally relevant card designs, which this study extended through integration with follow-up activities. However, this research makes distinct contributions through its focus on lower elementary students (ages 8-9), development of integrated follow-up activities, comprehensive three-cycle approach with detailed adaptations, and attention to both cognitive and affective domains of learning.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. Methodologically, the sample was limited to one class in one school (28 students), constraining the generalizability of findings. The relatively short duration (one semester) means that long-term impacts on knowledge retention and character formation remain to be investigated. The dual role of the researcher as implementing teacher, while advantageous for

implementation, introduces potential bias in data interpretation. Practically, the Index Card Match method requires intensive preparation, particularly in creating cards appropriate to the material and student characteristics. It demands sufficient classroom space to facilitate student movement, which may present challenges in schools with limited facilities. Finally, the method may not be equally effective for all topics within the Akidah Akhlak curriculum, particularly those of a highly abstract or philosophical nature.

Based on these findings and identified limitations, several recommendations emerge for various stakeholders. Akidah Akhlak teachers should consider adopting the Index Card Match method as a regular instructional strategy, particularly for conceptual material requiring deep understanding. Developing a bank of question and answer cards that can be used continuously across various topics would be beneficial. Integrating digital technology through electronic versions of the matching activity could enhance engagement. Combining this method with other approaches such as storytelling, demonstration, or project-based learning could create more comprehensive learning experiences. Adapting the method to suit student characteristics, local contexts, and available resources remains essential. School principals should facilitate teacher professional development in active learning methodologies through workshops, training, or mentoring programs. Allocating budget for creative instructional media, including Index Card Match card sets for various subjects, would support implementation. Encouraging teacher collaboration to share best practices and resources, and creating policies that support instructional innovation and process-based evaluation would foster continued improvement.

Future research should involve larger samples from multiple schools to enhance generalizability. Longitudinal studies investigating the long-term impact on knowledge retention and character formation would address a significant gap in current understanding. Examining the method's effectiveness across various topics within the Akidah Akhlak curriculum and at different grade levels would provide valuable insights. Developing and testing digital versions of the Index Card Match method could expand its applicability. Comparative studies between this method and other active learning approaches would help identify relative strengths and limitations. Investigating how the method can be optimized for students with special needs or learning difficulties represents another important avenue for research.

In conclusion, this classroom action research has demonstrated that the Index Card Match method, when systematically implemented with appropriate adaptations, can significantly improve Akidah Akhlak learning outcomes among third-grade students at MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang. The improvements encompassed both cognitive aspects, evidenced by the increase in class average from 65.3 to 83.7 and the rise in competency achievement from 46.4% to 89.3%, and affective dimensions, shown through enhanced motivation, participation, and positive peer interactions. The successful implementation was supported by attractive, age-appropriate card design, gradual instructional approach, integration of follow-up activities, and effective classroom management. The Index Card Match method proved capable of transforming Akidah Akhlak instruction from a passive, teacher-centered approach to an active, student-centered methodology that was both more effective and more enjoyable. Despite certain limitations, the findings make an important contribution to the development of Islamic religious education practices at the elementary level. The recommendations offered should inspire various stakeholders to continue improving the quality of Akidah Akhlak instruction, thereby providing a strong foundation for the formation of Islamic faith and character from an early age.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research demonstrates that the implementation of the Index Card Match method, when carefully adapted and refined to meet the needs of young learners, can significantly improve learning outcomes in Akidah Akhlak among third-grade students. The

transformation observed at MI Ma'arif 01 Cilopadang during the 2024/2025 academic year provides compelling evidence for the value of active, engaging teaching strategies in Islamic religious education. By making Akidah Akhlak learning more accessible, enjoyable, and meaningful, educators can better fulfill the profound responsibility of nurturing both the academic understanding and spiritual development of young Muslim students.

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