

# The Use of The Card Sort Method to Improve Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Among Third-Grade Students at SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba Academic Year 2021/2022

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## Abstract

This study aims to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) among third-grade students at SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba through the implementation of the Card Sort learning method. The background of this research is the low student achievement, which is attributed to the monotonous and less varied teaching methods previously employed. This study adopts a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, consisting of two cycles, each including planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through learning outcome tests, observations, and documentation.

The results indicate that the implementation of the Card Sort method effectively enhances student learning outcomes. In the first cycle, the percentage of students achieving mastery learning reached 50%, which increased to 90% in the second cycle. Additionally, the average student score improved from 53 in the pre-cycle phase to 72 in the first cycle and further increased to 80 in the second cycle. Student engagement also showed a significant improvement, shifting from a passive learning category in the pre-cycle phase to an active learning category in the second cycle.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Card Sort method is effective in enhancing student achievement in Islamic Religious Education among third-grade students at SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba. Therefore, it is recommended for use in teaching to foster student engagement and improve learning outcomes.

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## Introduction

Teaching methods are an essential part of instructional strategies. A teaching method serves as a means to present, explain, provide examples, and offer practice to students in order to achieve specific learning objectives. However, not all teaching methods are equally effective in achieving certain learning goals (Nuraiha, 2020).

In addition to selecting an appropriate teaching method, the determination of learning objectives is a fundamental requirement for teachers when choosing a suitable instructional approach (Sam, 2016). Learning objectives represent the targets that must be achieved by the end of the lesson and the competencies that students should acquire (Fatimatuzahroh et al., 2019). These objectives can be effectively realized through the application of suitable teaching methods. Once a specific goal is established, the challenge for educators is to select an instructional approach that ensures the highest likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes.

To develop an effective strategy for choosing the appropriate teaching method, teachers must assess students' prior knowledge, which can be obtained through written pre-tests or initial questioning. This enables educators to tailor their instructional approach so that students can achieve optimal learning outcomes (Santoso, 2017). Achieving learning objectives is a key indicator

of successful teaching. Moreover, the subject matter and topics being taught play a critical role in determining the most appropriate teaching model to be implemented (Misra, 2020). Thus, the chosen teaching method must align with the nature and content of the subject matter being delivered to students.

Additionally, time allocation and supporting resources must be taken into account when determining the appropriateness of a teaching method. The selected method must correspond to the available time and curriculum framework. Proper time management combined with an appropriate teaching method can enhance instructional effectiveness. The chosen teaching method should stimulate student engagement, foster interest and motivation, and improve academic achievement (Amalia et al., 2018; Misra, 2020). Learning outcomes are influenced by both internal and external factors.

Internal factors primarily pertain to students' cognitive abilities, which significantly impact their academic performance. Besides cognitive capacity, other contributing factors include physiological conditions, psychological states, interests, talents, motivation, and maturity (Mulia et al., 2021). Internal influences on student learning are logical, given that learning is fundamentally a process of conscious behavioral change (Lestari & Hudaya, 2018). Therefore, the extent to which students exert effort in conditioning themselves for learning directly correlates with their academic achievements.

However, external factors also play a substantial role in determining students' learning outcomes. One of the most influential external factors in school settings is the quality of instruction provided by teachers. Learning outcomes are inherently tied to instructional goals. Consequently, student achievement in school is influenced by the effectiveness and quality of instruction. Instructional quality is closely related to the availability of learning tools, instructional models, student engagement, and other pedagogical aspects. By implementing well-structured learning activities and selecting the right instructional models, it is possible to meet educational objectives, which include enhancing both student engagement and academic performance.

The successful improvement of student engagement and academic achievement signifies that the educational process has contributed to fulfilling curriculum targets. It is hoped that curriculum-based learning, combined with the selection of appropriate teaching methods, can accommodate individual student differences and promote increased learning participation and achievement.

A curriculum encompasses the entire learning experience offered to students under the guidance of educational institutions. As a curriculum framework, the School-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP) emphasizes competency-based education, ensuring that students develop the required skills and knowledge upon completion of their education. A well-designed curriculum must exhibit internal coherence, ensuring consistency between its components, including objectives, content, instructional processes, and assessments. This internal relevance indicates curriculum integration. Consequently, well-trained educators proficient in their duties must possess the skills to utilize all available instructional techniques in alignment with educational goals and subject matter requirements to achieve the highest educational outcomes. Teachers must continuously enhance their roles and competencies, as the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process and students' academic success are largely determined by the teacher's proficiency. A competent teacher can effectively manage classroom instruction, resulting in optimal student performance.

One key indicator of teacher competency is the ability to select and implement appropriate teaching methods. Teaching methods significantly impact students' learning approaches. If a subject is presented without clear objectives, and students are merely required to memorize information, their enthusiasm for learning will decline. Conversely, if the instructional process is well-organized and goal-oriented, students' motivation and engagement levels will increase, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes. A thoughtfully designed instructional approach that enables students to maximize their potential can positively influence academic performance. Preliminary observations of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process at SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba have revealed several issues. First, the teaching process has been predominantly

monotonous and lacks variation, failing to accommodate individual student differences. This has resulted in low student participation, with a classroom-wide engagement rate of only 45%. Second, student achievement remains low, as demonstrated by the results of the mid-semester examination, where 12 out of 20 students (90%) failed to meet the minimum competency standard of 6.5.

Findings from classroom observations indicate that students often experience boredom and lack enthusiasm due to the teacher-centered approach, where instruction is delivered in a one-way manner without actively involving students in the learning process.

The primary issue underlying these challenges is the continued reliance on conventional teaching methods in Islamic Religious Education classes. Consequently, student engagement and academic achievement remain suboptimal. To address this problem, a more interactive and engaging teaching method is needed, such as the Card Sort method. This method fosters collaborative learning and is effective in teaching concepts, categorizing information, and reinforcing previously acquired knowledge.

The Card Sort strategy is designed to create a more engaging learning environment, allowing students to be actively involved in the learning process while reducing monotony. This approach incorporates index cards containing key learning materials, which students must categorize based on definitions, classifications, or groups. For example, students might be tasked with matching cards that describe the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam. The more students participate, the more interactive the learning experience becomes.

Game-based learning methods such as Card Sort can create a conducive learning atmosphere. Through play, students acquire knowledge that integrates cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects of development. Educational games stimulate overall student development, including critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and social skills. The integration of card-based games in education enhances student engagement and reinforces learning retention.

Given these considerations, this study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the Card Sort method in improving student achievement in Islamic Religious Education at SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba during the 2021/2022 academic year. The study aims to provide empirical evidence on the impact of this interactive teaching method on student participation and learning outcomes.

## Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

### A. Learning Achievement in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

#### 1. Definition of Learning Achievement in PAI

Learning achievement refers to students' mastery of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material, reflected in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Morgan (2017) defines learning as "a relatively permanent change in behavior due to experience or practice." Thus, learning achievement in PAI includes both academic scores and the application of Islamic teachings in daily life.

#### 2. Foundations of Islamic Religious Education

##### a. Legal Basis

Islamic Religious Education is supported by national laws, including Pancasila and the 1945 Indonesian Constitution, Article 29:(1) The state is based on the belief in One Almighty God.(2) The state guarantees freedom of religion.

##### b. Religious Basis

Islam encourages education, as stated in the Quran:

وَأَتَيْنَاكَ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“And let there be among you a nation who invite to goodness, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong; they are the successful ones.” (Q.S. Al-Imran: 104)

## **B. The Function and Objectives of PAI**

Islamic education aims to instill faith, values, and moral behavior. Muhaimin (2018) states that PAI helps students internalize and practice Islamic teachings to become devout Muslims. Government regulations emphasize that religious education fosters piety and noble character.

## **C. Factors Influencing Learning Achievement**

### **1. Internal Factors**

Intelligence: Affects understanding and retention.

Interest & Motivation: Higher interest leads to better engagement.

Aptitude: Some students have a natural talent for religious studies.

### **2. External Factors**

School Environment: Quality of teaching and resources matter.

Family Influence: Parental support enhances learning.

Social-Cultural Environment: Community practices reinforce religious education.

## **D. The Card Sort Method in PAI Learning**

Card Sort is an interactive learning technique that enhances engagement. Silberman (2019) defines it as a collaborative method to teach concepts through sorting and categorization. Benefits include increased participation, better retention, and a student-centered approach. In PAI, this method can be applied to topics like the Five Pillars of Islam and the Six Articles of Faith, making learning more dynamic and effective.

## **Research Methods**

### **A. Type of Research**

This study employs Classroom Action Research (CAR), which aims to address and improve the quality of learning through systematic interventions. CAR is conducted to solve practical problems encountered by teachers in the classroom, allowing for continuous improvements in teaching strategies.

According to Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), CAR follows a cyclical process comprising four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This study consists of two cycles, with each cycle including these four stages to evaluate the effectiveness of the Card Sort method in improving students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI).

### **B. Research Subjects, Time, and Location**

#### **1. Research Subjects**

The research subjects consist of third-grade students of SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba during the 2021/2022 academic year. The class consists of 20 students, and the teacher serves as the primary instructor and observer in collaboration with researchers.

#### **2. Time and Location**

This research was conducted from February to May 2022 at SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba. The study follows a structured timeline aligned with the school's academic calendar.

### **C. Research Design**

The study follows the CAR framework with two cycles, where each cycle includes:

- Planning: Designing lesson plans, preparing instructional materials, and developing assessment tools.
- Action: Implementing the Card Sort method in PAI lessons.

- Observation: Monitoring student engagement, participation, and learning outcomes.
- Reflection: Evaluating the results and determining necessary improvements for the next cycle.

#### D. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using multiple techniques:

- Tests: Pre-test and post-test assessments to measure students' academic progress.
- Observation: Systematic observation of student behavior and engagement.
- Documentation: Collection of relevant records, such as lesson plans and student work.

#### E. Data Analysis Techniques

The study employs descriptive statistical analysis, focusing on:

- Quantitative Analysis: Calculation of mean scores and percentage improvements in learning outcomes.
- Qualitative Analysis: Interpretation of observational data to assess student engagement and participation.

#### F. Indicators of Success

The research is considered successful if:

- At least 90% of students achieve a minimum learning competency score of 65.
- Student engagement in learning activities reaches at least 80%.

This research methodology ensures a structured approach to evaluating the impact of the Card Sort method on student learning in PAI lessons.

## Results and Discussion

### A. Initial Observation Results

Initial observations were made by researchers in 3rd Class of SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba on February 02, 2022. At the time of this initial observation, the PAI teacher conducted learning by using the lecture method and interspersed with questions and answers. Based on the results of the researchers' initial observations of the PAI learning process in 3rd Class of SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba, it is known that so far the teacher has more often used conventional methods, namely lectures and interspersed with questions and answers. The teacher dominates the learning process while students listen and pay attention to the teacher's explanation. The opportunity for students to express their opinions is still small, so that teaching seems monotonous and unexciting. Learners only write and hear what the teacher explains, very rarely stimulated to think, but more stimulated to remember and memorize subject matter.

The following describes the data on the learning outcomes of students in the initial observation or before the implementation of the action:

Table 1. Student Learning Outcomes (observation)

No	Description	Acquisition
1	Lowest Score	20
2	Highest Score	80
3	Class Average Score	53
4	Number of Students Who Have Not Completed Learning	18
5	Number of Students Who Completed Learning	2
6	Percentage of Classical Completeness	10%

The results of initial observations regarding the learning outcomes of students as listed in the table above illustrate that the learning achievement of students is still low and needs to be improved, with an indicator of the average value of students only 64, which is still below the individual minimum completeness value criteria of 65. The number of students who are complete

is only 2 students or 10% classical completeness, which is still below the classical completeness standard of 85%.

Meanwhile, observations about students' activities during learning can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Student Activity Level (observation)

No	Aspects Observed	AvScore
1	The Level of Cooperation of Students	1
2	Learners' Enthusiasm About the Lesson	2
3	Attention of Students During the Lesson	2
4	Learners' Ability to Complete Tasks	2
5	Learners Answering Questions from Teacher or Friends	2
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>45%</b>

Table 3. Score Level (observation)

Percentage Range	Category
0% - 39%	Very Poor
40% - 55%	Less
56% - 65%	Enough
66% - 79%	Good
80% - 100%	Very Good

From the observation results above, it can be seen that the percentage of students' activities in participating in classical learning is 45% with less criteria, still below the action success indicator of 80%. Learners are not very active in learning. One of the indicators of learner activity that stood out was the lack of cooperation among students. They are also less enthusiastic in participating in learning. This is because the method used by the teacher does not provide space for students to interact with their classmates. The monotonous method also causes students to easily feel bored and less eager to participate in learning.

Looking at the results of this initial observation, it can be seen that there are several problems in PAI learning in 3rd Class of SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba, namely:

- The students' learning outcomes were still low (the class average score of 62 was still below the individual completeness value of 65 and the classical completeness of 64.29% was still far from the standard classical completeness value of 85%).
- The activity of students in the learning process is still low. The lowest activity is the level of cooperation among students.
- The low value of students' learning outcomes is assumed to be caused by the low activity of students in the learning process. One of the factors that trigger low student learning activities is the use of teacher teaching methods that do not refer to active student teaching methods (teachers more often use the lecture method).
- This initial observation was taken into consideration for the next action in PAI learning. To overcome the various problems and weaknesses of PAI learning, action is taken in the form of applying the Card Sort method in learning.

## B. Cycle 1 Implementation

Cycle 1 was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Card Sort method in improving student engagement and learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The cycle consisted of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

### 1. Planning

At this stage, lesson plans, learning materials, and assessment tools were prepared. The teacher was trained on how to implement the Card Sort method effectively in the classroom. The primary goal was to create an interactive learning environment that encouraged student participation.

## 2. Action

During the implementation phase, the Card Sort method was applied in two learning sessions. Students were divided into small groups and given categorized learning materials in the form of cards. They were required to sort and match the cards according to the given criteria. The teacher facilitated the discussion and guided students in understanding the lesson material.

## 3. Observation

Observations were conducted to evaluate student engagement, interaction, and comprehension. The teacher and researcher recorded student responses and participation levels. The learning outcomes were assessed through quizzes and direct observations.

Table 4. Student Learning Outcomes (Cycle 1 - First Meeting)

No	Description	Results
1	Lowest Score	60
2	Highest Score	100
3	Average Score	72
4	Number of Students Below Minimum Score (65)	10
5	Number of Students Meeting Minimum Score (65)	10
6	Percentage of Class Mastery	50%

Table 5. Student Learning Outcomes (Cycle 1 - Second Meeting)

No	Description	Results
1	Lowest Score	60
2	Highest Score	100
3	Average Score	77
4	Number of Students Below Minimum Score (65)	6
5	Number of Students Meeting Minimum Score (65)	14
6	Percentage of Class Mastery	70%

Table 6. Student Activity Level (Cycle 1)

No	Activity Aspect	Score
1	Student Collaboration	3
2	Enthusiasm in Learning	3
3	Attention During Lessons	2
4	Ability to Complete Tasks	2
5	Answering Questions	2
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>60%</b>

## 4. Reflection

The results of Cycle 1 showed an improvement in learning outcomes and student engagement compared to the pre-cycle phase. The percentage of students meeting the minimum competency score increased from 10% (pre-cycle) to 70% (Cycle 1). However, the desired mastery level of 85% had not yet been reached.

Additionally, the observation data indicated that students were more active in discussions and group activities. However, some students were still hesitant to participate, and their engagement levels varied. Based on these findings, adjustments were made for Cycle 2, including improved instructions, additional reinforcement activities, and better group structuring to maximize student interaction and understanding.

The findings from Cycle 1 highlight the potential of the Card Sort method in fostering a more engaging and effective learning process. The refinements in Cycle 2 aimed to further enhance student participation and ensure that learning objectives were fully achieved.

### C. Cycle 2 Implementation

Based on the findings from Cycle 1, several refinements were made to improve the effectiveness of the Card Sort method in Cycle 2. The modifications included clearer instructions, additional reinforcement activities, and better group structuring to maximize student participation.

#### 1. Planning

At this stage, lesson plans were revised to address the issues identified in Cycle 1. Additional learning materials were prepared to further enhance student understanding. The teacher was also given additional guidance on facilitating group discussions effectively.

#### 2. Action

Cycle 2 was conducted in two learning sessions using the improved Card Sort method. Students were encouraged to collaborate more actively in sorting and categorizing information. The teacher provided structured guidance to ensure all students participated equally in the learning process.

#### 3. Observation

Observations were carried out to assess improvements in student engagement and learning outcomes. The teacher and researcher monitored student participation, enthusiasm, and comprehension.

Table 7. Student Learning Outcomes (Cycle 2 - First Meeting)

No	Description	Results
1	Lowest Score	65
2	Highest Score	100
3	Average Score	78
4	Number of Students Below Minimum Score (65)	4
5	Number of Students Meeting Minimum Score (65)	16
6	Percentage of Class Mastery	80%

Table 8. Student Learning Outcomes (Cycle 2 - Second Meeting)

No	Description	Results
1	Lowest Score	70
2	Highest Score	100
3	Average Score	80
4	Number of Students Below Minimum Score (65)	2
5	Number of Students Meeting Minimum Score (65)	18
6	Percentage of Class Mastery	90%

Table 9. Student Activity Level (Cycle 2)

No	Activity Aspect	Score
1	Student Collaboration	4
2	Enthusiasm in Learning	4
3	Attention During Lessons	3
4	Ability to Complete Tasks	3
5	Answering Questions	3
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>85%</b>

#### 4. Reflection

The results of Cycle 2 showed significant improvements in both learning outcomes and student engagement. The percentage of students achieving the minimum competency score increased from 70% (Cycle 1) to 90% (Cycle 2), surpassing the target mastery level of 85%.

Observations also indicated that students were more active in discussions, demonstrated better collaboration, and showed increased enthusiasm for learning. The refinements made in Cycle 2 successfully addressed the limitations observed in the previous cycle.

The findings confirm that the Card Sort method is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing student participation and academic performance in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The improvements observed in Cycle 2 suggest that active learning methods can significantly contribute to better student engagement and comprehension.

## Implication and Conclusion

### 1. Conclusion

Based on the results of this classroom action research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Card Sort method significantly improves student engagement and learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for third-grade students at SD Negeri 001 Bangun Purba. The key findings include:

- The application of the Card Sort method increased student participation, collaboration, and enthusiasm during the learning process.
- The percentage of students meeting the minimum competency score improved from 10% (pre-cycle) to 90% (Cycle 2), exceeding the classical completeness standard of 85%.
- Student activity levels improved from 45% (pre-cycle) to 85% (Cycle 2), indicating higher engagement and interaction in the learning process.
- The Card Sort method helped create a more dynamic and student-centered learning environment, reducing passive learning behaviors and enhancing conceptual understanding.

These findings demonstrate that interactive and participatory learning methods, such as Card Sort, can enhance the quality of education by fostering student engagement and improving learning outcomes.

### 2. Suggestions

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- For Teachers: Educators should incorporate interactive teaching methods, such as Card Sort, to increase student engagement and comprehension. It is essential to design learning activities that encourage active participation and critical thinking.
- For Schools: Schools should support the implementation of innovative teaching strategies by providing necessary resources, training, and professional development opportunities for teachers.
- For Future Researchers: Further research is recommended to explore the effectiveness of the Card Sort method in other subjects and different educational levels. Additional studies can also examine long-term impacts on student learning motivation and retention.

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