
EFFORTS TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES IN READING HIJAIYAH LETTERS THROUGH THE INDEX CARD MATCH LEARNING MODEL ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Submitted: 05/01/2026

Revised: 29/01/2026

Accepted: 12/02/2026

Published: 05/03/2026

Abstract

This study aims to overcome students' difficulties in reading Hijaiyah letters through the implementation of the Index Card Match learning model among second-grade students of SD Negeri 4 Lamokato. This research employed a qualitative approach using Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, conducted in two cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The research subjects were 20 second-grade students. Data collection techniques included Hijaiyah letter reading tests, observation of students' learning activities, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively by calculating learning mastery percentages and qualitatively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that the implementation of the Index Card Match learning model effectively improved students' Hijaiyah letter reading skills and learning activities. The learning mastery percentage increased from 25% in the pre-cycle to 55% in Cycle I and significantly improved to 90% in Cycle II. Students' learning activities also increased, with an average of 90% in Cycle II. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Index Card Match learning model is effective in overcoming difficulties in reading Hijaiyah letters among second-grade students at SD Negeri 4 Lamokato.

Keywords

Index Card Match, Hijaiyah letter reading, Classroom Action Research, Islamic Education.



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and planned effort to provide guidance and assistance to students in developing their physical and spiritual potential so that they can achieve maturity and independently carry out the tasks of life (Aisyi et al., 2025; Syahid, 2024). The primary objective of education is the occurrence of expected changes through the learning process, including changes in individual behavior, personal life, social life, as well as in the teaching process itself (Mudyahardjo, 2001; Tirtarahardja & Sulo, 2005). This is in line with Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere that enables students to actively develop their potential, including spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed for themselves, society, the nation, and the state.

The educational process in schools should be student-oriented through a student-active learning approach, in which teachers do not merely act as transmitters of knowledge but as facilitators who help students develop their potential (Hoidn & Klemenčič, 2020; Keiler, 2018). Sardiman (2006) asserts that effective learning is learning that actively involves students so that educational interaction occurs between teachers and learners. Education, in essence, cannot be separated from human life, because through education, humans are able to refine their potential toward holistic maturity (Abdul et al., 2020; Biesta, 2020).

This perspective is consistent with Islamic teachings as stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-'Alaq, verses 4–5, which emphasize that Allah teaches humans through the use of the pen and teaches them what they did not previously know. According to Shihab (Shihab, 2000) in *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, these verses indicate that Allah grants knowledge to humans both through human effort, such as reading and writing, and through direct instruction. Similarly, Shihab (2012) in *Tafsir Al-Lubab* explained that the command to read is a call for humans to continuously seek and develop knowledge throughout their lives.

Learning is a process of individual effort to achieve relatively permanent changes in behavior as a result of experience and interaction with the environment. These changes include aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Sardiman, 2006). Teaching, on the other hand, is a conscious effort by teachers to create learning conditions that enable continuous behavioral changes in students. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in designing effective learning, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at the elementary school level (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023; Wibowo et

al., 2024).

Islamic Religious Education aims to form individuals who have faith and devotion to Allah SWT and possess knowledge, attitudes, personality, and skills in practicing Islamic teachings in daily life (Daradjat, 2011). One of the fundamental competencies that elementary school students must acquire is the ability to read Hijaiyah letters. This ability is essential as it serves as the foundation for reading the Qur'an (Husna et al., 2023; Majid, 2004), especially short chapters and Qur'anic verses. Therefore, teaching Hijaiyah letter reading requires learning models that actively engage students and foster learning interest.

One learning model that can be applied is the Index Card Match model. Silberman (2013) states that Index Card Match is an active learning strategy that helps students review and understand lesson material through matching question and answer cards in pairs. This model encourages students to think, move, and interact, thereby creating a more lively and enjoyable learning atmosphere (Safa'udin & Jatmiko, 2025; Sarti et al., 2025). The research conducted by Hasanah et al. (2025) found that the implementation of Index Card Match significantly improves students' mathematics learning outcomes across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Ardiansyah et al. (2023) research also shows the same thing, that the use of Index Card Match has a positive effect on students' learning outcomes. In the context of introducing Hijaiyah letters, the use of Index Card Match has also shown positive results in students' ability to recognize Hijaiyah letters (Windiana et al., 2023).

Based on preliminary observations at SD Negeri 4 Lamokato, particularly among second-grade students, it was found that students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters was still relatively low. Out of 20 students, only 5 students, or 25%, were able to read Hijaiyah letters correctly and fluently. This low level of ability was caused by learning methods that were still dominated by lectures and question-and-answer sessions, resulting in students being passive and easily bored. In addition, students experienced difficulties distinguishing Hijaiyah letters that have similar shapes but different pronunciations. Interviews with the Islamic Religious Education teacher, Mrs. Darsia, also revealed that the learning process of reading Hijaiyah letters had not been optimally implemented.

Furthermore, documentation and observation results indicated that students' low ability in reading Hijaiyah letters had an impact on their overall learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. Several students showed low motivation and confidence when asked to read Hijaiyah letters individually in front of the class, and some tended to avoid participation during reading

activities. This condition, if not addressed immediately, may hinder students' foundational skills in reading the Qur'an at an early age, which is a common challenge among elementary students in learning to recognize and read Hijaiyah letters (Faisal & Yuliawati, 2025). In addition, previous studies have shown that active learning strategies can effectively enhance students' engagement and reading skills compared to traditional lecture-based methods (Alfatani et al., 2023).

Based on these problems, it is necessary to improve the learning process through Classroom Action Research (CAR) by applying the Index Card Match learning model to overcome difficulties in reading Hijaiyah letters among second-grade students at SD Negeri 4 Lamokato. It is expected that through the implementation of an active and innovative learning model, students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters will improve and achieve the minimum learning mastery in accordance with the Minimum Mastery Criteria (MMC) of 75%.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using Classroom Action Research (CAR), which aims to improve and enhance the quality of both the learning process and learning outcomes through concrete actions implemented in the classroom. Classroom Action Research was chosen because it is oriented toward solving learning problems in a contextual and sustainable manner. The CAR model applied in this study was the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. These stages were carried out cyclically and repeatedly until the research success indicators were achieved. The study was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of one learning session (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014; Sugiyono, 2022).

This research was conducted at SD Negeri 4 Lamokato, Kolaka District, Kolaka Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, from September to November 2025. The population of this study comprised all second-grade students of SD Negeri 4 Lamokato who participated in Islamic Religious Education learning. Based on initial identification through observation and data on students' reading abilities, it was found that some students experienced difficulties in reading Hijaiyah letters. Therefore, the research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, which is the deliberate selection of samples based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria included second-grade students who had not yet achieved mastery in reading Hijaiyah letters. Based on these criteria, a total of 20 second-grade students were selected as the research sample and

became the subjects of the action.

In the implementation of the study, the researcher acted as the implementer of the learning actions, while the Islamic Religious Education teacher, Mrs. Darsia, served as the observer who assisted in observing students' activities during the learning process. In addition, the research was conducted under the supervision of two academic advisors who provided guidance and feedback throughout the research process to ensure procedural accuracy and the quality of research implementation.

The data in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from the results of formative tests in Cycle I and Cycle II to measure students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters, observations of students' learning activities during the learning process, and interviews with teachers and students to obtain in-depth information related to the learning process and outcomes. Secondary data were collected from supporting documents, such as lesson plans, students' score records, and other documents relevant to the research.

The data collection techniques used included tests, observations, interviews, and documentation. Tests were administered to measure students' ability to read the 30 Hijaiyah letters. Observations were conducted using observation sheets containing ten indicators of students' learning activities, including active participation in learning, cooperation in finding matching card pairs, and the courage to read Hijaiyah letters aloud. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher and several students to obtain supporting data related to responses, learning experiences, and obstacles encountered during the learning process. Documentation was used to complement the research data in the form of photographs of learning activities, students' assessment records, and field notes.

The research instruments were validated by experts prior to use to ensure their suitability with the research objectives. The criteria for research success were determined as at least 75% of students achieving learning mastery and at least 80% of students' learning activities falling into the good or very good category. The research procedures followed the CAR cycle of the Kemmis and McTaggart model, beginning with the planning stage, which involved preparing lesson plans and Index Card Match media. The action implementation stage included randomly distributing cards to students, matching card pairs, reading Hijaiyah letters aloud, presenting the results, and collaboratively drawing conclusions. The observation stage involved recording students' activities and the learning process, while the reflection stage was used to evaluate the results of the actions

and formulate improvements for the next cycle.

Data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were analyzed by calculating the percentage of students' learning mastery, while qualitative data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through the application of source and method triangulation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Initial Condition (Pre-Cycle)

Before the implementation of the action, the researcher first conducted a preliminary observation and a pre-cycle test to determine students' initial ability to read Hijaiyah letters. The observation was carried out through direct observation of the Islamic Religious Education learning process, as well as interviews with the classroom teacher. Based on the observation results, the learning process of reading Hijaiyah letters was still dominated by lecture and question-and-answer methods. Students tended to be passive, less enthusiastic, and easily bored. This condition had an impact on students' low ability to recognize, pronounce, and distinguish Hijaiyah letters, especially letters that have similar shapes and sounds.

The teacher also reported that students frequently made mistakes in reading Hijaiyah letters such as ba, ta, and tsa, as well as jim, ha, and kha. This condition indicates that students had not yet developed a strong understanding of the shapes and makhraj (points of articulation) of Hijaiyah letters. The pre-cycle test was administered to determine the students' initial level of mastery in reading Hijaiyah letters. The Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC) established for this study was a score of 70.

Table 1. Pre-Cycle Learning Outcomes of Reading Hijaiyah Letters

No	Description	Number of Students	Percentage
1.	Mastery Achieved	5	25
2.	Not Yet Mastery	15	75
	Total	20	100

Based on the table above, it can be seen that only 25% of the students achieved learning mastery, while the remaining 75% had not yet met the mastery criteria. These results indicate that the ability to read Hijaiyah letters among second-grade students at SD Negeri 4 Lamokato was still

relatively low. Therefore, improvement efforts are required through the implementation of a more active and enjoyable learning model to enhance students' reading abilities.

Planning and Implementation of Cycle I Actions

At the planning stage of Cycle I, the researcher and the teacher collaboratively prepared the Lesson Plan (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran*) by applying the Index Card Match learning model. The teacher prepared index cards containing Hijaiyah letters and matching cards in the form of letter sounds or examples of Hijaiyah letter readings. In addition, the researcher prepared observation sheets to record students' learning activities and evaluation instruments.

The implementation of Cycle I was conducted in one learning session. The teacher began the lesson with apperception and motivational activities, followed by a brief explanation of how to play the Index Card Match game. Students were randomly given cards and instructed to find the matching pairs. During the implementation, students began to show enthusiasm and interest in participating in the learning activities. However, several students were still confused when searching for their matching cards and were hesitant when asked to read Hijaiyah letters aloud in front of the class.

The observation results indicated an improvement in students' learning activities compared to the pre-cycle condition.

Table 2. Students' Learning Activities in Cycle I

No.	Observed Aspects	Percentage
1.	Activeness in participating in learning	65
2.	Cooperation in finding matching cards	70
3.	Courage in reading Hijaiyah letters	60
	Rata-rata	65

Based on Table 2, students' learning activities in Cycle I showed an improvement compared to the pre-cycle condition. Students' activeness in participating in learning reached 65%, indicating that most students had begun to engage in the learning process through the Index Card Match model. The aspect of cooperation in finding matching cards achieved the highest percentage, namely 70%, demonstrating that this learning model was able to encourage interaction and collaboration among students.

Meanwhile, students' courage in reading Hijaiyah letters was still categorized as moderate, with a percentage of 60%. This finding indicates that although students had begun to show the courage to perform and attempt to read Hijaiyah letters, some students still experienced hesitation

and a lack of self-confidence. The average learning activity score of 65% suggests that the learning implementation in Cycle I was fairly good; however, it still required improvement and reinforcement in the next cycle, particularly in enhancing students' confidence and courage when reading Hijaiyah letters aloud.

After the learning process was completed, students were given an evaluation test to measure the improvement in their ability to read Hijaiyah letters.

Table 3. Learning Outcomes of Reading Hijaiyah Letters in Cycle I

No	Description	Number of Students	Percentage
1.	Mastery Achieved	11	55
2.	Not Yet Mastery	9	45
	Total	20	100

Based on Table 3, the evaluation results in Cycle I indicate an improvement in students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters compared to the pre-cycle stage. The number of students who achieved learning mastery increased to 11 students, or 55%, while 9 students, or 45%, had not yet reached mastery.

This improvement demonstrates that the implementation of the Index Card Match learning model began to have a positive impact on students' learning outcomes. Through activities involving matching cards and reading Hijaiyah letters in pairs, students were better assisted in recognizing the shapes and sounds of Hijaiyah letters. However, the mastery level of only 55% indicates that students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters had not yet developed optimally.

Some students still experienced difficulties in accurately pronouncing Hijaiyah letters and distinguishing letters with similar shapes and sounds. Therefore, the evaluation results in Cycle I did not meet the predetermined success indicators, making it necessary to implement improvements and refinements in Cycle II to achieve optimal learning outcome improvements.

Planning and Implementation of Cycle II Actions

In Cycle II, the researcher implemented improvements based on the reflection results from Cycle I. The teacher clarified instructions, increased the variety of cards, and provided more intensive guidance to students who experienced learning difficulties. The learning process in Cycle II was more conducive. Students appeared more confident, actively asked questions, and were more willing to read Hijaiyah letters aloud.

Table 4. Students' Learning Activities in Cycle II

No	Observed Aspects	Percentage
1.	Activeness in participating in learning	90
2.	Cooperation in finding matching cards	92
3.	Courage in reading Hijaiyah letters	88
	Average	90

Based on Table 4, students' learning activities in Cycle II experienced a very significant improvement compared to Cycle I. Students' activeness in participating in learning reached 90%, indicating that almost all students were actively involved in the learning process using the Index Card Match model.

The aspect of cooperation in finding matching cards achieved the highest percentage, namely 92%. This result indicates that students were able to interact and collaborate very well, both in groups and in pairs. The Index Card Match model encouraged two-way communication among students, creating a more lively and conducive learning atmosphere.

Meanwhile, students' courage in reading Hijaiyah letters also showed a very good improvement, reaching 88%. Students appeared more confident and were no longer hesitant when asked to read Hijaiyah letters in front of the class. The average learning activity score of 90% indicates that the learning implementation in Cycle II was very effective and met the expected criteria. Therefore, the research action was deemed successful in terms of students' learning activities.

Table 5. Learning Outcomes of Reading Hijaiyah Letters in Cycle II

No	Description	Number of Students	Percentage
1.	Mastery Achieved	18	90
2.	Not Yet Mastery	2	10
	Total	20	100

Based on Table 5, the evaluation results in Cycle II demonstrate a very significant improvement in students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters compared to Cycle I. The number of students who achieved learning mastery increased to 18 students, or 90%, while only 2 students, or 10%, had not yet reached mastery.

This improvement in learning mastery indicates that the instructional improvements implemented in Cycle II through the Index Card Match learning model were optimally effective. Students were better able to recognize, pronounce, and articulate Hijaiyah letters correctly. In addition, students' confidence in reading Hijaiyah letters increased along with a more conducive

and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

The success achieved in Cycle II was inseparable from the improvements in learning strategies implemented by the teacher, such as providing repeated examples of reading Hijaiyah letters, offering more intensive assistance to students who experienced difficulties, and increasing the variety of cards used in the Index Card Match model. Thus, the evaluation results of Cycle II met the predetermined success indicators of this study, and the research actions were declared successful and did not require continuation to the next cycle.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Index Card Match learning model was able to improve students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters gradually and significantly. This improvement can be clearly observed from the comparison of learning outcomes during the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages. In the pre-cycle stage, most students were not yet able to read Hijaiyah letters correctly, either in terms of letter recognition or pronunciation. This condition was caused by learning methods that were still conventional and did not actively involve students in the learning process. After the Index Card Match model was implemented in Cycle I, an improvement in students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters was observed. Students began to recognize and pronounce Hijaiyah letters more accurately, although some pronunciation errors were still found. In Cycle II, the improvement in reading ability became more optimal. Students were not only able to recognize Hijaiyah letters but also able to read them more fluently and confidently.

These findings are consistent with Silberman's (Silberman, 2013) view that active learning can enhance students' understanding because they are directly involved in the learning process. The Index Card Match model requires students to think, move, and interact, thereby facilitating the memorization and recognition of Hijaiyah letters. These findings are also consistent with research conducted by Jusli & Ridwanudin (2023), who studied the effect of Index Card Match on student learning outcomes, found that ICM can improve students' ability to learn Asmaul Husna material. In this case, the findings of this study are very consistent in that Index Card Match can improve students' ability to remember and recognize (Astriyanti & Anwar, 2016; Hasibuan, 2022; Mulyani et al., 2025; Nur et al., 2024).

In addition to improving learning outcomes, the implementation of the Index Card Match model also had a positive impact on students' learning activeness and motivation. In the pre-cycle stage, students tended to be passive and less enthusiastic in participating in Hijaiyah letter-reading

lessons. However, after the implementation of the Index Card Match model, the learning atmosphere became more lively and enjoyable.

Students were actively involved in finding matching cards, cooperating with their peers, and showing the courage to read Hijaiyah letters in front of the class. These activities encouraged students to learn without feeling pressured. This finding is in accordance with the learning motivation theory proposed by Sardiman (Sardiman, 2006), which states that an enjoyable learning environment can enhance students' intrinsic motivation. Empirical findings from Nurishlah et al. (2023) also shows the same thing, that a pleasant learning environment can be a strategy to increase student learning motivation.

Increasing student motivation is very important, as explained in Fitriya et al. (2025) research, which shows that learning motivation affects student learning outcomes, especially in Islamic religious education. This is also explained by Ummat et al. (2024), who states that one of the factors that affects student learning outcomes is student learning motivation. In this case, Index Card Match, which helps make the learning atmosphere more enjoyable, can improve student learning outcomes. Several studies have proven the same thing (Hidayati, 2023; Marliza, 2025; Oktaviani & Aulia, 2024; Zainal et al., 2024). Based on the recapitulation of learning outcomes, the improvement in students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters can be visualized through a bar chart illustrating the percentage of learning mastery in each cycle. The chart shows a significant increase from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle I and from Cycle I to Cycle II.

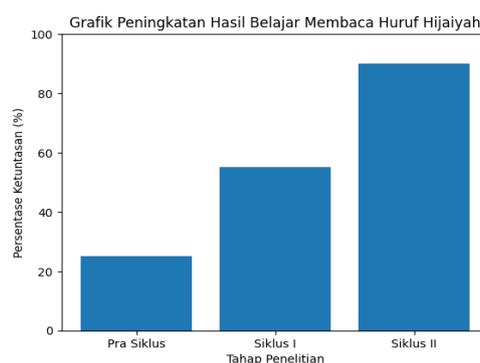


Figure 1. Improvement Graph of Students' Learning Outcomes in Reading Hijaiyah Letters for Grade II Students of SD Negeri 4 Lamokato

Visually, the bar chart clearly illustrates that the implementation of the Index Card Match model had a positive impact on students' learning outcomes. The increase in the percentage of

learning mastery, which reached 90% in Cycle II, indicates that this learning model is effective and feasible to be used as an alternative instructional strategy for teaching Hijaiyah letter reading. These findings are in line with Ariani & Setianingsih (2018); Putinella (2021); and Tobing (2018) research, which found that the implementation Index Card Match is effective as a learning strategy that affects student learning outcomes, especially in cases related to letters or vocabulary. Thus, it can be concluded that the application of the Index Card Match learning model not only improves students' learning outcomes but also enhances their activeness, motivation, and self-confidence in reading Hijaiyah letters in Grade II at SD Negeri 4 Lamokato.

CONCLUSION

The results of the Classroom Action Research conducted in Grade II of SD Negeri 4 Lamokato show that the Index Card Match model was effective in improving students' Hijaiyah reading skills. Student mastery increased gradually across the learning cycles, from 25% in the pre-cycle to 55% in Cycle I, and reached 90% in Cycle II. This significant improvement indicates that the research success indicators were fully achieved. In addition to improving learning outcomes, the Index Card Match model also had a positive impact on student engagement. Learning activities increased to 90% in Cycle II, as students became more active, cooperative, and confident in reading Hijaiyah letters. Therefore, the Index Card Match model is recommended as an effective instructional strategy for teaching Hijaiyah literacy in Islamic Religious Education.

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