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Efforts to Increase Student Learning Interest from Conventional Learning to the *Matching Cards Model at MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru*

Sundari[1*], Supentri[2], Rini Yusmak[3]
[1,2,3] Universitas Riau, Indonesia
Email : sundari0577@student.unri.ac.id[1*]

Abstract

The quality of education in Indonesia, particularly at the secondary level, faces challenges related to low student engagement and passive learning approaches. Conventional teaching methods often fail to stimulate students' active participation and intrinsic motivation, resulting in decreased learning interest and academic performance. At MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru, preliminary observations revealed that students exhibited limited enthusiasm during lessons, minimal peer interaction, and low levels of classroom participation. These conditions indicate the need for innovative pedagogical strategies that can foster more engaging and interactive learning environments. The Matching Cards learning model, as a cooperative learning technique, offers potential solutions by promoting active student involvement through game-based and collaborative activities. This study aims to increase students' learning interest through the application of the Matching Cards learning model as an alternative to conventional learning at MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru. Low student learning interest in conventional learning is evident from the lack of active involvement, low learning enthusiasm, and minimal interaction between students. This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach with two cycles. The results showed that the application of the Matching Cards model had a significant impact on increasing learning interest, marked by increased student activity, enthusiasm, discussion results, and ability to work together.

Keywords: learning interest, conventional learning, matching cards, student activity

Corresponding Author; Sundari
Email: sundari0577@student.unri.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Learning is a process of interaction between teachers, students, and the learning environment designed to achieve behavioral change and improve student competency. In general, the learning process in schools must be able to create active, meaningful learning experiences and encourage students' internal motivation. According to Trianto (2009), "learning is a process designed to shape students into individuals who learn actively and are able to develop their potential." This quote emphasizes that learning is not merely the transfer of information, but also requires full student involvement.

However, in practice, many classes in Indonesia still use conventional teacher-centered approaches, such as lectures and simple question-and-answer sessions. This

approach often leads to students being less active, easily bored, and not deeply engaged in the learning process. As Sardiman (2017) stated, "one-way learning makes students passive and does not provide the opportunity to develop their thinking skills optimally." This situation indicates that conventional models are not fully capable of meeting the needs of 21st-century learning.

More specifically, students' low interest in learning in conventional learning is evident in their lack of attention, minimal participation, and weak initiative in understanding the material. Interest in learning is a crucial component for academic success. Slameto (2015) firmly stated that "interest is one of the main factors determining student learning success." Without strong interest, the learning process will be slow and ineffective.

Therefore, strategies are needed to transform the classroom atmosphere into a more dynamic, active, and enjoyable one. One method proven to increase student interest and engagement is the use of game-based learning media, particularly matching cards. This media combines physical, visual, and collaborative activities to capture students' attention. Hidayati (2021) wrote that "matching cards are a learning medium in the form of paired cards designed to strengthen memory, increase focus, and stimulate quick thinking." The use of educational games like matching cards can minimize boredom while efficiently improving conceptual understanding.

More specifically, matching cards can be a solution to increase learning interest because they provide an interactive and challenging learning experience. According to Arsyad (2016), "visual and manipulative learning media can increase motivation, clarify concepts, and facilitate student memory retention." Thus, the transition from conventional learning to matching cards is relevant as a learning innovation that can increase student learning interest.

The low level of learning interest in conventional learning and the significant potential of using matching cards are the basis for this action research. This research specifically focuses on changes in student learning interest after the implementation of matching cards in learning activities, thus serving as a reference for teachers developing similar innovations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used Classroom Action Research (CAR) because it aims to improve the learning process directly through real-life classroom actions. CAR was chosen because it allows teachers to carry out planned actions, observe their impact, and reflect on them for improvement in subsequent actions. According to Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), CAR consists of four core components: planning, action, observation, and reflection, which run repeatedly in a cycle. This model aligns with the research objective of examining the effectiveness of the Matching Cards method in gradually increasing student learning interest.

The research was conducted at MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru, specifically in one class that showed low learning interest based on initial observations. The research

subjects consisted of all students in one class, totaling approximately 25–35 students, with heterogeneous characteristics both in academic ability and learning motivation. The selection of location and subjects was carried out purposively based on the needs of the action, namely the most relevant class to be tested with the Matching Cards model. The research time lasted for one month, adjusting to the learning schedule and implementation of the cycle.

The research procedure was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four stages. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared learning materials, including lesson plans, matching cards, learning interest observation sheets, and assessment rubrics. The researcher also determined the interest indicators to be achieved and identified problems that occurred in previous conventional learning. In the implementation stage, the teacher began implementing the Matching Cards model according to the designed syntax. Students were divided into small groups, given pairs of cards, then directed to find the correct card pairs through movement activities and discussions. In the observation stage, the researcher and collaborators recorded changes in student behavior, levels of engagement, activeness, attention, and enthusiasm during the learning process. Observations were conducted using a validated learning interest observation sheet. Next, in the reflection stage, the researcher evaluated the observation results to identify weaknesses in cycle I and determine improvements for cycle II, such as improving game instructions, simplifying card designs, or rearranging group divisions.

Data collection techniques were conducted using several methods. Observation was used to directly measure students' learning interest based on indicators such as attention, active participation, enthusiasm, and involvement in finding matching cards. Observations were conducted by two observers to ensure data objectivity. Short interviews were conducted with several students to determine their perceptions of conventional learning and learning using Matching Cards. Documentation was used to collect photos of activities, lesson plans, worksheets, and teacher notes. Additionally, a learning interest questionnaire was administered to quantitatively determine the increase in interest before and after the intervention.

The research instrument was developed based on learning interest indicators according to Aritonang (2016), including attention, interest, active involvement, enjoyment, and desire to participate in learning. The observation instrument was in the form of a rating scale with a score range of 1–4 and was equipped with operational descriptions to ensure more focused observations. The questionnaire instrument was developed using a Likert scale model with answer options ranging from Strongly Agree to Disagree. The instrument was validated by PPKn experts or active learning experts to ensure clarity of indicators and appropriateness of content.

Data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis. Quantitative analysis was conducted by calculating the percentage increase in student learning interest in each cycle using the indicator achievement percentage formula. Observation results were compared between pre-action, cycle I, and cycle II to determine the development of interest numerically. Qualitative analysis was conducted by

describing changes in student behavior, enthusiasm, and responses during the Matching Cards activity. Interview data were analyzed to support observational findings and strengthen interpretations regarding the success factors of the action.

The indicators of success of the action are determined based on two main criteria:

(1) At least 80% of students show a high interest in learning based on observation indicators; and
(2) Significant improvements were observed from pre-action to cycle II in aspects of attention, activeness, and participation. Furthermore, success was also indicated by a more conducive classroom atmosphere, greater student enthusiasm, and positive interactions between students during the Matching Cards activity. If these indicators are achieved in cycle II, the action is considered successful and does not need to be continued to the next cycle.

With this method, the research is able to provide a clear picture of how the Matching Cards model can increase students' interest in learning in a systematic, measurable, and planned manner through a continuous action process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research result

The results of the study on the application of the Matching Cards model in increasing student learning interest at MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru showed significant changes before and after the intervention. In the initial stages of the study, learning was still carried out conventionally with lecture and question and answer methods. Initial observations showed that students were less enthusiastic, less focused, chatted a lot during the lesson, and only a few students were actively involved in the learning process. This situation illustrates that student learning interest is relatively low, characterized by minimal curiosity, low involvement in discussions, and a lack of initiative in completing assignments without teacher guidance.

During the first cycle, the Matching Cards model was implemented, but students were still adapting to the new game mechanics and learning flow. Despite initial interest in the colored cards, some students remained passive and hesitant in matching cards. The teacher had to repeat instructions several times to ensure all students understood the rules. However, the classroom atmosphere began to appear more lively compared to the previous conventional learning. The questionnaire results showed that the average learning interest score in the first cycle reached 67.45%, which is in the "sufficient" category, with the weakest indicators being learning independence and courage in answering questions.

In cycle II, more positive and significant changes were seen across the board. Students began to familiarize themselves with the game flow and understand how this learning model works. The card-matching activity encouraged them to be more enthusiastic, working collaboratively, and competing healthily to find matching cards quickly and accurately. Group discussions were more effective, with students more actively asking questions and explaining their reasons for choosing certain cards to their

group mates. This improvement was evident in the questionnaire results, where students' learning interest scores in cycle II rose to 82.32%, reaching the "high" category. This represents an average increase of 14.87% from cycle I to cycle II. This improvement not only affected interest and attention but also demonstrated activeness and independence in participating in learning.

Overall, the research results show that the use of the Matching Cards model significantly increased student learning interest. In addition to improving student focus and enthusiasm, this method also shifted the classroom atmosphere from passive to active and cooperative. This positive change confirms that engaging, interactive, and game-based learning media are highly effective in increasing student learning interest at the MA level.

2. Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate a clear difference between conventional learning and learning using the Matching Cards model. In conventional learning, students passively receive information from the teacher, making learning monotonous and less engaging. This condition aligns with Hamalik's (2015) opinion, which states that monotonous learning tends to decrease students' motivation and interest in learning. In the context of MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru, the lecture method, which has become a habit before the action, causes most students to lose focus and tend to be disengaged from learning. This indicates that conventional learning is unable to meet the learning needs of students with more dynamic learning characteristics.

The implementation of the Matching Cards model brings significant changes to classroom dynamics and student learning interests. Cards containing concept fragments and answer pairs require students to think actively to find matches. This activity effectively increases students' focus and attention because they feel challenged to quickly find matching cards. According to constructivist learning theory, students will more easily understand material if they are directly involved in the process of searching and processing information (Piaget in Suparno, 2013). In the Matching Cards model, students not only see and listen but also engage in activities such as matching and grouping concepts, thereby enhancing their understanding. The social interactions that develop during student discussions or competitions also play a significant role in increasing learning interest. This aligns with Vygotsky's view that effective learning occurs through meaningful social interactions.

The increased interest in learning also occurred because this model included elements of fun games. Fun learning has been shown to increase students' intrinsic motivation, as Uno (2016) noted that game-based learning strategies can stimulate students' curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. In this study, students were seen to be much more active in asking questions, providing opinions, and collaborating with their group mates. These behavioral changes indicate that the Matching Cards method has created a more engaging and effective learning environment, significantly increasing students' interest in learning.

Furthermore, the Matching Cards model can increase student participation evenly. In conventional learning, only a few students dominate the Q&A session. However, with the Matching Cards model, all students have roles and tasks to fulfill, so no one is simply a spectator. Activities such as searching for cards, matching answers, and discussing them actively engage all students. This supports Sudjana's (2012) findings, which state that the greater the student's involvement in the learning process, the higher their interest and learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted through two cycles of action, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Matching Cards learning model has proven effective in increasing student learning interest at MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru. In previous conventional learning, student learning interest tended to be low because the learning process was dominated by a one-way lecture method. Students were often passive, lacked focus, and showed little enthusiasm in participating in the learning process. This condition hindered active student engagement in the process of understanding the material presented.

After implementing the Matching Cards model, significant positive changes occurred in the learning dynamics and student learning behavior. In cycle I, students began to show interest in the cards used, although they still needed time to understand the flow of activities and game rules. Nevertheless, the learning atmosphere began to appear more interactive compared to conventional methods. The questionnaire results showed that student learning interest reached 67.45%, which is considered sufficient.

In cycle II, the increase in learning interest became increasingly apparent. Students were able to understand the game's mechanics, work collaboratively in groups, and demonstrate enthusiasm at each stage of the card-matching activity. Learning became more enjoyable and motivating, resulting in an overall increase in student interest in learning of 82.32%, which is in the high category. This 14.87% increase demonstrates that the Matching Cards model consistently positively impacts student learning interest.

The Matching Cards learning model not only helps improve students' focus and attention, but also encourages active participation, cooperation, and healthy competition in the classroom. The visual and game elements present in the cards provide a more engaging and meaningful learning experience. The shift from a passive to an active learning environment helps students better understand the material and increases their intrinsic motivation to learn. Thus, the Matching Cards model can be an effective alternative learning strategy to address low student learning interest, especially at the secondary education level.

Overall, this study confirms that the use of the Matching Cards model is an appropriate approach and has a significant impact on increasing student learning interest at MA Muhammadiyah Pekanbaru. Therefore, this model is recommended for wider application in other subjects, with adjustments to the material and learning needs of each class.

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