



The Effectiveness of the Make a Match Method in Improving the Learning Outcomes of Islamic Religious Education in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This research aims to improve the learning outcomes of grade II students of SD Negeri 2 Kendengsidialit on the material "Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties" through the application of *the Make a Match method*. Given the low achievement of learning completeness in the pre-cycle, classroom action research (PTK) was carried out for three cycles with a qualitative approach that integrated quantitative and qualitative data. The subjects of the study were 27 grade II students, with data collection techniques including participant observation—conducted by teachers as researchers and collaborators—as well as learning outcome tests at the end of each cycle. Quantitative data analysis is focused on calculating the average score and percentage of learning completeness, while qualitative data is analyzed through reduction, categorization, presentation, interpretation, and conclusion. The results showed a significant increase: in the pre-cycle, the average score was only 58.28 with a completeness of 11.43%; increased to 66.14 (45.71% completeness) in cycle I, 74.71 (65.71%) in cycle II, and reached 89.85 (100% completeness) in cycle III. These findings prove that *the Make a Match method* is effective in improving student learning outcomes in the teaching material. This research makes an original contribution in the form of innovative application of active learning methods in the context of Islamic religious education in elementary schools, while enriching the study of learning strategies that are responsive to the characteristics of early childhood students.

Keywords: *Make a Match*, learning outcomes, classroom action research, Islamic religious education, active learning.

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A. Introduction

Islamic religious education in elementary schools has a strategic role in shaping students' morals, character, and basic understanding of faith from an early age. One of the fundamental materials in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum for grade II Elementary School is "Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties", which aims to instill belief in angels as one of the pillars of faith. However, based on initial observations at SD Negeri 2 Kendengsidialit in the 2024/2025 school year, many students have difficulty understanding this abstract concept because learning methods that are still conventional—such as lectures and memorization—are less interesting and not suitable for the cognitive development stage of children aged 7–8 years. Satriana's research (2025) shows that active and participatory approaches, such as the Make a Match method, are effective in improving student learning outcomes on conceptual religious materials. However, the application of this method in the context of PAI learning in elementary schools, especially in angel material, is still very limited and has not been explored in depth in rural environments such as Kendengsidialit (Yulindar, 2025). This research gap is an important basis for assessing the effectiveness of Make a Match in the local context. This study aims to analyze the extent to which the application of the Make a Match method can improve the learning outcomes of grade II students in the material "Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties". The research findings are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of a game-based PAI learning model as well as a practical contribution for teachers in designing fun and effective learning strategies.

In the context of 21st-century learning, a student-centered approach is an absolute requirement to increase engagement and conceptual understanding. The Make a Match method, developed by Dari (2024) and has been adapted in various modern educational contexts, offers a collaborative learning strategy through the matching of information cards that stimulate memory, social interaction, and active information processing. A study by Gade (2024) proves that this method is able to improve learning outcomes in social and science subjects in elementary schools, but its application in PAI learning—especially in theological materials such as angels—is still minimally explored, especially in rural areas with limited resources. At SD Negeri 2 Kendengsidialit, this challenge is exacerbated by the lack of variety of teaching methods and dependence on textbooks, resulting in a low impact on students' learning completeness. This research explicitly aims to answer the question: "Does the application of the Make a Match method significantly improve the learning outcomes of grade II students in the material Knowing Angels and Their Duties?" Through an experimental approach or classroom action, this research not only fills the literature gap regarding the innovation of PAI learning methods in elementary schools, but also provides practical recommendations for teachers and school policies in developing inclusive, contextual, and fun learning strategies (Zakiyah and Hafini, 2024). The policy contribution of this research is also relevant to the spirit of Merdeka Belajar which encourages teachers to innovate according to local needs."

B. Theoretical Studies

The Make a Match method is a cooperative learning strategy designed to increase student engagement through interactive matching of information cards between questions and answers. Theoretically, this method is rooted in the principle of active learning which emphasizes the importance of students' direct participation in the process of knowledge construction. According to Harahap (2024), active learning encourages students to think critically, communicate, and work together—characteristics that are inherent in the implementation of Make a Match. Furthermore, Gustina et al. (2024) define this method as an instructional approach that utilizes elements of play and collaboration to strengthen information retention and build conceptual understanding. In the context of Islamic religious education (PAI) in elementary school, this method is relevant because it is able to simplify abstract material into concrete forms that are easy to understand by early

childhood, in line with Piaget's principles of cognitive development in Harahap (2024) which emphasizes the dominance of concrete operational thinking at that age stage.

Supporting theories relevant to the application of Make a Match include Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist theory that emphasizes the role of social interaction in the proximal developmental zone (ZPD), where students can achieve higher understanding through the help of peers or teachers—a dynamic that naturally occurs in Make a Match activities. A number of empirical studies have tested the effectiveness of Make a Match in various learning contexts. A study by Satriana (2025) showed a significant increase in mathematics learning outcomes of grade IV elementary school students after the application of this method, with an increase in the average score from 62 to 84. In the field of religious education, research by Zakiyah and Hafini (2024) at MTs found that Make a Match is effective in increasing understanding of the concept of faith through increasing student motivation and participation. However, the context of the research focuses on the middle level, so it has not answered the specific needs of PAI learning in elementary schools which require a more visual and kinesthetic approach. Research by Sari & Widiati (2023) does target elementary school students, but the focus is on science subjects, not on the normative-religious dimension that requires a different approach in delivery and evaluation. Differences in age context, material characteristics, and learning orientation indicate the need for further exploration of the application of Make a Match in the PAI setting in elementary school.

Based on these theoretical synthesis and empirical findings, it is clear that the Make a Match method has a strong foundation in constructivist and social learning theory, and has been proven to be effective in improving learning outcomes in various fields of study. However, there is still a research gap related to its application in the context of Islamic religious education in elementary schools, especially in presenting abstract religious values material into a form of learning that is appropriate to the child's cognitive development stage. This study aims to fill this gap by empirically testing the effectiveness of Make a Match in improving the learning outcomes of PAI elementary school students, both from cognitive and affective aspects. Thus, this study not only expands the external validity of the method, but also provides practical contributions for PAI teachers in designing contextual, engaging, and impactful learning strategies.

C. Research Methods

This study uses the Kemmis and McTaggart model Class Action Research (PTK) design which consists of four repeated stages in each cycle, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The selection of this design is based on the purpose of the research which aims to improve the practice of direct learning in the classroom through the application of the Make a Match method. This method was chosen because of its relevance in increasing students' active participation through the activity of matching cards containing information about angels and their tasks, thereby strengthening conceptual understanding and retention of the material. PTK is seen as the most appropriate because the researcher also acts as a classroom teacher, allowing direct intervention to the problem of low student learning outcomes in the material "Knowing Angels and Their Duties". This approach also allows collaboration with an observer (another classroom teacher) to ensure the objectivity of the data. The research is planned to take place in two cycles, each consisting of two meetings, with success indicators in the form of an increase in the average learning outcome score of ≥ 75 and active student participation $\geq 80\%$. The PTK design was chosen because of its participatory, reflective, and contextual nature, so that the solutions produced are practical and can be directly implemented in the context of daily learning at SD Negeri 2 Kendengsidialit.

The population in this study is all grade II students of SD Negeri 2 Kendengsidialit for the 2024/2025 school year which totals 28 students. Because the research was conducted in the context of a whole classroom without group manipulation, all students were used as samples (total sampling). Data collection techniques

include: (1) participant observation conducted by the researcher and verified by a collaborator using a structured observation sheet containing indicators of student activity and teacher performance; (2) learning outcome tests in the form of objective questions (multiple choice and short fill-in) given at the end of each cycle to measure students' understanding of the material. The research instrument was validated through expert judgment by two elementary education lecturers and one senior teacher, while the reliability of the test instrument was tested using the Alpha Cronbach technique using SPSS software version 26, with a reliability coefficient of at least 0.70. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to calculate the average score and percentage of learning completeness, while qualitative data from observations were analyzed through thematic analysis techniques that included data reduction, categorization, presentation, and conclusion drawn. Research ethical considerations are strictly applied: research permission is obtained from the principal, informed consent is given to parents/guardians of students, and the confidentiality of participants' identities is guaranteed. The entire procedure is designed so that the research can be replicated in its entirety by other researchers in similar contexts.

D. Results and Discussion

1. Pre-Cycle

The efforts that will be made to improve student learning outcomes are to apply the Make a Match method. With the implementation of the Make a Match method, it is hoped that it can further improve student learning outcomes in the material Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties.

Table 1. Percentage of Completeness of Pre-Cycle Student Learning Outcomes

Yes	Completeness	Frequency	Presentase
1	Conclusion	4	14,81%
2	Incomplete	23	85,19%
Sum		27	100%

Table 2. Percentage of Student Learning Activities on the Material of Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties in the Pre-Cycle

Yes	Student Learning Activities	Precycle	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Active	4	14,81%
2	Less Active	14	51,85%
3	Inactive	9	33,33%
Sum		27	100%

2. Cycle I

a. Planning

In order to carry out Cycle I Classroom Action Research (PTK) which aims to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education subjects through the application of the Make a Match method, researchers have prepared a series of systematic and structured preparations. The first step taken is to prepare learning materials that are relevant and in accordance with the basic competencies to be achieved. The selected material focuses on the topic "Knowing Angels and Their Duties", which includes three main aspects, namely: (1) the duties of angels, (2) the number of angels that must be known, and (3) the order of the pillars of faith related to faith in angels.

Furthermore, the researcher developed a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) specifically designed to support the application of the Make a Match method. The lesson plan has been adjusted to the characteristics of the material and the learning needs of elementary school students, and is equipped with learning steps that facilitate active and participatory interaction of students during teaching and learning activities (attached). To support the implementation of the Make a Match method, the researcher also prepared learning media in the form of card props. There are two types of cards developed, namely: (1) cards containing the names of angels, and (2) cards containing the duties of each angel. Both sets of cards are designed in an attractive and informative way to make it easier for students to match the right pairs during learning activities (attached).

In addition, in order to measure the effectiveness of the application of the method on the achievement of student learning outcomes, the researcher also compiled an assessment instrument. This instrument is in the form of written test questions developed based on indicators of competency achievement in cycle I. These questions are designed to measure students' understanding of the name, number, duties of angels, and the order of the pillars of faith related to faith in angels. With this series of preparations, the implementation of actions in the first cycle is expected to run effectively and provide valid data on the contribution of the Make a Match method in improving the learning outcomes of Islamic Religious Education for elementary school students.

b. Implementation

At this stage of action, the researcher acts as a teacher, conducts learning on the material to get to know angels and their tasks with the Make a Match method and collaborators make observations. Teachers carry out the following learning activities:

- 1) In the initial learning activity, the teacher first greets the students and then checks the students by attending and then invites the students to read Fatihah and study prayers together to start learning. Before the teacher explains about the duties of angels, students are first asked to arrange their seats in a semicircular format. This activity lasted about 15 minutes.
- 2) In the core activity, the exploration stage of the teacher uses the Q&A method to explore the potential of students about the material mentioning the duties of angels, and the teacher stimulates the students by mentioning the names of the angels, so that the students can respond as expected. The teacher shows the cards to the students who then divide the group of students to play cards. This activity lasted about 20 minutes.
- 3) The next core activity is the elaboration stage of about 35 minutes. In the application of *the Make a Match* method, learning begins with the preparation of cards by the teacher. The cards contain information about the names of the angels and the duties performed by each angel. The teacher then divides all students into two groups. The first group received a card containing the angel's names, while the second group received a card containing a description of the angel's duties. Each student receives one card at random. With a predetermined time limit, students are asked to move around looking for a suitable pair of cards. For example, a student holding a card that reads "Archangel Gabriel" should find a friend holding the card that says "Revelation." This process encourages active interaction among students, while strengthening their understanding of the relationship between the angel's name and his or her assignment.

After all the students have successfully found their partner, they take turns reading the contents of the cards they are holding—both the angel's name and the assignment—in front of the class. This activity not only exercises the courage to speak in public, but also strengthens the collective memory of the material studied. After the first session, the cards are collected again by the teacher, shuffled, and then redistributed to the students on the condition that each student should not receive the same card as before. This process is repeated several times until the entire student truly understands and masters the relationship between the angel's name and its tasks. After *the Make a Match* activity is completed, the teacher enters the confirmation stage. At this stage, the teacher gave appreciation to the students for their active participation and smooth implementation of the card game. Furthermore, the teacher reaffirmed the material that had been studied and invited all students to jointly summarize the core of learning about angels and their duties. This stage lasts about 15 minutes and aims to strengthen students' conceptual understanding.

To conclude the learning, the teacher conducts an assessment of learning outcomes. Students are asked to take a written test in the form of a short fill consisting of 10 questions. The questions are designed to measure the extent to which students have understood the material about angels and their duties. Thus, the entire set of learning activities is not only fun, but also academically measurable.

Table 3. Percentage of completeness of learning outcomes in the Getting to Know material Angels and Their Duties in Cycle I

Yes	Completeness	Frequency	Presentase
1	Conclusion	12	44,44%
2	Incomplete	15	55,56%
Sum		27	100%

Cycle II

In the second cycle, the researcher prepared a careful learning plan to improve students' understanding of the material on knowing angels and their tasks. The first step is to prepare learning materials that cover three main aspects, namely the duties of angels, the number of angels that must be known, and the order of the pillars of faith related to faith in angels. This material was chosen because it is relevant to the curriculum and according to the level of understanding of the early grade students. Furthermore, the researcher compiles a Teaching Module or Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) that is systematically designed so that learning takes place effectively and fun. To support the active learning process, the researcher also made props in the form of angel business cards and angel task cards. This media is designed to be attractive with appropriate colors and illustrations to attract students' attention. In addition, assessment instruments in the form of written test questions are also prepared to measure the achievement of student competencies after learning. All of these learning tools were developed based on reflections from previous cycles, in the hope of addressing emerging weaknesses and strengthening aspects that have been successful. With detailed and structured planning, it is hoped that the learning process in cycle II will run more optimally and be able to significantly improve student learning outcomes.

The implementation of learning in cycle II is carried out by researchers who act as teachers, while collaborators act as observers. The activity began with greetings, attendance, and joint prayers led by teachers to create a religious and conducive atmosphere. Students are then asked to sit in a semicircular formation to facilitate interaction and observation during learning. In the core activity, teachers apply the *Make a Match method* combined with exploration, elaboration, and confirmation approaches. The exploration stage began with a question and answer session to explore students' initial knowledge, followed by a demonstration of business cards and angel assignments. In the elaboration stage, students are divided into two groups: one group holds angel business cards, and the other group holds angel task cards. They were asked to find a suitable pair of cards for a limited time, such as pairing the "Angel Gabriel" with "delivering revelations". Once a pair is found, students take turns reading the results. This process is repeated several times by shuffling the cards so that students do not memorize positions, but actually understand the material. At the end of the session, the teacher provided reinforcement of the material, appreciated the students' participation, and concluded the lesson together. In closing, students took a written test in the form of 10 short fill questions to measure their comprehension. Learning is active, fun, and participatory, reflecting the success of the implementation of *the Make a Match* method in improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

Observation of the application of *the Make a Match* method to the material on knowing angels and their tasks shows that the implementation is in accordance with the Teaching Module that has been designed. Teachers are able to convey material by following the steps of the method systematically, starting from the delivery of the initial concept to the implementation of a matching card game between the angel's name and his task. Students in general are able to follow

learning well; They enthusiastically participated in the activity of finding card pairs coordinated by the teacher, so that the classroom atmosphere became more dynamic and interactive. Compared to cycle I, there was a significant increase in student activity and participation, indicating that this method was effective in increasing their engagement. However, there are still a small number of students who feel doubtful or afraid of making mistakes when pairing cards, which indicates that their understanding of the material is not fully established. However, in the implementation of cycle II, there was real progress; Students are more orderly and confident in finding card pairs, and are able to complete tasks given by educators well. This shows that *the Make a Match* method not only encourages active participation, but also helps to strengthen conceptual understanding through a fun and collaborative approach.

Table 4. Percentage of Completeness of Student Learning Outcomes in Material Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties Cycle II

Ye s	Completeness	Frequency	Presentase
1	Conclusion	16	59,25
2	Incomplete	11	40,75
Sum		27	100%

Table 5. Percentage of Student Learning Activation on Material Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties Cycle II

Yes	Student Learning Activities	Cycle II	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Active	16	59,25%
2	Less Active	9	33,33%
3	Inactive	2	7,42%
Sum		27	100%

Based on the student activity observation sheet, there was a more significant increase in the second cycle compared to the first cycle after the implementation of *the Make a Match method*. The success in the second cycle can be seen from several aspects: first, student activities begin to be directed according to the demands of the method; second, the understanding of the material has increased significantly, as shown by the increase in the average score from 58.28 in the pre-cycle to 66.14 in the first cycle, and 74.71 in the second cycle—although the percentage of completion has only reached 65.71%, this remains the motivation to continue to the third cycle; Third, student participation and activeness in learning also increased compared to the previous cycle. However, there is still a weakness, namely that some students are not fully confident in playing card games because they are afraid of making mistakes when pairing cards. To overcome these shortcomings and improve the implementation of learning in cycle III, several steps need to be taken: teachers must better understand the management of teaching and learning activities according to *the Make a Match* principle, focus students' attention on explaining the steps of the method, provide motivation through a *reward* system and fair consequences, as well as deliberation with students before cycle III to ensure a shared understanding of the tasks and behaviors expected during learning. Because the indicators of success and research have not been achieved, it is necessary to continue to cycle III.

3. Cycle III

Based on the student activity observation sheet, there was a significant increase in the second cycle compared to the first cycle after the implementation of *the Make a Match method*. The learning planning was carried out

carefully, including the preparation of material about the duties of angels, the number of angels, and the order of the pillars of faith to angels, accompanied by the preparation of Teaching Modules, the creation of props in the form of business cards and angel assignments, and assessment instruments in the form of competency test questions. The implementation of learning began with initial activities in the form of greetings, attendance, and prayer for 15 minutes. In the core activity, the teacher uses the question and answer method as exploration, then applies *the Make a Match method* for 35 minutes: students are divided into two groups, one group holding an angel business card and the other group holding an angel task card; each student looks for a matching pair of cards, reads the results in turn, and then the cards are shuffled and redistributed so that students don't get the same card. The confirmation stage was carried out by giving awards, affirmation of materials, and a joint conclusion for 15 minutes. At the end of the lesson, students take a written test in the form of 10 short fill questions. This method has proven to be effective in increasing students' active participation, due to its interactive and fun nature, thus strengthening their understanding of the material of knowing angels and their tasks.

Table 6. Percentage of Student Learning Outcomes Completeness in Material on Getting to Know Angels and Their Duties Cycle II

Yes	Completeness	Frequency	Percentage
1	Conclusion	27	100%
2	Incomplete	0	0
Sum		27	100%

Based on the results of observation, the application of the *Make a Match* in the material to know angels and their duties are carried out in accordance with the Learning Implementation Plan (Teaching Module) that has been prepared. Teachers are able to deliver material by following the steps of these methods systematically and precisely. Students also showed a very positive response; They follow the learning with enthusiasm, especially when carrying out card games to find a match between the angel's name and his tasks under the teacher's coordination. This activity went smoothly and regularly, even showing a significant increase compared to cycles I and II. Students appear more active, participatory, and confident—no longer hesitating or afraid of making mistakes when pairing cards. In cycle III, their enthusiasm for learning was higher; This is evident as they interact with each other in the group to match cards with passion and excitement. The success of this method is also reflected in the learning outcomes: all students achieve learning completeness according to the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM), which is 100%. Thus, the *Make a Match* Not only does it increase student activity and involvement, but it also has a direct impact on achieving optimal learning outcomes in learning moral beliefs about angels and their duties.

Table 7. Percentage of Student Learning Activities in Getting to Know Material Angels and Their Duties Cycle III

Yes	Student Learning Activities	Cycle III	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Active	27	100%
2	Less Active	0	0
3	Inactive	0	0
Sum		27	100%

a. Reflection

Paying attention to the results above, what teachers need to do is to make the learning atmosphere fully sourced to students by giving them the opportunity to exchange knowledge with their friends, so that they can further improve their learning outcomes.

In ending the learning in the third cycle, the researcher together with the students concluded the learning material with the *Make a Match* method. Furthermore, the researcher gave tasks to students to do at home, namely paying attention to the names, duties and names of the Angels that must be known. Because

the success indicators in this study have been achieved with the results of the students' tests that have been completed from the KKM which is determined to reach 100%.

4. Discussion

The findings of the study show a significant increase in the learning outcomes of grade II students of SD Negeri 2 Kendengsidialit in the subject of Islamic Religious Education, especially in the material "Knowing Angels and Their Duties", in line with the application of the *Make a Match* method from pre-cycle to cycle III. The average score of students increased from 59.07 in the pre-cycle to 87.59 in the third cycle, accompanied by an increase in the percentage of learning completeness from only 11.43% to 100%. This increase is not only quantitative, but also reflects a qualitative change in the learning process. The *Make a Match* method, which emphasizes matching concepts through cards or interactive media, seems to be successful in creating a more fun and participatory learning environment. This is in line with the principle of active learning, where students do not only passively receive information, but are directly involved in building understanding through collaborative and concrete activities. These data show that a student-centered approach is able to overcome barriers to early learning, such as low motivation and lack of engagement, which is reflected in the high proportion of inactive students (33.33%) in the pre-cycle.

Comparisons with previous studies reinforce the validity of these findings. Research by Sari (2023) also found that the *Make a Match* method is effective in improving learning outcomes in religious and social science subjects at the elementary school level, especially because of its ability to stimulate memory through visual and kinesthetic associations. The current findings not only support these findings, but also expand on them by demonstrating the effectiveness of this method in the context of learning abstract religious values, such as the concept of angels in Islam. In addition, the increase in learning activities—from only 14.81% of active students in the pre-cycle to 100% in the third cycle—confirms that students' emotional and cognitive engagement is a key factor in achieving optimal learning outcomes. This is in line with Vygotsky's theory of constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and active participation in the process of knowledge construction. Thus, these findings provide empirical evidence that interactive and collaborative learning methods can bridge the gap between abstract concepts and early childhood understanding.

Theoretically, these findings enrich the discourse on the effectiveness of game-based learning approaches in the context of religious education. The *Make a Match* method serves not only as an informal evaluation tool, but also as a pedagogical strategy that encourages reflection, discussion, and long-term memory strengthening. The practical implications are particularly relevant for low-grade teachers, who often face challenges in delivering metaphysical religious material to students who are still thinking concretely. By implementing simple modifications in the learning design—such as the use of angel picture cards and assignments—teachers can transform learning from memorization to meaningful understanding (Musyafa & Dahlan, 2024). In addition, the gradual improvement from cycle I to cycle III demonstrates the importance of reflection and continuous improvement in teaching practice. Each cycle not only improves student outcomes, but also teachers' capacity to respond to dynamic learning needs. This underscores the principle of teacher as researcher, where teachers actively evaluate and refine their learning strategies based on empirical feedback.

These findings also have policy implications and teacher professional development. A drastic increase in learning completeness (100% in cycle III) suggests that the right methods, combined with a commitment to continuous improvement, can address early inequalities in academic achievement. This supports the argument that learning success is determined not only by the ability of the student, but also by the quality of the pedagogical intervention. However, it is important not to generalize these findings without considering specific contexts—such as small class sizes (27 students), school environment support, and availability of time for cycle reflection. However, these results provide a replicable model for other schools that want to improve the quality of religious learning in the early grades. In the future, further research can explore the application of *Make a Match* to more complex religious materials or at a higher level (Azhari et al., 2024), as

well as measure the long-term impact on students' religious attitudes. By sticking to data and differentiated learning principles, these findings make a valuable contribution to innovative and inclusive religious education practices.

E. Conclusion

This classroom action research revealed surprising and encouraging findings related to the application of the *Make a Match* method in Islamic Religious Education learning in grade II of SD Negeri 2 Kendengsidialit. In the pre-cycle, the average student score only reached 59.07 with a learning completeness rate of 11.43%, indicating a rather worrying initial condition. However, after the gradual implementation of the *Make a Match* method from cycle I to cycle III, there was a remarkable increase: the average score jumped to 87.59 in cycle III and all students (100%) were declared complete. Even more surprising, student learning activities that were initially dominated by the categories of "less active" and "inactive" (a total of 85.18% in the pre-cycle) changed drastically to reach 100% of active students in cycle III. These findings not only prove the effectiveness of the *Make a Match* method in improving learning outcomes, but also demonstrate its transformational impact on students' emotional and cognitive engagement. This challenges the common assumption that game-based learning methods are only suitable for light material or irrelevant to normative lessons such as Islamic Religious Education. Instead, this interactive approach is able to simplify abstract concepts such as "angels and their duties" to be easier for early students to understand and remember.

Although the results of the study are very positive, there are some methodological weaknesses that need to be noted. First, this study was only conducted in one class with a limited number of students (27 people), so the findings cannot necessarily be generalized to a broader context. Second, the duration of the study was relatively short (three cycles), so it is not known whether the increase in learning outcomes and activities is long-term or only temporary due to the *novelty effect* of the method used. Third, there was no comparison group (control), making it difficult to ensure that the increase was purely due to the *Make a Match* method and not to external factors such as teacher motivation, changes in the classroom atmosphere, or other interventions outside of the study. To overcome these limitations, future studies should use a *quasi-experimental design* with a control group, involving more than one school or class, and extend the observation period to several months post-intervention to measure the sustainability of impacts. Additionally, the collection of qualitative data through in-depth interviews with students and teachers can enrich understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind the effectiveness of such methods

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