

CARD INNOVATION IN TEACHING AKIDAH AKHLAK AT MAN 1 MANDAILING NATAL

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ABSTRAK

Case card media presents moral issues sourced from real-life situations, encouraging students to think critically and reflectively. The use of this media is in line with the problem-based learning approach, which emphasizes the process of analysis, discussion, and collaborative problem solving. Previous research shows that the use of card media in PAI learning can significantly increase student motivation and learning activity. This study aims to describe the innovation of using case cards in teaching Akidah Akhlak (Islamic beliefs and morals) at MAN 1 Mandailing Natal. Case cards are designed to present real-life problems related to moral values, thereby encouraging students to think critically and actively participate in the learning process. This study uses a qualitative approach with a classroom action research design. Data collection techniques include observation, student response questionnaires, learning outcome tests, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the use of case card media can increase student activity, facilitate understanding of religious ethics material, and foster a reflective attitude towards moral issues in everyday life. Thus, case card media can be used as an alternative innovative learning media in religious ethics learning.

ABSTRAK

Media kartu kasus menyajikan isu-isu moral yang bersumber dari situasi kehidupan nyata, mendorong siswa untuk berpikir kritis dan reflektif. Penggunaan media ini sejalan dengan pendekatan pembelajaran berbasis masalah, yang menekankan proses analisis, diskusi, dan pemecahan masalah secara kolaboratif. Penelitian sebelumnya menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media kartu dalam pembelajaran PAI dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan motivasi dan aktivitas belajar siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan inovasi penggunaan kartu kasus dalam pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak di MAN 1 Mandailing Natal. Kartu kasus dirancang untuk menyajikan masalah nyata yang berhubungan dengan nilai-nilai moral, sehingga mendorong siswa untuk berpikir kritis dan berpartisipasi secara aktif dalam proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain penelitian tindakan kelas. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, kuesioner tanggapan siswa, tes hasil belajar, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media kartu kasus dapat meningkatkan aktivitas siswa, mempermudah pemahaman materi etika agama, dan menumbuhkan sikap reflektif terhadap masalah moral dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Dengan demikian, media kartu kasus dapat digunakan sebagai alternatif media pembelajaran inovatif dalam pembelajaran etika agama.

Kata kunci: Etika Agama, Media Pembelajaran, Kartu Kasus, Pendidikan Agama Islam

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' understanding of Islamic teachings, which include aspects of faith, worship, and morals. One of the core subjects in PAI is Akidah Akhlak, which focuses on instilling correct beliefs and shaping students' moral behavior (Lubis, 2026; Pratami et al., 2025). The teaching of Aqidah Akhlak emphasizes not only mastery of concepts, but also the process of internalizing values so that they are reflected in attitudes and actions. Thus, the success of teaching Aqidah Akhlak is largely determined by the teacher's ability to manage a meaningful and contextual learning process (Ramayulis, 2015).

In school learning practices, Akidah Akhlak is still often perceived as a theoretical subject that is interesting to students. However, the dominance of the lecture method limits student active involvement and results in one-way learning interactions. This condition has an impact on low learning interest and weak student ability to relate moral material to everyday life. This situation shows the need for learning approaches and media that can activate students cognitively and affectively (Sanjaya, 2016).

The development of educational paradigms demands innovation in the use of learning media as part of efforts to improve the quality of learning. Learning media serve as a means of conveying learning messages more effectively, attractively, and in a way that is easy for students to understand (Lubis, 2024). The use of innovative media has been proven to increase student participation and strengthen understanding of abstract material. In the context of Akidah Akhlak learning, learning media is an important instrument for connecting moral values with the real experiences of students (Samosir, Maulana, & Rahman, 2025).

One form of innovative learning media that is relevant for use in Akidah Akhlak learning is case card media. Case card media presents moral issues sourced from real-life situations, encouraging students to think critically and reflectively. The use of this media is in line with the problem-based learning approach, which emphasizes the process of analysis, discussion, and collaborative problem solving. Previous research shows that the use of card media in PAI learning can significantly increase student motivation and learning activity (Aminah, 2016). One highly relevant topic in Akidah Akhlak learning that can be effectively adapted into case card media is "Avoiding Blameworthy Morals (Akhlak Mazmumah) in the Digital Age," specifically focusing on the concepts of *Riya'* (showing off), *Hasad* (envy), and *Ghibah/Fitnah* (gossip/slander) on social media. Instead of merely memorizing theoretical definitions, students are presented with real-world dilemmas they encounter daily. For instance, a case card could feature a scenario about a student who uploads a video of their charity work on TikTok to inspire others, only to receive a sarcastic comment from a classmate that triggers a heated online debate among their peers. Using a problem-based learning approach, students work collaboratively to dissect this phenomenon, challenging themselves to analyze the fine line between religious propagation (*da'wah*) and *riya'*, identify how such posts can trigger *hasad* in viewers, and formulate concrete solutions regarding digital etiquette (*adab*). By anchoring theological concepts into digital realities, this case card media effectively sparks lively group discussions, sharpens critical thinking, and encourages students to reflect deeply on preserving their faith (*akidah*) and moral integrity in the modern era.

Although various studies have examined the use of card media in PAI learning, studies that specifically discuss case card media in Akidah Akhlak learning at the Madrasah Aliyah level are still limited. This limitation indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed in order to enrich the practice of Akidah Akhlak learning. Therefore, this study focuses on the implementation of case card media innovation in Akidah Akhlak learning at MAN 1

Mandailing Natal. This study aims to analyze the process of applying case card media and its impact on student engagement and understanding.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research design. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of implementing case card media in Akidah Akhlak learning and the students' responses to the use of this media. Qualitative descriptive research allows researchers to describe learning phenomena systematically and contextually based on actual conditions in the field. With this approach, the data obtained focuses not only on the final results but also on the learning process that takes place during the use of case card media (Sugiyono, 2019).

The subjects of this study were grade XI students at MAN 1 Mandailing Natal who were directly involved in learning Aqidah Akhlak using case card media. The selection of subjects was based on the consideration that grade XI students already had sufficient thinking skills to analyze the moral issues presented in the case cards. The research location was chosen at MAN 1 Mandailing Natal because this madrasah implements structured Akidah Akhlak learning and provides space for teachers to innovate in learning. Analysis of the characteristics of the subjects and the context of the research location is important to ensure that the research results are relevant to the learning conditions at the madrasah (Moleong, 2017).

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through observation, questionnaires, learning outcome tests, and documentation. Observation was used to directly observe the involvement and activity of students during the learning process. Questionnaires were given to determine students' responses and perceptions of the use of case cards in Akidah Akhlak learning, while learning outcome tests were used to measure students' understanding of the material taught. Documentation in the form of photos of activities, learning notes, and media devices was used as supporting data to strengthen the research analysis results (Arikunto, 2018).

The research procedure was carried out through several systematic stages, namely the planning, implementation, observation, and evaluation stages. In the planning stage, the researcher compiled learning tools and designed case card media in accordance with the basic competencies of the Akidah Akhlak material. The implementation stage was carried out by applying case card media in learning activities through group discussions and problem solving. Furthermore, the observation and evaluation stages were carried out to analyze the learning process and assess student involvement and understanding as a basis for reflection on the effectiveness of the media used (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2015).

The data analysis technique in this study was conducted by combining simple qualitative and quantitative analyses. Qualitative data obtained from observations and documentation were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to describe the learning process in depth. Meanwhile, simple quantitative data from questionnaires and tests were analyzed using percentages and average scores to identify trends in the increase in student engagement and understanding. This combined analysis allowed researchers to obtain a complete picture of the effectiveness of using case cards in teaching Aqidah Akhlak (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018).

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Implementation of Case Cards in Akidah Akhlak Learning

The results of the research conducted from February to March 2026 at MAN 1 Mandailing Natal which made the subject of the research class XI showed that the application of case card media in teaching Aqidah Akhlak at MAN 1 Mandailing Natal can be done systematically and in accordance with the lesson plan. Teachers begin the lesson by introducing the material, then distributing case cards containing moral issues relevant to the daily lives of students. Students are asked to read, understand, and discuss the cases in small groups before presenting the results of their discussions in front of the class. This process shows that case card media can be well integrated into learning activities without requiring complex tools.

During the learning process, case card media serve as a catalyst for discussion and a tool to relate the concepts of faith and morals to the reality of students' lives. Students do not only receive material passively but are directly involved in the process of analyzing the moral values contained in each case. Analytically, this shows that case card media can facilitate contextual learning that places students as active subjects in learning, as per the principle of meaningful learning that emphasizes the connection between material and real experiences (Sanjaya, 2016).

In addition, the implementation of case cards also helps teachers manage their classes in a more interactive and communicative manner. Discussions arising from each case encourage open dialogue between teachers and students, so that learning is not one-sided. Analysis of this process shows that case card media contributes to creating a democratic and reflective learning atmosphere, which is very important in Akidah Akhlak learning because the material is not only understood cognitively but also internalized as values in daily life (Rusman, 2018).

Student Engagement and Activity

Based on the results of observations, student engagement during learning using case cards showed a clear increase compared to conventional learning. Students appeared to be more active in participating in discussions, expressing their opinions, and responding to the views of their groupmates. This activity was evident from the increase in the number of students participating in class discussions and group discussions. These findings indicate that case cards are able to create learning conditions that encourage active student participation.

The results of a questionnaire given to students also showed a positive response to the use of case cards. Most students stated that learning became more interesting and less boring because they were presented with real cases that were challenging to analyze. Students felt more confident in expressing their opinions because the discussions were based on concrete situations that were close to their lives. Analytically, these results indicate that case card media can increase students' intrinsic motivation, which directly affects their learning activity (Arsyad, 2017).

The active involvement of students in Akidah Akhlak learning shows a shift in the role of students from recipients of information to active learners. Analysis of these findings reinforces the view that the use of innovative learning media contributes to improving the quality of learning interactions. Thus, case cards not only serve as learning aids, but also as a means of building students' critical thinking and argumentation skills in the context of Islamic moral values.

Student Understanding and Learning Outcomes

The learning test results show that students' understanding of the Akidah Akhlak material improved after the case card media was implemented. The average score of students increased compared to the evaluation results before the use of this media. This improvement indicates that students are better able to understand the concepts of faith and morals in depth because the material is presented in the form of real-life problems that require analysis and reflection.

The improvement in learning outcomes is not only seen in cognitive aspects, but also in students' ability to explain attitudes and behaviors that are in accordance with Islamic moral values. Students were able to provide logical and religiously-based reasons when solving the cases given. Analytically, this shows that case-based learning encourages students to integrate knowledge with attitudes and values, making learning more holistic (Rusman, 2018).

These findings are in line with the view that contextual and problem-based learning can improve the quality of students' understanding because they are directly involved in the process of discovering the meaning of the material being studied. Analysis of student learning outcomes reinforces the argument that case cards are an effective medium for improving the practical understanding of Akidah Akhlak, rather than merely memorizing concepts.

Discussion of Research Findings

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the use of case cards has a positive impact on the process and outcomes of Akidah Akhlak learning. The implementation of this media has been proven to increase student engagement, activity, and understanding of the learning material. These results are in line with problem-based learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of active student engagement in the learning process to build meaningful understanding (Sanjaya, 2016).

The findings of this study also support the results of previous studies which state that card media or case-based media are effective in increasing student motivation and activity in learning Islamic Religious Education (Aminah, 2016). The similarity of these results shows that the use of simple but innovative media can contribute significantly to the quality of learning, especially in learning values and morals.

Analytically, the success of case cards in this study shows that learning innovation does not always depend on advanced technology, but on the ability of teachers to design media that is contextual and relevant to the lives of students. Thus, case cards can be used as an effective and applicable alternative learning medium in teaching Aqidah Akhlak in madrasahs, especially in efforts to instill moral and religious values in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the use of case cards in teaching Aqidah Akhlak at MAN 1 Mandailing Natal has proven to be effective in increasing student engagement and understanding. Case cards are able to present contextual learning situations through the presentation of real cases that are close to the lives of students, so that Aqidah Akhlak material is not only understood conceptually, but also practically. Analysis of the observation and test results shows an increase in active participation and students' ability to identify and respond to moral issues based on Islamic values, which is in line with the affective learning objectives in PAI (Sanjaya, 2016).

In addition, case card media encourages students to engage in critical and reflective thinking processes through group discussions and problem solving. This process shows that Akidah Akhlak learning is no longer one-way and theoretical, but dialogical and participatory.

This analysis reinforces the view that problem-based learning with the help of simple media can improve the quality of learning interactions and build a deeper understanding of Islamic moral values (Hosnan, 2017).

Thus, the effectiveness of case cards lies not only in the form of the media, but also in their ability to integrate the cognitive, affective, and social aspects of students in a single learning process. This analysis shows that innovative learning media have a strategic role in responding to the challenges of teaching Akidah Akhlak in madrasahs, particularly in fostering moral awareness and religious attitudes in students on an ongoing basis. Based on the conclusions and implications of the study, the researchers recommend that Akidah Akhlak teachers at MAN and other madrasahs utilize case cards as an alternative learning medium. Teachers are advised to develop case cards that are relevant to the social and psychological conditions of students so that learning becomes more contextual and meaningful. This analysis shows that the success of media use is greatly influenced by the creativity of teachers in designing and managing the learning process (Uno, 2016).

For schools, this study recommends support for the development of learning innovations through the provision of facilities, teacher training, and policies that encourage the use of active learning media. The analysis of the research results confirms that a school environment that supports learning innovation will have a positive impact on the overall quality of PAI learning, particularly in shaping the character of students.

For future researchers, it is recommended to develop similar studies with broader research designs, such as classroom action research in several cycles or quasi-experimental approaches, in order to obtain more in-depth and comprehensive data. In addition, case cards can be developed in digital form or combined with learning technology to keep up with the times. This analysis indicates that further research is needed to enrich the study of Akidah Akhlak learning media innovation at various levels of education.

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