Implementation of the STAD cooperative learning model in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education lessons at a Junior High School

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Plus Nurul Hidayah Pasundan. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through classroom observation and documentation. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the STAD model fosters a collaborative, democratic, and pedagogically meaningful learning environment. Students demonstrated increased learning motivation, evidenced by active participation, enthusiasm in group discussions, and improved formative assessment outcomes. Theoretically, these results reinforce the principles of positive interdependence and individual accountability within cooperative learning frameworks. Practically, the implementation of STAD facilitates the internalization of Islamic values such as solidarity (*ukhuwah*), responsibility, and deliberation (*mushawarah*), while also serving as a relevant pedagogical alternative for character education in the 21st century. This research contributes to the development of

contextual and value-based Islamic Religious Education models and positions STAD as a cross-cultural pedagogical strategy that supports the formation of intelligent, critical, and morally grounded Muslim students.

Keywords: 21st Century learning; character education; Islamic values; learning motivation; positive interdependence.

INTRODUCTION

A learning model is a depiction of a learning situation or environment that encompasses the teacher's role and actions in the learning process. In general, a learning model is a systematic design or pattern used to develop a long-term curriculum, develop teaching materials, and guide the learning process both in and outside of the classroom. The main goal of developing a learning model is to create an active, enjoyable learning environment and encourage maximum student engagement, thereby optimally improving their learning outcomes and achievement (Octavia, 2020). One learning model that can create such learning conditions is the Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) cooperative learning model.

The STAD learning model is a form of cooperative learning in which the teacher forms several small groups consisting of 4 to 5 students. Each group is arranged heterogeneously, both in terms of gender and academic ability level, thus creating diversity in the learning process and cooperation among group members (Esminarto et al., 2016). The STAD type of cooperative learning model encourages students to work in groups, thereby developing attitudes of cooperation, critical thinking, learning motivation, and responsibility towards the team. Students learn to help each other and prepare for individual quizzes as part of achieving team rewards. After learning, the teacher conducts an evaluation based on student understanding, both from the teacher's explanation and the results of group discussions, but during the quiz, students are not allowed to work together (Wardana et al., 2017). The STAD learning model is a cooperative approach that has been applied in various subjects, from mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, and Islamic religious education. In practice, this model combines the abilities of four students with varying abilities into one group. The interactions that occur in learning are normative, consciously and purposefully conducted, and serve as a guide in directing the achievement of educational goals.

The Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model is also effective in encouraging students to express their opinions more confidently, respect the views of their peers, and be open to sharing ideas. Furthermore, this learning model provides a space for students to become accustomed to facing practice questions or collaborative problem-solving challenges. Although the STAD cooperative learning model has been widely implemented in various subjects, its application in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, particularly in efforts to increase student learning motivation at the junior high school level, is still limited and rarely studied in depth (Wulandari, 2022). Most research discussing the STAD model has focused on exact science subjects, such as mathematics or science. However, studies that explore this model in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, particularly in efforts to increase student learning motivation, are still very limited. Therefore, a cooperative learning model like STAD is highly appropriate because it encourages cooperation and mutual assistance among students in completing assignments (Wulandari, 2022). Students' ability to be active, confident, and engaged in learning is closely related to their level of learning motivation.

Learning motivation is an internal drive that arises within students, encouraging them to engage enthusiastically in learning activities, maintain consistency throughout the process, and remain focused on the desired goals. This motivation plays a crucial role in maintaining student engagement throughout the learning process and influences the amount of effort they exert to achieve desired outcomes (Aritonang, 2008). With high motivation, students are more likely to face learning challenges and are more motivated to achieve optimal academic performance. Learning motivation is formed from two types of drives: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic drives encompass a strong desire to achieve success and a need for the learning process itself. Meanwhile, extrinsic factors arise from a supportive learning environment, such as a comfortable, engaging, and conducive atmosphere. Overall, learning motivation is a driving force, both internal and external to the student, characterized by various specific indicators and plays a role in determining the success of an individual's learning process (Ali et al., 2022).

Based on research conducted by researchers at SMP Plus Nurul Hidayah Pasundan, low levels of active student participation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning were found, particularly in terms of enthusiasm for discussions and completing assignments independently. Initial observations indicated that some students lacked motivation to participate in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons, resulting in poor understanding of the material and poor learning outcomes. This aligns with previous research indicating low learning motivation among students Research by Ali et al., low student learning motivation is influenced by several factors, including limited student ability to understand the subject matter, lack of concentration during learning, low active student participation in class, and student attitudes that do not support the learning process (Ali et al., 2022). In addition, research conducted by Siti Sarah, when students have high learning motivation, they tend to be more driven to seek and understand information, broaden their horizons, and complete various tasks more optimally (Sarah, 2024). Motivation is one of the factors that influence student learning achievement. With strong motivation, students will study more diligently, diligently, tenaciously, and are able to maintain full concentration throughout the learning process (Ali et al., 2022). This also applies to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons, where strong learning motivation can help students better understand religious values and apply them, as well as improve their achievement in the subject.

The various subjects taught in formal education encompass a wide range of disciplines, one of which is Islamic Religious Education, offered at every level of education. In schools, this subject is generally referred to as Islamic religious education, while in madrasas, it is divided into four separate subjects: the Qur'an and Hadith, creed and morals, jurisprudence, and Islamic cultural history. These subjects are not merely for conveying religious material but play a deeper and more strategic role in shaping students' character and personality (Faisal & Lazwardi, 2022). The goal of Islamic religious education is to equip students with a deep understanding of religious values and to develop attitudes and behaviors consistent with Islamic teachings. Islamic religious education aims to foster faith and shape students' noble character through understanding and practicing Islamic teachings in their daily lives. This goal aligns with the hope that students will become Muslim individuals who develop in their faith and piety and are ready to continue their education to a higher level (Faisal & Lazwardi, 2022). This is crucial for junior high school (SMP) students, as it serves as the initial stage for character development and positive study habits. Junior high school is a transitional stage from childhood to adolescence. During this phase, students begin to experience various influences from the external environment, both positive and negative. Furthermore, students begin to learn to adapt to their interests and talents as part of their development process (Sari, 2020).

This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of cooperative-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning models, as well as practically serve as a reference for teachers in designing learning strategies that can increase student learning motivation. One approach believed to be effective in achieving these goals is the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model, developed by (Slavin, 1994). This model emphasizes cooperation in small groups, where individual success contributes to the success of the group as a whole, and vice versa. Through a fair assessment system and rewards for group achievements, STAD not only encourages academic understanding but also fosters social skills such as communication, responsibility, and solidarity among students. The cooperative learning model is characterized by positive interdependence, individual accountability, in-depth face-to-face interaction, and objective group evaluation (Dzemidzic Kristiansen, 2022). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, this model is highly relevant because its values, such as togetherness, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility, align with Islamic teachings and the primary goal of religious education. PAI aims not only to develop students with religious knowledge but also to cultivate noble morals, social skills, and habits that reflect Islamic values. Therefore, the integration of the STAD model into PAI learning is expected to foster students' learning motivation more comprehensively, across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Self-motivation to learn is a key element in the success of the educational process. According to (Cayubit, 2022), learning motivation can arise intrinsically or extrinsically, and both are equally important in shaping students' persistence, direction, and consistency in learning. Motivated students will demonstrate enthusiasm in completing assignments, a passion for understanding the material, and the ability to learn independently. In this context, the STAD model provides a significant opportunity to activate this motivation, as the learning process is participatory, collaborative, and healthy, competitive.

Based on this background, this research is directed to examine the implementation of the STAD type cooperative learning model in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects at SMP Plus Nurul Hidayah Pasundan. To answer this main focus, several research questions are formulated, namely: (1) What are the basic concepts and principles of implementing the STAD method in cooperative learning? (2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of the STAD method in the context of Islamic Religious Education learning? (3) To what extent can the implementation of this method improve students' learning abilities based on theory and previous research results? and (4) what factors support and hinder the effectiveness of implementing STAD in Islamic Religious Education learning? Thus, the results of this study are expected to enrich academic discourse related to cooperative learning strategies, as well as provide practical, applicable guidance for Islamic Religious Education teachers in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to describe in depth the implementation process of the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for observing and understanding phenomena that occur naturally in the classroom, particularly in learning contexts that emphasize social interaction, cooperation, and student engagement in the learning process (Doyle et al., 2020). The research was conducted at SMP Plus Nurul Hidayah Pasundan, with the subjects being students and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers who were directly involved in learning activities using the STAD model. The main focus of this study was to observe how the STAD learning strategy was implemented, how students responded to the model, and the extent to which this cooperative approach influenced their learning motivation during the learning process. Subject selection was done purposively, namely based on direct involvement in the intended learning.

Data collection was conducted using two main techniques: direct observation and documentation. Observations were conducted during the classroom learning process, with researchers recording student activities, interactions between group members, the teacher's role, and general classroom dynamics. These observations aimed to capture a realistic picture of how the STAD model was implemented and how students responded to these learning activities. In addition to observation, documentation techniques were used to strengthen and supplement the data obtained, including collecting Lesson Implementation Plans (RPP), student worksheets, evaluation results, and photographs of relevant learning activities. This documentary data helped strengthen the findings obtained from field observations (Leko et al., 2021). All collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and simplifying important information from observations and documentation. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narrative form to fully understand the relationships between phenomena. The final step was drawing conclusions, which involved interpreting the meaning of the presented data to address the research focus, specifically regarding the effectiveness of the STAD model in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons (Elliott & Timulak, 2021). To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation techniques and sources, comparing findings from observations and documentation comprehensively to obtain a valid and scientifically accountable picture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic concepts and principles of implementing the STAD method in cooperative learning

The Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) type of cooperative learning model is a form of instructional approach that aims to integrate group cooperation with individual academic achievement (Rorimpandey et al., 2022). This model was developed by Robert E. Slavin and his team at Johns Hopkins University in response to the need for learning that emphasizes not only academic achievement, but also social skills, collaboration, and shared responsibility (Slavin, 1994). In the modern educational landscape that demands integration between cognitive and affective aspects, STAD emerges as an alternative that bridges individual and group learning in a cooperative and competitive atmosphere in a balanced manner.

Conceptually, STAD is rooted in social learning theory and constructivism. Learning is not a purely individual activity, but rather occurs through social processes, discussions, and the exchange of ideas between individuals (Martin & Borup, 2022). Therefore, group work is not merely a tool, but central to the learning process itself. In STAD, the formation of small groups heterogeneous in terms of academic ability, background, or character is not without reason. Diversity within the group allows for mutual complementarity among students; those with better understanding can help those struggling, while those who help deepen their own understanding through re-explanation.

This model is also influenced by the basic principle of positive interdependence, which means that the success of one group member determines the success of the group as a whole (Shimizu et al., 2021). In other words, there is no room for selfish competition within a team, as the value and success of the group derive from the contributions of all its members. This principle is designed to create collective motivation, foster a sense of belonging, and foster a sense of social responsibility among students. Meanwhile, individual accountability is maintained through personal evaluations such as individual quizzes, so that each student is required to study diligently and not solely rely on their group mates (Simón et al., 2024).

Another equally important principle in STAD is individual accountability. Although students work in groups, each student's learning achievement is still assessed individually. Teachers assign individual quizzes or assignments that must be completed without group assistance. The scores obtained not only reflect the student's abilities but also serve as the basis for calculating the contribution to the group's grade. This encourages each student to strive for maximum effort, as individual progress will bring collective benefits to the group (Amelia et al., 2021). This pattern avoids the domination or dependency that usually occurs in conventional group work.

Structurally, STAD consists of five main components: class presentations, group work, individual quizzes, individual progress scoring, and group awards (Rahman, 2025). Class presentations are the initial stage where the teacher delivers the material in a classroom setting, usually in the form of a lecture, class discussion, or demonstration. The goal is for all students to have a common understanding before moving on to group work. The second stage is group work, where students discuss the material with their teammates. During this stage, students help each other explain unfamiliar concepts, solve problems together, and prepare for individual quizzes. The individual quiz is a personal evaluation stage. Here, students work independently without assistance from their group members. The purpose of this quiz is to assess individual understanding and simultaneously prevent free riders within the group. Afterwards, an individual's progress score is calculated by comparing the student's quiz results with their previous scores. Thus, what is assessed is not just the absolute value, but also the improvement in learning ability. Finally, all members' scores are added together to obtain a group score. Groups that show significant improvement or achieve the highest scores will receive awards, whether in the form of praise, certificates, or other forms of recognition that can motivate students (Rahman, 2025). From this structure, it can be seen that STAD combines traditional instructional elements such as teacher lectures with modern cooperative principles that are oriented towards student interaction and active participation (Syuhada et al., 2025). Teachers still play a crucial role as facilitators, but the learning process is encouraged to be more student-centered. Teachers are tasked with directing discussions, observing group dynamics, providing guidance when needed, and ensuring that each student understands their role and responsibilities within the group. This requires teachers to possess strong classroom management skills, including the ability to create balanced and dynamic groups.

Furthermore, the principles of implementing STAD also require an understanding of the student's learning context. Factors such as student readiness to learn, learning style, and social and emotional background significantly influence the success of this model (Atradinal & Ockta, 2024). Therefore, the implementation of STAD cannot be understood as a mere technical procedure, but rather as a pedagogical approach that requires contextual adaptation. Each learning group may require a different approach depending on the composition of its members and the dynamics within it. The concept of STAD is also closely related to Lev Vygotsky's thinking on the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding. Within the ZPD, learning is considered most effective when students are guided to achieve understandings that cannot yet be achieved independently, but can be achieved with the help of peers or teachers (Lambright, 2024). This is where STAD's relevance becomes strong: group work allows more advanced students to help their peers who are still developing. In practice, group learning creates a natural space for scaffolding to occur, where students teach each other, provide guidance, and clarify difficult concepts.

One of the advantages of the STAD principle is its flexibility for application across various subjects and levels of education. This model has been used in mathematics, science, social studies, language arts, and even religious education. Its successful implementation is largely determined by the teacher's consistency in carrying out each step, as well as the students' commitment to carrying out group and individual responsibilities. Therefore, the implementation of STAD cannot be separated from the quality of thorough learning planning, including the development of lesson plans, the development of fair evaluation instruments, and a motivating reward system (Palau et al., 2021). In practice, the basic principles of STAD not only build academic understanding but also shape students' attitudes and character (Masoabi, 2015). Values such as responsibility, empathy, openness to differences, and a passion for helping others are naturally instilled through group work. This makes STAD a learning model that is not only pedagogically relevant, but also morally and socially relevant. In the context of a pluralistic and ever-changing society, collaboration-based learning like STAD is becoming increasingly important in equipping students with 21st-century skills, such as teamwork, effective communication, and problem-solving (Marishane, 2020). Thus, the basic concept and principles of implementing STAD in cooperative learning are a concrete manifestation of student-centered learning, combining social interaction with individual responsibility, and building a learning atmosphere that supports active and participatory involvement (Safiudin, 2024). Through this framework, learning is no longer a passive activity, but becomes a dynamic process that involves the minds, hearts, and real actions of students in an effort to build shared knowledge and values.

Advantages and disadvantages of the STAD cooperative method in Islamic Education Learning

The STAD cooperative learning method has been proven effective in improving student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Through structured group work, students can help each other understand the material, which has a positive impact on improving academic grades. Research at SMP Negeri 3 Mallusetasi showed that the implementation of STAD increased the average student learning outcome score from 61.91% in cycle I to 87.43% in cycle III (Linda, 2023). A similar thing was found in a study at Muhammadiyah 3 Tanjung Sari Middle School, Medan, where classes using STAD showed a significant increase in learning outcomes compared to classes using conventional methods (Matondang, 2024). This improvement indicates that STAD can help students better understand Islamic Religious Education material through group interaction and discussion. Furthermore, STAD also encourages students to be more active in the learning process, which contributes to a deeper understanding of the material. Thus, this method not only improves learning outcomes quantitatively but also the quality of students' understanding of religious values. The implementation of STAD can also foster a sense of shared responsibility within the group, which is important in Islamic Religious Education learning that emphasizes social and spiritual values. Therefore, STAD is an effective alternative learning method to improve student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education subjects at the junior high school level (Anggraini et al., 2025).

The STAD method not only improves learning outcomes but also motivates students to be more active in the learning process. By working in groups, students feel more motivated because of the shared responsibility to achieve learning goals. Research on the Mathematics learning outcomes of eighth-grade students at SMP NU Karangdadap shows that the application of STAD creates a fun and conducive learning atmosphere, so that students become more active and not bored in following the lesson (Sakinah, 2024). In addition, students become more enthusiastic and involved in group discussions, which improves their understanding of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material. This increase in motivation is also seen in studies showing that STAD helps students improve social sensitivity, communication skills, and skills in working together with other friends. Thus, STAD can create a more dynamic and participatory learning environment, which is important in Islamic Religious Education learning that emphasizes understanding religious values through shared experiences. This method also helps students develop social skills such as communication and cooperation, which are essential in religious and social life. Therefore, STAD not only increases learning motivation but also shapes students' character in accordance with Islamic Religious Education values (Azzahra, 2024).

One of the main advantages of the STAD method is its ability to develop social skills and cooperation among students. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, values such as tolerance, empathy, and mutual cooperation are very important, and STAD provides a forum for students to practice these values. According to Slavin, the use of this cooperative learning model can improve student achievement and also

have other positive consequences such as developing intergroup relationships, acceptance of classmates who are weak in academics, and increasing self-esteem (Arisanti, 2015). By working in groups, students learn to respect others' opinions and complete tasks together, reflecting the Islamic values of brotherhood and deliberation. Furthermore, group interactions can help students develop self-confidence and the ability to convey ideas effectively. These skills are crucial in everyday life and align with the goal of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to develop individuals with noble character and the ability to interact positively in society. Thus, STAD enhances not only the cognitive but also the affective and social aspects of students, which are essential in religious education. Implementing STAD in PAI learning in junior high schools can help students internalize religious values through direct experience in social interactions (Misman, 2025).

Despite its many advantages, the STAD method also has several weaknesses that need to be considered in its implementation. One major challenge is the longer time required to form groups and carry out learning activities, which can make it difficult to achieve curriculum targets (Tanjung et al., 2020). Furthermore, this method requires special skills from teachers in managing the classroom and facilitating effective group discussions. If not managed well, group discussions can be dominated by certain students, while others become passive. This situation can hinder the goal of cooperative learning, which should actively involve all group members. Furthermore, inadequate classroom facilities can be a barrier to implementing STAD, especially if the classroom is small or there are insufficient learning aids. Teachers also need to ensure that all students understand their roles and responsibilities within the group to avoid unequal contributions. Thus, although STAD has great potential to improve Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, its success depends heavily on careful planning and the teacher's skills in managing the learning process. Therefore, training and support for teachers are crucial to optimize the implementation of this method in the classroom.

Implementation of the STAD cooperative learning model at a Junior High School

The implementation of the STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) type of cooperative learning model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not only a strategy to improve students' cognitive learning outcomes, but also an effective medium for internalizing Islamic values in learning practices (Rahman, 2025). In this model, students are divided into small, heterogeneous groups based on academic ability, gender, and social background, so that each member has an equal opportunity to participate and contribute to the group's learning outcomes. With this mechanism, STAD emphasizes not only intellectual aspects, but also social skills, interpersonal communication, and a sense of collective responsibility, which are very important in character education based on Islamic values. Furthermore, STAD emphasizes the principle that individual success contributes to group success, and vice versa. This creates a collaborative learning environment where students do not feel like they are competing individually, but rather support one another. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, this approach is highly relevant because it supports the development of attitudes of ukhuwah Islamiyah (brotherhood), ta'awun (mutual assistance), and deliberation to reach consensus. Students not only theoretically understand learning materials such as faith, worship, and morals, but also practice them in daily learning interactions. Therefore, STAD is not merely a technical method in learning, but also an effective vehicle for realizing Islamic values in a lively and meaningful classroom atmosphere (Sili, 2021).

The STAD implementation process consists of five main steps: teacher delivery of material, formation of study groups, group discussions, individual quizzes, and awards to the team with the highest score. In practice, the teacher delivers material such as faith, worship, or morals in a class setting, then students work in groups to discuss their understanding. Afterward, students take individual quizzes, the results of which are used to assess their contribution to the team. The STAD grading system focuses on individual score improvement, not just the final result. This creates a competitive yet collaborative learning climate, where students are encouraged to continuously improve without leaving their groupmates behind (Slavin, 1995). Research by Hastin Okta Herlina shows that the use of the STAD model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning improves both student learning outcomes and activity. In a classroom action research conducted on fifth-grade students at SDN 3 Kedu, learning completion increased from 50% to 93.75% after three cycles. The average formative score increased from 61.56 to 75.63, and learning activity increased from 33.75% to 69.38%. These findings indicate that STAD is able to significantly increase student activity and learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects, while simultaneously fostering students' social skills through group work (Herlina, 2023). Furthermore, another study from the

Journal of Learning Innovation states that STAD can increase students' learning motivation because they feel valued within the group and receive shared responsibility. This motivation is an important foundation in Islamic Religious Education learning because students not only pursue grades but also engage emotionally and spiritually in the learning process. The implementation of STAD also trains students to think critically and reflectively about the religious material being taught, for example, in discussions about praiseworthy morals or social responsibility in Islam (Amelia et al., 2021).

From an affective and social perspective, STAD is highly effective in fostering tolerance, responsibility, and empathy in students. According to research in the Journal of Education, this model has a positive impact on the development of students' religious character. They learn to respect others' opinions, express ideas politely, and work together to achieve common goals. This is a concrete manifestation of Islamic values taught in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in everyday life. Therefore, STAD is not only a learning model but also a tool for developing students' character and spirituality contextually (Flint-Ashery & Stadler, 2021). However, the success of STAD implementation depends heavily on the teacher's role as facilitator and classroom manager. Teachers need to ensure that group assignments are fair and that learning strategies are tailored to student characteristics. Other challenges include time management and group dynamics, which can lead to certain students dominating. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers must be equipped with skills in classroom management and process-based assessment to ensure STAD can be implemented optimally and consistently. With the right support, STAD can be a highly effective learning model for developing a generation of intellectually intelligent and morally upright Muslims (Atradinal & Ockta, 2024).

One thing that distinguishes STAD from other learning models is the principle of positive interdependence. An individual's learning success will contribute to the success of their group, and vice versa (Khidr & Sabri, 2022). This principle encourages students to focus not only on personal achievement but also on the development of their peers. This is highly relevant to the Islamic values of deliberation and mutual cooperation, which prioritize the common good over individual interests. Therefore, the implementation of STAD in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning not only improves learning outcomes but also serves as a vehicle for developing student character in line with Islamic values. One of the most recent contributions comes from the study (Halik et al., 2023), which confirms that STAD significantly improves students' interpersonal skills, moral awareness, and social sensitivity in religious education. This study shows that STAD has a cross-cultural impact in shaping students' adaptive and tolerant religious personalities. In practice, STAD is able to facilitate religious education that is not dogmatic, but reflective and dialogical—two important approaches in today's multicultural society.

In learning practices at SMP Plus Nurul Hidayah Pasundan, the implementation of STAD has proven to be able to create more interactive Islamic Religious Education classes. Students do not simply sit quietly listening to lectures, but actively participate in discussing Islamic values directly with their group mates. They engage in discussions about Quranic verses related to responsibility, good morals, or the obligation to seek knowledge. This kind of interaction transforms the classroom into a lively and contextual learning environment, where Islamic values are not only taught but also experienced and practiced within group dynamics (Flint-Ashery & Stadler, 2021). However, the success of STAD implementation is largely determined by the teacher's readiness as a facilitator, capable of maintaining conducive group dynamics. Teachers need to have skills in forming groups fairly, monitoring student interactions, and providing constructive feedback. A common challenge is students who are too dominant or too passive in group discussions. Therefore, teacher training in group management, peer mediation strategies, and participatory evaluation is essential for this model to run optimally (Alp Christ et al., 2022).

As part of its contribution to global education, STAD has now been widely adopted in educational systems across countries with diverse religious contexts. The use of STAD in moral education in Singapore, citizenship education in Finland, and ethics education in Japan demonstrates the approach's cross-cultural flexibility and effectiveness (Vicente et al., 2024). In this context, Indonesia's experience implementing STAD in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has become an important part of the international discourse on values-based pedagogical innovation. This demonstrates that STAD is not only a local learning model but also a global learning instrument capable of addressing the challenges of our time: developing a generation of academically intelligent and spiritually mature learners. Thus, the implementation of the STAD cooperative learning model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMP Plus Nurul Hidayah Pasundan not only has a positive impact on students' learning outcomes and social skills, but also makes a

real contribution to the development of contextual, reflective, and participatory Islamic education. Support from the latest theories and international research findings strengthens STAD's position as a relevant learning approach for developing the character of Muslim students who are critical thinkers, socially concerned, and have noble morals in real life.

Factors of the effectiveness of the STAD method in Islamic Religious Education learning

The effectiveness of a learning model is not only determined by its theoretical design, but also depends heavily on the context of its implementation in the field. Similarly, the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) model, although conceptually superior in developing collaboration, motivation, and learning outcomes, its success is largely determined by various supporting and inhibiting factors inherent in the learning environment (Slavin, 1994). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, these factors are important to examine in depth because PAI learning not only touches the cognitive domain but also the affective and psychomotor domains, which require a conducive learning atmosphere and a well-managed support system.

One of the main supporting factors in implementing the STAD model is the teacher's understanding of the concepts, principles and implementation steps (Pimdee et al., 2024). Teachers who thoroughly master this model will find it easier to manage learning dynamics, form effective groups, and guide students through each stage of STAD optimally. A good understanding will prevent teachers from becoming trapped in a merely procedural approach and, instead, will encourage them to modify and adapt strategies to suit the needs of the class. This is crucial, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects, which are rich in values and require a contextual and humanistic approach. Islamic Religious Education teachers who thoroughly understand the principles of STAD will be able to use this model as a tool not only to transfer knowledge but also to build students' character and spiritual values through positive group collaboration. In addition to teacher competence, the readiness of learning materials is also a significant supporting factor. Tools such as syllabi, lesson plans (RPP), student worksheets, and evaluation instruments must be systematically developed and aligned with cooperative principles (Wahyuni et al., 2022). Without proper tools, cooperative learning risks becoming directionless and losing its collaborative essence. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), good learning tools must also reflect the Islamic values to be internalized through group activities, such as mutual assistance, honesty in discussions, and shared responsibility.

The physical condition of the classroom is also a crucial supporting element. A clean, spacious, and flexible seating arrangement allows for effective group formation. Seating that encourages interaction facilitates student discussion and coordination in small groups. Furthermore, regularly changing seating arrangements helps prevent boredom and creates a more dynamic learning environment. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons, which focus heavily on moral and social values, a comfortable physical space also helps create an environment conducive to reflection, discussion, and the formation of collective awareness. Equally important, support between teachers within an educational unit also significantly influences the effectiveness of the STAD model. When teachers share good practices, discuss challenges they face, and collaborate on developing learning instruments and strategies, the teaching and learning process becomes structurally stronger (Wardana et al., 2017). Teachers no longer work individually, but become part of an active and solution-oriented learning community. Collaboration between teachers also creates continuity in learning values across subjects, which is crucial in the context of values education, such as Islamic Religious Education.

In addition, a psychologically and socially conducive learning environment is an important factor in the success of STAD learning (Halik et al., 2023). When students feel safe, comfortable, and valued in the classroom, they are more likely to open up to discussions, express their opinions, and accept differences within the group. This supportive environment provides the foundation for fostering courage, a sense of responsibility, and a spirit of mutual assistance in the learning process. Moreover, in Islamic Religious Education learning, affective aspects such as empathy, patience, and togetherness are integral to the learning objectives themselves. Therefore, a friendly classroom atmosphere that respects diversity greatly supports the success of the STAD model.

However, despite these various supporting factors, the implementation of the STAD model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also faces several obstacles that require careful consideration. One of the main obstacles is the limited allocation of learning time. The STAD model requires sequential stages

and sufficient time for each session, starting from material delivery, group formation, discussion, individual evaluation, to calculation and awarding group rewards. If the time allocation in one lesson hour is too short or inflexible, teachers will struggle to complete all these stages optimally. As a result, learning objectives are not fully achieved, and students do not gain a true cooperative learning experience (Khidr & Sabri, 2022).

Besides time constraints, the availability of learning resources such as textbooks and teaching media is also a serious obstacle. In many cases, students lack adequate textbooks, so when they enter the group discussion stage, they lack a source of information to refer to together. This situation makes it difficult for students to understand the material independently and tend to be passive during discussions. As a result, the goal of group discussions in STAD, which is to strengthen conceptual understanding through dialogue and interaction, is not achieved. Teachers ultimately have to prepare additional materials or special summaries to fill in the gaps in available learning resources (Tanjung et al., 2020).

Another inhibiting factor is students' low understanding of the group work mechanism in the STAD model (Anggraini et al., 2025). Many students are not accustomed to working in structured cooperative groups, so they experience confusion when asked to discuss, share roles, or evaluate fellow group members. Some students may be accustomed to individual or passive learning, so when they enter a collaborative learning model, they tend to withdraw or rely solely on other, more active group members. This not only hinders these students' development but also reduces the group's overall effectiveness.

Furthermore, inadequate school facilities are also a real obstacle to implementing STAD. Small classrooms, limited supporting equipment, and limited technology and learning media make it difficult for teachers to implement STAD steps effectively. Teachers need sufficient space to arrange group seating, a whiteboard or screen to present material, and sufficient time to provide feedback to each group. When these are not available, STAD implementation can be half-hearted, and students do not receive the maximum learning experience (Flint-Ashery & Stadler, 2021).

Finally, the lack of training or mentoring for teachers in implementing the STAD model is also a structural barrier that should not be overlooked. While this model is quite popular in theory, in practice, many teachers still don't understand how to implement it properly. Some teachers may have tried STAD but failed to implement all of its essential components, such as individual evaluations or group rewards. As a result, learning becomes disoriented and actually creates confusion among students. Ongoing training, teacher workshops, and support from schools and education offices are crucial to ensure that STAD is truly understood and implemented effectively (Anggraini et al., 2025).

These inhibiting factors are not absolute or insurmountable obstacles. With careful planning, adequate support, and the willingness of teachers and schools to innovate, these obstacles can be minimized. Teachers can adapt group formation, simplify evaluation stages, or reorganize learning time to make it more effective. Schools can also provide spaces and facilities that support the implementation of cooperative learning models. Most importantly, every educational actor recognizes that successful learning, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), is not merely a matter of transferring knowledge, but also of building a vibrant, dialogical, and valuable learning atmosphere, strategies, and ecosystem.

By comprehensively understanding the factors that support and hinder the effectiveness of STAD, Islamic Religious Education teachers have a stronger foundation in designing and evaluating classroom learning processes. Furthermore, this knowledge also serves as a foundation for developing educational policies that encourage cooperative learning approaches as an integral part of the process of character building and students' social intelligence. In the long term, the consistent and reflective application of STAD can become a means of Islamic Religious Education learning that touches not only the minds but also the hearts and actions of students in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

Thus, this study shows that the implementation of the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SMP Plus Nurul Hidayah Pasundan has a significant positive impact on increasing student learning motivation. Based on the analysis, it was found that the basic concept of STAD, which is based on positive interdependence and individual accountability, is able to create a collaborative learning climate that supports students' cognitive, affective, and social development. The learning process is no longer one-way, but rather changes to be dialogic, reflective, and participatory, where students not only understand the teaching material but also internalize Islamic values in group interactions.

Theoretically, these findings confirm the relevance of Vygotsky's social constructivism theory in the implementation of STAD, particularly through scaffolding and the zone of proximal development. STAD learning practices in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) have been shown to foster the development of critical, empathetic, and responsible religious character in students. However, the effectiveness of this method's implementation remains dependent on teacher preparedness, learning tools, supporting facilities, and adaptive classroom management. This research's contribution lies in strengthening the discourse of collaborative, contextual Islamic pedagogy, which positions STAD as a learning approach capable of bridging academic achievement and the formation of noble character. Furthermore, this research also opens up space for exploring the STAD model in religious education in multicultural environments, as part of Indonesia's contribution to the international discourse on value integration and global learning innovation.

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