



The Implementation of the STAD Type Cooperative Learning Model in Enhancing Students' Self-Control and HOTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the impact of the STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) cooperative learning model in developing self-control and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in Akidah Akhlak lessons at MAN 2 Kota Bengkulu. Using a qualitative descriptive research approach, the study explored how this model is implemented in a classroom setting, focusing on the planning, execution, and evaluation phases. Data were collected through interviews with 6 Akidah Akhlak teachers, 3 students, and 2 school administrators, as well as classroom observations and document analysis. The research applied Miles and Huberman's data analysis framework, which involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that the STAD model significantly enhanced student engagement and promoted collaboration, with a clear impact on developing self-control and HOTS. The cooperative structure of the model fostered critical thinking and emotional regulation, as students work together in diverse teams. The study also highlighted challenges such as unequal participation within groups and difficulties in managing HOTS-related tasks. Overall, the STAD model proved effective in improving both academic performance and character development, making it a valuable approach for fostering cognitive and emotional growth in students. The study recommends further training for teachers on implementing STAD effectively and suggests adapting the model to better address the needs of students.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are a crucial factor in determining the success of educational systems. While curricula may be well-designed, their effectiveness is heavily dependent on how teachers implement them in the classroom (Brophy, 2016). Therefore, improving educational quality requires teachers to refine their teaching practices. A fundamental competency for educators is the ability to choose appropriate teaching strategies that align with both the curriculum goals and the potential of students (Woolfolk,

2020). By adopting these strategies, teachers can create a learning environment that fosters self-directed learning and encourages students to engage in problem-solving activities, thereby developing critical thinking skills (Kramer & Fiske, 2021). This shift towards a student-centred approach promotes a democratic, collaborative, and constructive learning atmosphere (Sharan, 2018).

In Indonesia, the education system faces challenges, particularly in instilling moral and religious values. Despite efforts to teach ethics and morality in schools, the observed behaviour of students often does not align with the principles they are taught. This issue is seen not only among students but also across various societal levels, including political elites, revealing a disconnect between words and actions (Susanto, 2020). The failure to integrate moral education effectively into students' lives necessitates exploring alternative teaching methods that can bridge this gap. One such method is cooperative learning (CL), which emphasises group-based learning and peer interaction to foster collaboration, personal growth, and academic achievement (Johnson & Johnson, 2019).

Cooperative learning strategies enable students to work together in small groups, promoting mutual support and shared responsibility for learning outcomes (Azar & Othman, 2020). The use of these strategies allows students to help each other, particularly those struggling academically, and fosters a sense of social responsibility (Slavin, 2017). One of the most widely used cooperative learning models is the STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) model, which includes five key components: team formation, class presentations, quizzes, individual progress scores, and team recognition. This model emphasises collaborative efforts to maximise learning and promote critical thinking among students (Slavin, 2017).

At Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 (MAN 2) in Bengkulu, it was observed that many students face difficulties in learning due to the monotonous and ineffective teaching methods employed by some teachers. These methods have led to low student engagement and hindered the development of self-directed learning skills. Additionally, some students struggle to manage their emotions and behaviours, which further impacts their academic performance (Mardiana, 2021). This highlights the need for more dynamic teaching strategies that encourage active participation and foster the development of both cognitive and emotional skills in students (Karimi & Shahrak, 2020; Tomasello & Rogers, 2021).

The development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) is also a crucial issue in the current educational landscape (Almeida & Martins, 2019; Kim & Lee, 2018). HOTS includes abilities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, analysis, and creativity, which are essential for students to engage meaningfully with the learning material (Brookhart, 2019). However, traditional teaching methods, which focus primarily on memorisation, fail to adequately challenge students to think critically and creatively. As a result, students' cognitive development is limited, and they are often unprepared to address complex real-world problems (Rashid, 2019).

To address these challenges, the researcher proposes the implementation of the STAD model in Akidah Akhlak (religious morality) lessons at MAN 2 Bengkulu. The STAD model is expected to improve student engagement, foster collaboration, and develop students' critical thinking and emotional regulation (Sari & Pratama, 2018). By engaging in cooperative learning activities, students will have the opportunity to interact with peers, share knowledge, and support each other in mastering the subject matter, thereby promoting self-control and HOTS (Baker, 2020).

This study aims to evaluate the impact of the STAD model on students' self-control and HOTS in Akidah Akhlak lessons. By examining the implementation of this model, the research seeks to identify effective strategies for enhancing student participation and developing essential cognitive and non-cognitive skills. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of how cooperative learning models like STAD can improve educational outcomes and promote the development of well-rounded individuals with strong moral values and critical thinking abilities (Cohen et al., 2017).

The significance of this research lies in its potential to provide practical guidance for teachers seeking to implement more effective teaching strategies. By focusing on the development of self-control and HOTS, this study will offer valuable insights into how the STAD model can be used to engage students and improve their academic and personal growth. Moreover, the findings may serve as a foundation for future research on the integration of cooperative learning models into diverse educational contexts (Slavin, 2017).

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this research will also provide practical benefits for educators. The results of the study will serve as a guide for teachers in implementing cooperative learning strategies that promote both cognitive and emotional development. By understanding how to effectively apply the STAD model, educators can better support their students' academic success and foster positive social interactions (Hidayat & Satriawan, 2019). Furthermore, the study will help teachers assess the effectiveness of the STAD model in improving HOTS and self-control, making it a valuable resource for ongoing educational improvement (Brookhart, 2019).

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, specifically descriptive qualitative research, which aims to explore and understand the social context in-depth. According to Kirk and Miller (2015), qualitative research focuses on human behaviour within its natural context. This method is ideal for studying the application of the STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) cooperative learning model in Akidah Akhlak (religious morality) lessons, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the teaching context, challenges, and the perspectives of students, teachers, and school administrators (Woolfolk, 2020). Descriptive qualitative research is chosen because it can uncover complex issues that cannot be measured quantitatively and provides a more comprehensive insight into improving students' character development and HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) in an educational setting (Sharan, 2018).

The research was conducted at MAN 2 Bengkulu, focusing on grade 10 students. The study took place over one month, from February 20 to March 20, 2025, with data collection continuing until the researcher gathered accurate and relevant information. The primary data sources included interviews with the 6 Akidah Akhlak teachers, 3 students, 1 school administrator, and 1 staff member, all of whom provide direct insights into the implementation of the STAD model. Secondary data were gathered from school documents, archival records, and literature reviews on cooperative learning, educational strategies, and HOTS, enriching the research with additional context (Cohen et al., 2017).

Data were collected using multiple methods to ensure validity. Observations were conducted to gather direct information from the classroom setting, allowing the researcher to understand the dynamics of the STAD model's application. Interviews with key informants, including teachers and students, will provide verbal insights into the implementation and effectiveness of the model (Hopkins, 2016). Additionally, documentation such as school records, photographs, and reports was collected to support and triangulate the data obtained through observations and interviews. This multi-method approach ensured that the data is comprehensive and robust, contributing to the credibility of the findings.

Data analysis followed the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), involving three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved clarifying and summarising raw data, focusing on the most relevant information for further analysis. Data display was used to present the data in a structured manner, typically through narrative text, to help with further analysis. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified to ensure the validity of the findings. The study also used triangulation techniques to enhance data credibility. Triangulation involved using multiple sources of data, theories, and researchers to cross-check the information and ensure its reliability (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

To validate the research findings, the study used credibility tests such as prolonged observation, persistent engagement, and member checking. Triangulation was employed by comparing data from different sources, such as teachers, students, and administrators. This ensures that the research findings are well-supported and credible, providing a thorough understanding of the STAD model's impact on student engagement, self-control, and HOTS development (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Planning the Implementation of the STAD Cooperative Learning Model in Developing Self-Control and HOTS in Akidah Akhlak Lessons

The core concept of the STAD model is to encourage students to motivate and help one another in mastering the material taught by the teacher. For students to earn a team award, they must support their teammates in learning the subject matter. They must work together to do their best and demonstrate that learning is important, valuable, and enjoyable. After the teacher presents the lesson, students collaborate in pairs to compare their answers, discuss any discrepancies, and help each other if there are misunderstandings. They can approach the material through problem-solving or engage in quizzes with their team members, identifying their strengths and weaknesses to better prepare for the tests.

The primary goal of group learning is to accelerate the understanding of all students. This technique is based on the idea that students learn in cooperative learning groups to comprehend the lesson. Group learning for students is not just a one-time activity; it is a permanent classroom organisation method that can effectively teach various subjects over time.

In interviews conducted with Akidah Akhlak teacher, Mrs Leni Hartati, she explained her planning process for applying the STAD model:

"In planning STAD learning, I begin by preparing a teaching module that not only includes basic competencies but also indicators for character development and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). I align the learning objectives with relevant Akidah Akhlak values such as honesty, patience, and empathy. Self-control becomes the focus during group discussions, where students learn to restrain themselves from dominating and to respect the opinions of others. I also design case analysis questions to encourage students to draw logical conclusions from the issues they discuss."

This interview reveals that the planning for implementing the STAD cooperative learning model is holistic, with a focus on character development (self-control) and HOTS. The teacher's module is designed to not only meet cognitive aspects but also encompass Akidah Akhlak values. Group discussions are structured to foster self-control by encouraging respectful dialogue and critical thinking through case studies. Similarly, Mr Nunu, another Akidah Akhlak teacher, added:

"I start by mapping out material that is suitable for STAD. I tend to choose challenging topics, such as 'ethics toward parents,' and design discussion activities that allow students to relate the material to real-life situations. I also create observation sheets to assess students' emotional control and critical thinking."

These interviews confirm that the STAD planning process is systematic, starting from the selection of relevant and challenging topics to the creation of discussion-based activities and assessment tools. This structured approach ensures that students develop both critical thinking skills and self-control.

Implementation of the STAD Cooperative Learning Model in Developing Self-Control and HOTS in Students

The STAD model emphasises collaboration in heterogeneous groups. The students' tasks are not just individual efforts but learning together as a team, where the success of the group depends on everyone mastering the material. The STAD model consists of five main components: class presentations, team formation, quizzes, individual progress scores, and team recognition.

Based on interviews with Mrs Leni, she described the implementation process as follows:

"First, I explain the material to the students using audiovisual aids. After that, I form small groups of 4-5 students for group discussions. They work together to analyse the material and help each other understand the concepts."

Mr Nunu shared his approach to STAD:

"I begin with a brief presentation on the Akidah Akhlak material, explaining key concepts and giving relevant examples. The aim is to provide students with a general overview of the material and motivate them to engage in group work."

These statements show that the implementation of the STAD model involves a combination of direct teaching and collaborative group work. The teacher uses audiovisual presentations to introduce the material and then transitions to group discussions where students actively engage with the material, helping each other to grasp the concepts. Mr Samsudin added:

"I ensure that students understand the material well before having them present their group discussions. This allows me to assess whether they've fully grasped the material."

This approach emphasises the importance of clear material presentation and group discussions, providing students with opportunities to reinforce their learning through collaboration.

Evaluation of the STAD Model Implementation

Evaluating the STAD model's effectiveness involves assessing both individual and group progress. The model is designed to enhance collaboration, responsibility, and critical thinking. Interviews with teachers revealed that the STAD model is highly effective in developing self-control and HOTS. Mrs Iska, an Akidah Akhlak teacher, stated:

"STAD has greatly helped in building students' character, especially in terms of self-control. During discussions, they learn to manage their emotions, listen patiently to others' opinions, and avoid conflict. For HOTS, this model encourages students to analyse ethical values, evaluate behaviour, and design solutions to moral cases."

Similarly, Mr Nunu said:

"I see students becoming more disciplined and responsible. They learn to manage their emotions during discussions, avoid interrupting others, and respect opinions. In terms of HOTS, tasks like analysing moral issues encourage critical thinking and problem-solving."

These responses indicate that the STAD model is effective in promoting both self-control and HOTS. The evaluation process incorporates individual quizzes, group activities, and reflection on character development, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of students' academic and personal growth.

Discussion

Planning the Implementation of the STAD Cooperative Learning Model in Developing Self-Control and HOTS in Akidah Akhlak Lessons

The STAD model is designed not only to improve academic outcomes but also to shape students' character and enhance their higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). The planning phase of STAD involves creating an integrated teaching module that addresses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning goals. Teachers are encouraged to design lessons that balance knowledge acquisition with the development of emotional and social skills. For example, incorporating Akidah Akhlak values like

honesty, patience, and empathy into the learning process allows students to engage with the material in a way that connects theoretical concepts to their real-world experiences (Rosyadi et al, 2025).

In the planning stage, teachers must design activities and discussions that encourage students to apply the ethical principles learned in Akidah Akhlak to everyday situations. This approach not only promotes critical thinking but also reinforces self-control (Rorimpandey, 2022). By focusing on practical applications of moral values, students are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours and decisions, which enhances their personal growth. Additionally, incorporating problem-solving scenarios and case studies related to Akidah Akhlak enables students to practice HOTS by analysing, evaluating, and synthesising information, making the learning process more engaging and impactful (Slavin, 2017).

Implementation of the STAD Model in Developing Self-Control and HOTS

The STAD model emphasises collaboration within small, heterogeneous teams where students work together to understand and master the material. The collaborative nature of the model fosters a learning environment that encourages not only academic achievement but also the development of essential social-emotional skills like self-control. As students work together in teams, they are required to manage their behaviour, listen to others, and respect diverse opinions, which contributes to better self-regulation and emotional control during group discussions (Ikhsan, 2025).

Through structured activities like group discussions and presentations, the STAD model promotes the development of HOTS by encouraging students to critically analyse the material, engage in respectful dialogue, and generate solutions to real-world problems (Sani, 2024). The group dynamic of STAD ensures that all members are actively involved and responsible for both their own learning and the progress of their teammates. This collaborative effort not only enhances cognitive abilities but also supports the emotional growth of students as they learn to work together and support each other in overcoming challenges, which ultimately improves their critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Baker, 2020).

Evaluation of STAD Implementation

The evaluation of the STAD model involves assessing both individual and group performance, focusing on various aspects of learning such as participation, teamwork, and emotional regulation. Teachers observe how well students engage in discussions, work together as a team, and manage their emotions during the learning process. This observational data is crucial in understanding the overall effectiveness of the STAD model in fostering self-control and higher-order thinking. Teachers also assess how students handle disagreements or differing opinions during discussions, which reflects their ability to regulate emotions and contribute constructively to group tasks (Ikhsan, 2025).

In addition to observing group dynamics, the evaluation process includes assessing students' HOTS through tasks like case analysis and problem-solving. These tasks challenge students to think critically, evaluate different perspectives, and come up with logical solutions based on their understanding of the material (Sani, 2024). By focusing on both cognitive and character development, STAD provides a holistic approach to student assessment. This approach not only measures academic success but also tracks students' growth in emotional and social competencies, ensuring that they are developing both intellectually and personally (Brookhart, 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) cooperative learning model in Akidah Akhlak lessons at MAN 2 Kota Bengkulu includes comprehensive planning steps such as creating integrated lesson plans that balance cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives. The focus is on Akidah and Akhlak values, selecting contextual materials that encourage critical thinking, forming heterogeneous groups to foster collaboration, and incorporating LKS (Student Worksheets)

and case studies to stimulate students' HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills). The assessment strategy is dual, evaluating both individual and group performance, with rubrics designed to assess self-control and HOTS, while including reflection and self-assessment sessions to support students' personal development.

The STAD model is implemented through five key components: class presentations, team formation, quizzes, individual progress scores, and team recognition. The process begins with a teacher-led presentation of the material, followed by individual quizzes to assess initial knowledge, and then the formation of small groups to collaborate on assigned tasks. After additional individual quizzes, the teacher facilitates group discussions and feedback, rewarding teams based on improvements. Although STAD promotes active participation, teamwork, and self-control, the model's success depends on careful planning and time management to ensure its effective execution.

Evaluations of the STAD model, both formative and summative, assess cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learning. Feedback from teachers and students is used to adjust teaching strategies, such as modifying group structures or tasks to better foster HOTS development. The application of STAD has proven effective in enhancing self-control and HOTS, with students developing better emotional regulation, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making skills. This model not only supports cognitive learning but also plays a significant role in fostering character development and collaboration, making it a valuable tool in Akidah Akhlak education.

Recommendations for the implementation of the STAD cooperative learning model in Akidah Akhlak education encompass several key strategies to enhance its effectiveness. Firstly, ongoing professional development for teachers is essential to ensure they are adequately prepared to design and manage cooperative learning activities that align with Akidah Akhlak values and promote higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). The integration of digital learning tools—such as electronic worksheets and online collaboration platforms—should be encouraged to increase student engagement, facilitate group interaction, and improve the efficiency of assessments. Group dynamics can be strengthened by assigning rotating roles (e.g., leader, recorder, presenter), which foster student responsibility and leadership while maintaining equitable participation. Additionally, detailed assessment rubrics should be developed to evaluate affective aspects such as self-control, ethical decision-making, and collaboration, making these dimensions more measurable and actionable. Given its proven success, the STAD model is also recommended for use in other Islamic studies subjects, such as Fiqh or Islamic Civilisation History, to support consistent cognitive and moral development. The incorporation of structured student reflection and peer evaluation is vital for promoting metacognitive awareness and personal accountability. Furthermore, regular monitoring and adjustment of group composition based on students' learning styles, academic performance, and interpersonal dynamics are necessary to sustain motivation and collaborative effectiveness. Effective time management is also critical to ensure that all five components of the STAD model are implemented thoroughly, particularly classroom discussions and reflective activities. Longitudinal research should be conducted to assess the long-term impact of STAD on students' character development. Lastly, fostering parental involvement through periodic updates and collaborative initiatives is recommended to reinforce the Akhlak values taught in the classroom and build a strong school-home partnership.

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