

# OPTIMIZING C5-LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ISLAMIC CREED AND MORALS THROUGH THE STUDENT FACILITATOR AND EXPLAINING MODEL

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## ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak di madrasah dihadapkan pada tantangan rendahnya pengembangan keterampilan berpikir tingkat tinggi, khususnya kemampuan evaluatif (C5), akibat dominannya penggunaan metode ceramah yang berorientasi pada hafalan dan pemahaman dasar. Kondisi ini berdampak pada keterbatasan peserta didik dalam menilai persoalan moral secara kritis dan mengambil keputusan berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh model Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) terhadap hasil belajar Akidah Akhlak pada ranah kognitif C5. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode quasi experiment melalui desain post-test only control group. Subjek penelitian adalah peserta didik kelas VIII MTs Negeri 2 Lampung Timur yang dibagi ke dalam kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan instrumen tes pilihan ganda yang telah memenuhi uji validitas dan reliabilitas, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan uji Mann-Whitney. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol ( $p = 0,009 < 0,05$ ), di mana peserta didik yang belajar dengan model SFE memiliki kemampuan evaluatif yang lebih tinggi. Temuan ini mengimplikasikan bahwa model SFE efektif digunakan sebagai strategi pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak berbasis Higher Order Thinking Skills, khususnya dalam meningkatkan capaian pembelajaran pada level evaluasi (C5).

**Kata Kunci:** Akidah akhlak, C5 evaluasi, hasil belajar, *Student Facilitator and Explaining*

## ABSTRACT

*Akidah Akhlak instruction in madrasah settings is expected to foster higher-order thinking skills, particularly evaluative ability at the C5 cognitive level. However, instructional practices remain predominantly lecture-centered, limiting students' opportunities to develop critical moral evaluation and value-based decision-making skills. This study aims to examine the effect of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) learning model on students' learning outcomes in Akidah Akhlak, specifically at the evaluative (C5) cognitive domain. Employing a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method, this study utilized a post-test only control group design. The research participants were eighth-grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Lampung Timur, who were divided into an experimental group and a control group. Data were collected using a multiple-choice test instrument that had met validity and reliability requirements and were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups ( $p = 0.009 < 0.05$ ), indicating that students taught using the SFE model demonstrated higher evaluative learning outcomes than those taught through conventional methods. These findings imply that the Student Facilitator and Explaining model is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing higher-order evaluative thinking (C5) in Akidah Akhlak learning and can serve as a viable alternative for HOTS-oriented Islamic religious education.*

**Keywords:** Akidah akhlak, 5 Evaluation, Islamic Creed and Morals, Learning Outcomes, Student Facilitator and Explaining

## A. Introduction

Akidah Akhlak instruction is expected to foster higher-order thinking skills, particularly evaluative ability (C5), enabling learners to assess moral issues and make



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decisions aligned with Islamic values.<sup>1</sup> However, instructional practices in madrasah settings remain predominantly lecture-based, providing limited opportunities for students to develop evaluative and judgment-based skills.<sup>2</sup> Previous studies on the *Student Facilitator and Explaining* (SFE) model and other innovative learning approaches have largely focused on improving general learning outcomes or lower cognitive domains, while empirical evidence examining their effectiveness in enhancing evaluative abilities at the C5 level in Akidah Akhlak learning remains limited.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this study addresses this research gap by specifically investigating the impact of the SFE model on students' evaluative learning outcomes (C5), offering a novel contribution to HOTS-oriented instructional strategies in Islamic religious education.<sup>4</sup>

However, empirical conditions in educational settings indicate that instructional practices remain far from ideal. Teachers continue to rely heavily on lecture-based methods, creating less engaging classroom environments and limiting students' active participation. As a result, students have limited opportunities to practice articulating, assessing, and critically evaluating moral issues, which contributes to low learning outcomes at the C5 evaluative level. This lack of interactive and reflective learning experiences highlights the need for instructional models that are explicitly oriented toward the development of evaluative competencies in Akidah Akhlak learning.

Previous studies have reported that the *Student Facilitator and Explaining* (SFE) model is effective in improving students' learning outcomes, activeness, and critical engagement across various subjects.<sup>5</sup> However, most existing research has focused on general learning outcomes or lower-to-middle cognitive domains, with limited attention to higher-order evaluative abilities. Moreover, empirical studies examining the effectiveness of the SFE model within Akidah Akhlak instruction, particularly at the C5 cognitive level, remain scarce. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by specifically investigating the impact of the SFE model on students' evaluative learning outcomes (C5) in Akidah Akhlak learning, offering a novel contribution to HOTS-oriented research in Islamic education.

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<sup>1</sup> Kartika Dwi Astuti and Muqowim, "The Role of Akidah Akhlak Teacher in Embedding Character of Polite and Decent Language for Elementary Students" 13, no. 1 (2021): 20-34.

<sup>2</sup> Faris Fathurrohman et al., "Utilization of the YouTube Application in Learning Akidah Akhlak at Senior High School" 2, no. 2 (2024): 31-54.

<sup>3</sup> Dina Destari et al., "The Analysis of Improving Student Learning Outcomes Using The Value Clarification Technique Learning Model" 06, no. 01 (2023): 3300-3305.

<sup>4</sup> Yuliana Darmawati and Ali Mustadi, "The Effect of Problem-Based Learning on the Critical Thinking Skills of Elementary School Students Yuliana" 11, no. 2 (2023): 142-151.

<sup>5</sup> A Alfin, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Literasi Kewargaan Melalui Model Pembelajaran Student Facilitator and Explaining," *Jurnal Riset Pendidikan Indonesia* 2 (2022): 100-108.

The Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model emerges as a relevant alternative for addressing these challenges.<sup>6</sup> This model positions students as active facilitators who explain concepts to their peers, thereby fostering a collaborative and interactive learning environment.<sup>7</sup> Through presentation, discussion, and re-explanation activities, students are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter while simultaneously strengthening their evaluative abilities.<sup>8</sup> The peer-explaining process inherent in the SFE model has the potential to strengthen evaluative and argumentative skills, as students are required to articulate rationales and justify their understanding.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, this model fosters a more dynamic classroom atmosphere, thereby enhancing students' learning motivation and engagement.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the SFE model can serve as a strategic solution for enhancing students' learning outcomes, particularly at the C5 cognitive level.<sup>11</sup>

Theoretically, the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) at the evaluative level (C5) has been widely discussed in the revised Bloom's taxonomy framework, which emphasizes the ability to assess, consider, and make decisions based on specific criteria. Cooperative and student-centered learning models, including Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE), are conceptually believed to be able to encourage high-level cognitive engagement through activities such as presentations, discussions, and explanations between students. However, most theoretical and empirical studies on SFE still place HOTS as a general construct, without a clear mapping to specific cognitive levels, especially evaluative abilities (C5). In addition, studies on Islamic education pedagogy tend to emphasize the affective and normative dimensions of Akidah Akhlak learning, while higher-order cognitive dimensions—especially moral evaluation based on reasoning and justification of Islamic values—have not been systematically developed in tested learning models. Thus, there is a theoretical gap between (1) the concept of evaluative thinking in HOTS, (2) the theoretical potential of the SFE model as facilitative

<sup>6</sup> Irma Sari Daulay, Nurhayati Siregar, and Ratih Amaeini Hasibuan, "Application Of Student Facilitator And Explaining Learning Model To Increase Learning Motivation For Grade IV Paringgoan" 14, no. 2 (2023): 95-100.

<sup>7</sup> Nadia Rahmani et al., "The Effect Of Student Facilitator And Explaining ( Sfae ) Cooperative Learning Model On Physics Student ' S Achievement" 16, no. 1 (2023): 88-92.

<sup>8</sup> Phoolan Chakarvarti, "Investigating the Effectiveness of Peer Feedback in Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Undergraduate Students," *Journal of Education Review Provision* 2, no. 3 (2023): 91-95.

<sup>9</sup> Armini, Chablullah Wibisono, and Faizal Madya, "The Influence of Spiritual Motivation , Psychological Motivation , Physiological Motivation on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction At Health Centers in the City of Tanjungpinang," *International Journal of Educational Review, Law And Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2024): 183-192.

<sup>10</sup> Armini, Wibisono, and Madya, "The Influence of Spiritual Motivation , Psychological Motivation , Physiological Motivation on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction At Health Centers in the City of Tanjungpinang."

<sup>11</sup> Dian Erlita, "Improvement Of Community Learning Outcomes Through Learning Methods Inquiry In Grade Iv," 2024, 951-61.

learning, and (3) the learning needs of Aqidah Akhlak, which require contextual moral assessment skills. This study attempts to fill this gap by positioning SFE as a pedagogical framework to develop specific and measurable C5 learning outcomes in context.

Despite extensive discussions on HOTS and cooperative learning models, existing studies have predominantly conceptualized HOTS as a broad cognitive construct without explicitly addressing evaluative ability (C5) as a distinct learning outcome. Furthermore, Islamic religious education literature tends to prioritize affective and normative dimensions of Akidah Akhlak, leaving evaluative moral reasoning underexplored within empirically tested instructional models. This creates a theoretical gap between HOTS-based cognitive frameworks, the pedagogical potential of the Student Facilitator and Explaining model, and the specific cognitive demands of Akidah Akhlak learning, which this study seeks to address.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that the SFE model is effective in enhancing students' active participation, conceptual understanding, and learning outcomes.<sup>12</sup> For instance, studies by Yufi Mohammad (2024) and Qurotul Ayuni (2023) found that the SFE model effectively promotes greater student activeness and critical engagement in the learning process.<sup>13</sup> However, the majority of these studies have primarily examined the impact of the SFE model on overall learning outcomes or on lower- to mid-level cognitive domains.<sup>14</sup> There remains a notable scarcity of studies focusing on the effectiveness of the SFE model in enhancing evaluative abilities at the C5 cognitive level, particularly within Akidah Akhlak instruction. This gap provides a critical rationale for the present study. The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on examining the enhancement of students' evaluative abilities through the implementation of the SFE model.

This study is of critical importance, as evaluative competence constitutes a key skill required by learners to navigate increasingly complex moral issues in the digital era. Enhancing C5-level cognitive abilities will enable students to critically evaluate information, distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, and make decisions grounded in authoritative evidence and the ethical principles of Islam. The urgency of this study is further grounded in the need for madrasah institutions to implement more active and meaningful instructional innovations. Moreover, the findings

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<sup>12</sup> Indah Resti Ayuni Suri et al., "Virtual Learning Experimentation with Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFAE) on Mathematical Representation Abilities and Understanding Mathematics Concepts," *Alifmatika: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Matematika* 6, no. 1 (2024): 14-23.

<sup>13</sup> Yufi Mohammad Nasrullah et al., "Penerapan Model Pembelajaran Student Facilitator And Explaining (SFAE) Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Fiqih" 1, no. 2 (2024): 1679-1688.

<sup>14</sup> Arini Purnamasari et al., "The Influence of Using the Student Facilitator and Explaining Model in Learning Speaking Skills at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah" 4, no. 2 (2023): 1927-1932.

of this study may contribute to teachers' informed selection of appropriate instructional models to optimize learning outcomes in Akidah Akhlak education. Accordingly, this study holds not only academic relevance but also practical implications for improving the overall quality of education.

## B. Research Methodology

This research was conducted during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at MTs Negeri 2 Lampung Timur, employing a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental post-test-only control group design. Class VIII (G) was selected as the experimental group and taught using the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) learning model, whereas Class VIII (F) served as the control group and was instructed using the Direct Instruction model. Cluster random sampling was applied to ensure that every student had an equal chance of being selected as a sample, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the data. The focus of this study was to measure learning outcomes at the C5 (evaluation) level of Bloom's Taxonomy, assessing students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and make moral decisions based on the exemplary story of Prophet Musa. Evaluation indicators included students' capacity to assess the actions of Prophet Musa and his followers, evaluate the decisions made, compare characters' behaviors with moral principles, and determine the most appropriate moral actions in similar situations.

The research instrument consisted of multiple-choice questions (MCQs) designed to assess evaluative skills. Examples of evaluative items included: (1) determining the appropriate action based on Prophet Musa's response to Pharaoh, (2) assessing the correct way to respond to the complaints of the Israelites, and (3) evaluating Prophet Musa's conduct when leading the Israelites across the parted sea. Multiple-choice format was chosen because each item required students to analyze, compare, and select the best answer, with distractors carefully designed to reflect incorrect reasoning or morally inappropriate options. Furthermore, the instrument had undergone validity, reliability, discrimination index, and distractor quality testing, ensuring its suitability for measuring students' evaluative abilities.

Preliminary tests included normality assessment using the Liliefors method and homogeneity testing via Bartlett's test. The results of the normality test indicated that the data were not normally distributed ( $p < 0.05$ ). Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed to examine the significant effect of the SFE learning model on students' learning outcomes. This approach ensured methodological consistency and

provided robust evidence of the effectiveness of the SFE model in enhancing students' evaluative abilities in the subject of Akidah Akhlak.

### C. Results

#### 1. Normality Test

Tests of Normality							
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk			
	Kelompok	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Data	1.00	.357	31	.000	.687	31	.000
	2.00	.323	31	.000	.809	31	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 1. Normality Test Results

The results of the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk method indicated that the learning outcomes data for the experimental group (Statistic = 0.687, p = 0.000) and the control group (Statistic = 0.809, p = 0.000) were not normally distributed, as p < 0.05. Therefore, subsequent analyses were conducted using non-parametric methods

#### 2. Uji Mann-Whitney

Table 2. Mann-Whitney	Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>		Data
	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	
The U test for outcomes value of U = 0.009. These difference	308.500	804.500	
	Z	-2.624	results of the Mann-Whitney comparing learning between groups revealed a 308.500, Z = -2.624, p = .009
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		results indicate a significant between the experimental
	a. Grouping Variable: Kelompok		and control groups. The mean score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, suggesting that the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) learning model is effective in enhancing students' learning outcomes

### 3. Homogeneity Test

**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Data	Based on Mean	2.126	1	60	.150
	Based on Median	.247	1	60	.621
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.247	1	53.960	.621
	Based on trimmed mean	1.696	1	60	.198

**Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results**

Based on the homogeneity test results using Levene's Test, the significance values were 0.150 (based on the mean), 0.621 (based on the median), and 0.198 (based on the trimmed mean). Since all significance values are greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted, indicating that the variances between the experimental and control groups are equal (homogeneous). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity for the data in this study is satisfied, allowing for valid comparisons between group scores.

### D. Discussion

The findings of this study show that the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model significantly enhances students' learning outcomes at the C5 evaluative level, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test results ( $p = 0.009 < 0.05$ ). Students in the experimental group achieved higher evaluative scores than those in the control group, particularly in assessing moral cases, evaluating arguments, and determining appropriate moral decisions based on Akidah Akhlak principles. This result is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that student-centered and interactive learning models improve higher-order thinking skills, including evaluative and critical abilities.<sup>15</sup> The present study extends these findings by providing empirical evidence that the SFE model is effective in

<sup>15</sup> Purwati et al., "Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling, and Moral Action in Reflecting Moral Development of Students in Junior High School," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education* 13, no. 3 (2024): 1602-1609.

strengthening evaluative competencies (C5) specifically within Akidah Akhlak instruction.<sup>16</sup>

The effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model in improving C5 evaluative outcomes can be explained by its emphasis on peer explanation and active cognitive engagement.<sup>17</sup> Through the process of explaining material to peers, students are required to organize information, evaluate arguments, and justify their reasoning, which supports the development of metacognitive and evaluative skills.<sup>18</sup> In the context of Akidah Akhlak learning, students are challenged to assess moral phenomena such as honesty, responsibility, and self-control by considering contextual factors, moral consequences, and Islamic value-based reasoning. This active evaluative process is difficult to achieve through lecture-based instruction, but is facilitated by the dialogic and interactive nature of the SFE model.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the higher evaluative performance observed in the experimental group reflects the effectiveness of peer-based explanation and discussion in fostering C5-level cognitive processes rather than mere conceptual understanding.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research demonstrating that the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model effectively enhances higher-order thinking skills, particularly at the evaluative level.<sup>20</sup> The significant difference observed between the experimental and control groups ( $p = 0.009 < 0.05$ ) supports the results reported by Safitri (2025), who found that SFE-based learning improves students' evaluative and analytical abilities through active explanation. Similarly, Asari showed that peer-facilitated learning leads to stronger evaluative judgment in moral decision-making compared to lecture-based instruction. In addition, Aini reported that collaborative and explanation-oriented instructional models significantly enhance students' evaluative and decision-making skills.<sup>21</sup> Taken together, these findings reinforce

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<sup>16</sup> Amber van Hoe et al., "The implementation of peer assessment as a scaffold during computer-supported collaborative inquiry learning in secondary STEM education," *International Journal of STEM Education* 11, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-024-00465-8>.

<sup>17</sup> Abd. hamid Isa, yane hardiyanti Mahmud, dan delfiyanti idris Labodu, "Student facilitator and explaining learning: Its use to increase student learning outcomes" 3, no. 2 (2023): 337-46.

<sup>18</sup> Logan Fiorella, "Fostering knowledge building in learning by teaching: A test of the drawing-facilitates-explaining hypothesis," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 37, no. 5 (2023): 1124-38, <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.4100>.

<sup>19</sup> Glendon L. Macapayad et al., "Efficacy of One-on-One Peer Tutoring in Improving the Problem-Solving Performance Among the Grade 10 Learners," *European Journal of Education Studies* 11, no. 11 (2024): 818-829.

<sup>20</sup> Emi Sulistri and Haris Rosdianto, "The Effect of the Student Facilitator and Explaining ( SFE ) Type Learning Model on Students ' Critical Thinking Skills Related to Heat Material Pengaruh Model Pembelajaran Tipe Student Facilitator and Explaining ( SFE ) Terhadap Keterampilan Berpikir Kri" 2, no. 5 (2023): 1227-1240.

<sup>21</sup> Fitria Puteri Arviani, Dinn Wahyudin, and Laksmi Dewi, "The Effectiveness of Problem Based Learning Model in Improving Students' Higher Order Thinking Skills," *JPI (Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia)* 12, no. 4 (2023): 627-635.

the present study's evidence that the SFE model effectively stimulates higher-order evaluative thinking within the context of Akidah Akhlak learning.<sup>22</sup>

Akidah Akhlak learning emphasizes students' ability to evaluate and apply moral values in real-life contexts rather than merely mastering concepts, making achievement at the C5 cognitive level essential.<sup>23</sup> The significant improvement in evaluative learning outcomes observed in this study indicates that the SFE model effectively supports this objective by engaging students in activities that require judging moral behaviors, considering consequences, and assessing actions based on Islamic values.<sup>24</sup> Through peer-facilitated discussions of contextual cases such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility, students are encouraged to critically compare arguments and justify moral decisions. This evaluative engagement enables learners to internalize akhlāq values more deeply, suggesting that the SFE model contributes not only to higher academic outcomes but also to the development of moral competencies central to Akidah Akhlak education.<sup>25</sup>

Several factors contributed to the effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model in this study, including a supportive classroom environment, the use of contextual moral cases, and students' active roles as peer facilitators.<sup>26</sup> During the learning process, students were encouraged to present their analyses and respond to peer feedback through questions and clarifications, fostering critical and reflective thinking.<sup>27</sup> This interactive learning pattern aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive growth.<sup>28</sup> By engaging with real-life Akidah Akhlak issues rather than abstract concepts, students were able to evaluate moral situations more meaningfully, supporting the development of evaluative competencies at the C5 cognitive level.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ira Suryani, "Professional Competence Of Akidah Akhlak Teachers In Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Medan Model" 5, no. 3 (2022): 1328-41.

<sup>23</sup> Silviana Nur Faizah et al., "The Effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining Learning Model Assisted by Ular Tangga Panah Media on Akidah Akhlak" 9, no. September (2024): 256-271.

<sup>24</sup> Rendi and Nurlaili, "Internalization of Islamic Values in Education with Strategic and Applicative Studies at MA Al-Quraniyah Manna," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 3 (2025): 327-346.

<sup>25</sup> Marwan Marwan et al., "The Role of Character Education in Building Ethics and Morality among Students in the Digital Age," *International Journal of Educational Research Excellence (IJERE)* 4, no. 1 (2025): 33-39.

<sup>26</sup> Linda Linda et al., "Analysis HOTS Problem Solving: Student Learning Outcomes from Student Facilitator and Explaining and Geogebra-Assisted Discovery Learning Models," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 1 (2024): 208-219.

<sup>27</sup> Xiaomeng Zeng and Latha Ravindran, "Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Peer Feedback to Develop Students' Critical Thinking: A Systematic Review from 2010 to 2023," *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 55, no. June 2024 (2025): 101691.

<sup>28</sup> Zhengqi Zhang, "Collaborative Learning in Social Constructivism: Promoting English Learning in a Secondary Classroom in China," *Journal of Education and Educational Research* 3, no. 3 (2023): 1-5.

<sup>29</sup> Hong Li, "Impact of Collaborative Learning on Student Engagement in College English Programs: Mediating Effect of Peer Support and Moderating Role of Group Size," *Frontiers in Psychology* 16, no. April (2025): 1-11.

The novelty of this study lies in its explicit focus on strengthening C5 evaluative cognitive skills within Akidah Akhlak instruction through the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model. While previous studies have generally examined the effectiveness of SFE in improving learning outcomes or lower-to-middle cognitive skills, empirical evidence targeting evaluative abilities in religious education remains limited. This study contributes new insights by demonstrating that the SFE model significantly enhances students' capacity to evaluate moral issues and make reasoned decisions grounded in Islamic values. By positioning students as both facilitators and evaluators, the SFE model promotes active reasoning, argument evaluation, and reflective judgment, which are essential components of higher-order thinking. These findings offer a novel empirical basis for developing instructional approaches that integrate moral education with the systematic development of evaluative cognitive skills.

## E. Conclusion

This quasi-experimental study demonstrates that the implementation of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model significantly enhances students' evaluative learning outcomes at the C5 cognitive level in *Akidah Akhlak* learning , yielding higher achievements in the experimental class compared to the control class. This finding confirms the effectiveness of SFE in promoting Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) through peer explaining and argumentation activities, which theoretically strengthens the understanding that peer interaction plays a significant role in triggering metacognition and moral judgment. The scientific contribution (novelty) of this study lies in its empirical demonstration that SFE is specifically effective in the evaluative C5 domain within religious education, an area rarely explored previously. In terms of practical implications, the SFE model offers an innovative solution to address the limitations of the dominant lecture-based methods , providing a HOTS-based approach, and serving as a reference for educators to optimize students' moral and evaluative competencies.

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