

The Effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining Learning Model in Improving Students' Learning Engagement in Islamic Religious Education

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KEYWORDS

Student Facilitator and Explaining; Learning Activeness; Islamic Religious Education; Systematic Literature Review

ABSTRACT

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process is often dominated by conventional teacher-centered methods, resulting in low student engagement and activeness in the classroom. To address this problem, an innovative learning model is needed that shifts the focus of learning to the students (student-centered), one of which is the Student Facilitator and Explainer (SFAE) model. This study aims to analyze and identify the effectiveness of implementing the SFAE learning model in increasing student learning activeness, specifically in Islamic Religious Education. This study used the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) method following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The data collection process was carried out by screening and analyzing relevant scientific articles from the Google Scholar database between 2020 to 2025 that examined the implementation of the SFAE model in Islamic Religious Education learning clusters such as Fiqh, Akidah Akhlak, and Al-Qur'an Hadith. The identification stage yielded 50 articles, which were subsequently screened using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. As a result, 15 eligible articles were included in the final analysis. The findings from the literature review indicate that the SFAE model has been significantly effective in boosting student learning activeness in the classroom. The transformation of students' roles into facilitators who re-explain material to their peers encourages dynamic, communicative, and collaborative learning interactions. Students have been shown to be more confident in discussions, asking questions, responding to stimuli, and presenting their thoughts. Furthermore, this increased activeness is directly proportional to strengthened motivation, self-confidence, and critical thinking skills, and has a positive impact on achieving optimal cognitive learning outcomes. Therefore, the SFAE learning model is a highly valid and effective innovative strategy for transforming Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning environments to be more interactive, participatory, and student-centered.

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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) constitutes a fundamental component of the educational system, serving not only to develop students' religious knowledge but also to foster their moral character, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility. Through IRE, learners are expected to acquire a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings and internalize

religious values that can guide their behavior in everyday life. Consequently, the objectives of IRE extend beyond the acquisition of cognitive competencies to encompass the development of affective and behavioral dimensions that contribute to the formation of well-rounded individuals. To achieve these objectives, the learning process should be designed to encourage meaningful learning experiences and actively engage students in constructing knowledge and understanding religious concepts. Nevertheless, the implementation of IRE in many educational settings continues to encounter significant challenges, particularly concerning students' learning activeness. Classroom instruction frequently remains dominated by teacher-centered approaches in which teachers function as the primary source of information while students assume passive roles as recipients of knowledge. Such learning conditions often restrict students' opportunities to participate in discussions, express opinions, ask questions, and engage actively in learning activities, thereby limiting the effectiveness of instruction and the achievement of learning outcomes (Arrobi, 2023; Muhail, 2020).

Student learning activeness is widely recognized as a critical indicator of educational success because it reflects learners' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement throughout the learning process. Active participation enables students to become more involved in constructing knowledge, solving problems, and interacting with their peers and teachers. Research has consistently demonstrated that active learners tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation, stronger conceptual understanding, better critical thinking skills, and improved academic performance compared to passive learners. Within the context of Islamic Religious Education, learning activeness is particularly important because students are expected not only to understand religious principles theoretically but also to apply these principles in their daily lives. Therefore, there is a growing need for innovative instructional models capable of creating dynamic, interactive, and collaborative learning environments that facilitate meaningful student engagement and enhance the quality of educational outcomes (Riadi, F. S., Yahya, R. N., 2022; Rizal, 2022).

One instructional approach that has gained considerable attention in recent years is the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFAE) learning model. This model adopts a student-centered orientation by providing learners with opportunities to act as facilitators who explain learning materials to their peers. Through this process, students are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, strengthen communication skills, participate actively in discussions, and build confidence in expressing their ideas and perspectives. The SFAE model is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which posits that knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction, collaboration, and meaningful learning experiences. By shifting the focus of learning from teachers to students, SFAE promotes greater learner autonomy and participation, thereby creating a more engaging and collaborative classroom environment that supports meaningful knowledge construction (Afandi, 2024). A growing body of empirical research has highlighted the effectiveness of the SFAE model in improving various educational outcomes. (Arrobi, 2023) reported that the implementation of an online SFAE model significantly enhanced students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education by increasing classroom interaction, communication, and participation. Similarly, (Faizah, 2024).

Found that integrating SFAE with the Ular Tangga Panah instructional media effectively improved students' achievement in Aqidah Akhlak subjects while simultaneously increasing their motivation and engagement during classroom activities. Likewise, (Yuspita, L., Robiansyah, F., & Darmawan, 2023) demonstrated that the application of SFAE in elementary-level Islamic Religious Education successfully enhanced both students' academic performance and classroom participation. Collectively, these findings suggest that the SFAE model possesses substantial potential to promote active learning and improve the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education instruction. Beyond its influence on academic achievement, previous studies have also emphasized the contribution of SFAE to the development of affective and

twenty-first-century competencies. (Kesumawati, 2025) revealed that the implementation of SFAE increased students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education by encouraging active participation in discussions, presentations, and collaborative learning activities. Furthermore, (Rizal, 2022) argued that the model contributes significantly to character development by fostering responsibility, self-confidence, cooperation, and mutual respect among students. In addition, (Riadi, F. S., Yahya, R. N., 2022) demonstrated that students who participated in SFAE-based learning exhibited stronger critical thinking abilities than those who experienced conventional instructional methods. These findings indicate that the benefits of the SFAE model extend beyond cognitive achievement and encompass important affective and social dimensions of learning. Despite the increasing number of studies supporting the effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining model, the existing evidence remains fragmented across different educational levels, subject areas, and research contexts. Most previous investigations have concentrated on specific aspects such as learning outcomes, motivation, learning interest, or critical thinking skills, often examining these variables independently. Limited attention has been devoted to systematically synthesizing empirical findings related specifically to the effectiveness of SFAE in enhancing students' learning activeness within the context of Islamic Religious Education. This limitation reveals a significant research gap that necessitates a more comprehensive and systematic examination of existing studies to generate a broader understanding of the model's effectiveness. In response to this gap, the present study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, analyze, and synthesize research findings published between 2020 and 2025 concerning the implementation of the Student Facilitator and Explaining model in Islamic Religious Education, including Fiqh, Aqidah Akhlak, and Al-Qur'an Hadith subjects. By systematically reviewing and integrating recent empirical evidence, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of SFAE in promoting students' learning activeness. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on synthesizing contemporary evidence related to the application of SFAE within Islamic Religious Education, thereby offering a more holistic perspective on how the model contributes to the development of active, interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning environments. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the advancement of innovative instructional strategies and serve as a valuable reference for educators, researchers, and policymakers seeking to enhance the quality of Islamic Religious Education.

Although an increasing number of empirical studies have reported the positive impact of the *Student Facilitator and Explaining* (SFAE) learning model, the available evidence remains fragmented across different educational levels, subject areas, and research contexts. Most previous studies have employed experimental or quasi-experimental designs to examine the effects of SFAE on specific learning outcomes, such as academic achievement, learning motivation, learning interest, critical thinking skills, or classroom participation. While these studies consistently demonstrate the effectiveness of the SFAE model, their findings remain context-specific and do not provide a comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness in promoting students' learning activeness within Islamic Religious Education.

Furthermore, based on a review of studies published between 2020 and 2025, no Systematic Literature Review (SLR) has specifically synthesized empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFAE) model in enhancing students' learning activeness in Islamic Religious Education. Existing review studies generally discuss active learning approaches in broader educational contexts or examine multiple instructional models without focusing specifically on the implementation of SFAE in Islamic Religious Education subjects, including Fiqh, Aqidah Akhlak, and Al-Qur'an Hadith. This limitation indicates an important research gap that requires a systematic synthesis of empirical findings to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the consistency and effectiveness of SFAE across various Islamic Religious Education learning contexts.

To address this gap, the present study employs a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025 concerning the implementation of the *Student Facilitator and Explaining* model in Islamic Religious Education. The novelty of this study lies in its exclusive focus on systematically synthesizing recent empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of SFAE in enhancing students' learning activeness across various Islamic Religious Education subjects. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of evidence-based instructional practices and serve as a valuable reference for educators, researchers, and policymakers in developing more interactive, collaborative, and student-centered Islamic Religious Education learning environments.

Method

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach aimed at identifying, reviewing, evaluating, and synthesizing prior research regarding the effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFAE/SFE) learning model systematically and based on scientific evidence. The implementation of this method adopts the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol to ensure that the literature review process is conducted in a structured, transparent manner with high academic accountability. The secondary data collection process was carried out through a comprehensive search across credible academic databases, including Google Scholar, Crossref, Semantic Scholar, ERIC, and Garuda. The search strategy applied specific keyword combinations connected with Boolean operators, such as "*Student Facilitator and Explaining*" OR "*SFE*" OR "*SFAE*", which were further combined with "*Hasil Belajar PAI*" (PAI Learning Outcomes), "*Keaktifan Belajar*" (Learning Engagement), "*Motivasi Belajar*" (Learning Motivation), as well as subject-specific domains such as "*Fikih*", "*Akidah Akhlak*", and "*Al-Qur'an Hadits*". The publication timeline for the selected articles was strictly limited to the period from 2020 to 2025 to ensure that the extracted data represents the most recent dynamics and advancements in educational research.

The eligibility of the analyzed documents was determined based on strict compliance with predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria required the articles to be empirical research reports published in indexed scientific journals discussing the implementation of the SFE or SFAE model, in both face-to-face and online learning settings, while reporting outcomes related to students' cognitive and non-cognitive variables. Conversely, the exclusion criteria rejected articles in the form of proceedings, conceptual literature reviews lacking field data, duplicate publications, and studies irrelevant to the success parameters of the SFE/SFAE model. Through this eligibility selection, scientific articles met the requirements to be isolated and subjected to in-depth data extraction. The extraction process was conducted by compiling key information into a data matrix table encompassing the authors' identities, publication years, journal names, educational levels, specific subject matters investigated, research designs, sample sizes, data collection instruments, the use of supporting media such as the *ular tangga panah* (arrow snakes and ladders) game, and the primary findings reported. Quality assessment of all articles was performed by evaluating methodological appropriateness, clarity of the intervention or experimental procedures, and the validity of the statistical analyses presented in the original manuscripts. Data synthesis was executed using a qualitative descriptive analysis technique on the gathered secondary data. These scientific findings were compared and grouped thematically to identify patterns, trends, similarities, and differences in research outcomes regarding the effectiveness of the SFE/SFAE model. The analysis focused on the magnitude of the model's impact on cognitive learning outcome indicators, learning engagement, motivation, communication skills, critical thinking, autonomy, and student character reinforcement.

Empirical confirmation regarding the secondary literature's data shows that the implementation of SFE/SFAE significantly boosts student engagement and dynamic peer

interactions (Afandi, 2024; Sholeh, M., & Khumairotuzzaro'ah, 2023; Subagyo, S., & Arsana, 2021). Furthermore, its positive impact on student learning outcomes and academic achievement has been widely validated across various educational levels (Aminda, 2024; Arrobi, 2023; Firdianti, 2025; Muhail, 2020; Yuspita, L., Robiansyah, F., & Darmawan, 2023). Beyond cognitive aspects, the model has proven effective in fostering student learning motivation and interest (Kesumawati, 2025; Prasetyo, A., Wijayanti, D., & Suryani, 2025; Suleman, M. A., Hasanuddin, H., & Rahman, 2024) improving critical thinking skills (Riadi et al., 2022), and strengthening students' internal character values (Rizal, 2022). The pedagogical quality is further enhanced when the model is integrated with interactive learning media such as games (Faizah, 2024).

The entirety of these synthesized results, which highlight a substantial average increase in student activities and learning outcomes across the reviewed literature, was then comprehensively interpreted to formulate theoretical and practical conclusions regarding the role of the SFE/SFAE model as an innovative, student-centered learning strategy.

Result

1. Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

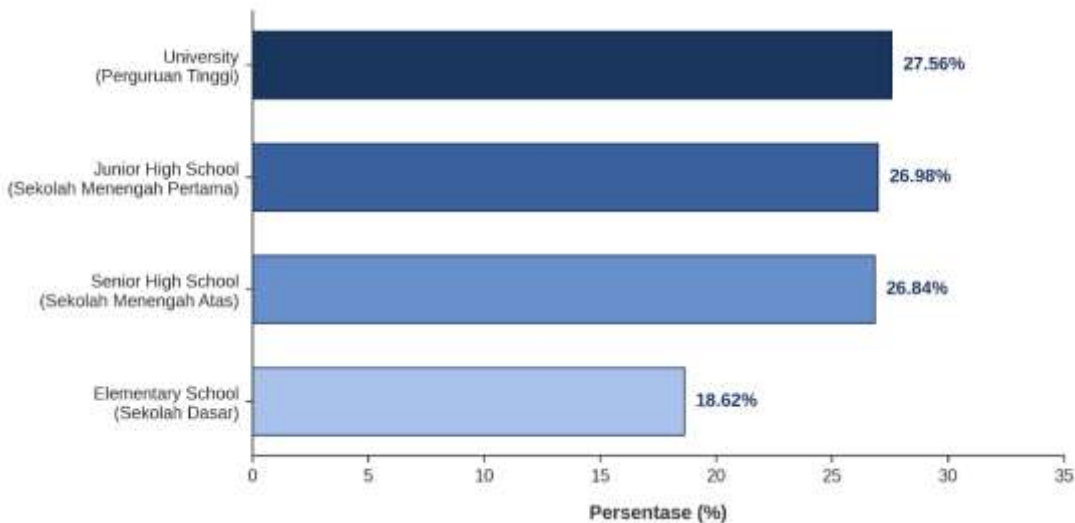
Prior to evaluating the effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) learning model, a descriptive analysis of participants' demographic characteristics was conducted to ensure the representativeness of the sample. Respondents were classified according to educational background and gender. The demographic distribution is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

Education Level	Men	Women	Total Participants	Percentage (%)
Elementary School	145	111	256	18.62
Junior High School	170	201	371	26.98
Senior High School	155	214	369	26.84
University	180	199	379	27.56
Total	650	725	1,375	100.00

The findings indicate that the study involved a total of 1,375 participants, comprising 650 males (47.27%) and 725 females (52.73%). Female respondents slightly outnumbered male respondents across the sample population. In terms of educational attainment, the largest proportion of participants originated from the university level (27.56%), followed by junior high school (26.98%) and senior high school (26.84%). The relatively balanced distribution across educational categories suggests that the sample adequately represents diverse educational backgrounds. Such heterogeneity is important because differences in prior knowledge, learning experiences, and cognitive readiness may influence students' engagement and adaptation to innovative instructional approaches such as the SFE model.

Figure 1. Distribution of Participants by Educational Level



2. Effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) Learning Model

The effectiveness of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) learning model was evaluated through three primary indicators: student learning activity, cognitive learning outcomes, and comparative post-test performance against other cooperative learning approaches. Findings synthesized from previous empirical studies demonstrate a consistent positive impact of SFE on students’ academic achievement and classroom engagement.

Table 2. Effectiveness Indicators of the Student Facilitator and Explaining Model

Indicator	Result (%)	Source
Increase in Learning Activity	35.00	Subagyo & Arsana (2021)
Increase in Cognitive Learning Outcomes	45.00	Subagyo & Arsana (2021)
Post-Test Score (NHT Model)	76.36	Faizah et al. (2024)
Post-Test Score (SFE + Educational Media)	82.47	Faizah et al. (2024)

Figure 2. Comparative Effectiveness of the SFE Learning Model

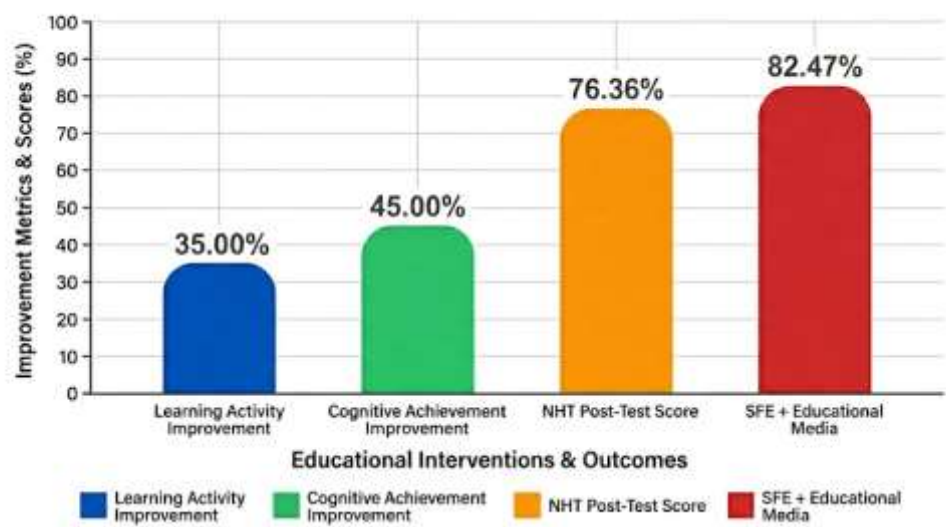


Table 3. Comparative Summary of Reviewed Studies on the *Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) Learning Model*

Study	Educational Level	Research Design	Main Findings	Similarities	Differences / Novelty	Limitations
Subagyo & Arsana (2021)	Vocational High School	Experimental	Learning activity increased by approximately 35%; cognitive learning outcomes improved by 45%	Both studies conclude that the SFE model improves student participation and cognitive learning outcomes	This study synthesizes evidence from multiple educational levels and evaluates both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes rather than a single classroom experiment	Conducted in one school with limited sample size
Faizah et al. (2024)	Elementary School	Quasi-experimental	Mean post-test score using SFE with educational media (82.47) exceeded NHT (76.36); significant difference ($p < 0.05$)	Both studies demonstrate that SFE is more effective than conventional cooperative learning models in improving learning outcomes	This study extends the discussion by comparing findings across several empirical studies and identifying contextual factors affecting SFE implementation	Focused only on short-term cognitive outcomes

This Study	Multiple educational levels	Systematic Literature Review	SFE consistently improves participation, communication, confidence, critical thinking, collaboration, learning autonomy, and learning achievement	Confirms the positive findings reported by previous empirical studies	Provides a comprehensive synthesis across multiple educational levels, identifies similarities, differences, contextual factors, and research limitations, and offers practical recommendations for teachers, curriculum developers, and future empirical research	Limited by the number and methodological diversity of the reviewed studies
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Discussion

The results demonstrate that the implementation of the Student Facilitator and Explaining (SFE) model substantially contributes to the transformation of classroom learning from a teacher-centered paradigm toward a student-centered learning environment. By positioning students as facilitators who organize and explain learning materials to their peers, the model encourages active participation and deeper cognitive engagement.

Evidence from (Subagyo, S., & Arsana, 2021) revealed that student learning activity increased by approximately 35% following the implementation of the SFE model. Students became more actively involved in classroom discussions, questioning activities, collaborative problem-solving, and knowledge-sharing processes. This finding supports constructivist learning theory, which argues that knowledge is more effectively acquired when learners actively construct understanding through social interaction and reflection.

Compared with previous empirical studies, the present study provides broader evidence regarding the effectiveness of the *Student Facilitator and Explaining* (SFE) model by synthesizing findings across multiple educational levels and learning contexts. While Subagyo and Arsana (2021) primarily focused on improvements in learning activity and cognitive achievement, and Faizah et al. (2024) emphasized comparative learning outcomes between the SFE and Numbered Heads Together (NHT) models, the present study integrates evidence from various empirical investigations to identify consistent patterns of effectiveness, contextual influences, methodological differences, and research limitations. In addition to confirming improvements in learning achievement, this study demonstrates that the positive effects of SFE extend beyond cognitive outcomes to include communication skills, self-confidence, critical thinking, collaborative competence, and learning autonomy. By providing a comprehensive synthesis of empirical evidence, this study offers a broader perspective that can support educational practitioners, curriculum developers, and future researchers in understanding the wider pedagogical contribution of the SFE model across diverse educational settings.

Furthermore, the increase in classroom participation was accompanied by a substantial improvement in cognitive achievement. The reviewed studies reported an average increase of approximately 45% in learning outcomes after SFE implementation. This improvement can be attributed to the requirement that students reorganize, interpret, and

communicate information before presenting it to peers. Such activities strengthen conceptual understanding, information retention, and higher-order thinking skills.

The superiority of the SFE model was also demonstrated in experimental studies comparing SFE with other cooperative learning approaches. Faizah et al. (2024) reported that students who learned through the SFE model assisted by *Ular Tangga Panah* educational media achieved a mean post-test score of 82.47, significantly higher than students taught using the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) model, who achieved an average score of 76.36 ($p = 0.021 < 0.05$). These findings indicate that integrating game-based instructional media with SFE can enhance students' motivation and reduce instructional boredom while maintaining academic rigor. The findings of this review are consistent with those reported in previous studies on student-centered learning in Islamic Religious Education. Subagyo and Arsana (2021) found that the Student Facilitator and Explaining model significantly increased students' classroom participation by encouraging them to explain concepts, ask questions, and engage in collaborative discussions. Similarly, Faizah et al. (2024) demonstrated that the integration of SFAE with educational media resulted in higher post-test scores and greater learning motivation than conventional cooperative learning models. In addition, Riadi and Yahya (2022) reported that SFAE effectively developed students' critical thinking skills through active interaction and peer explanation, while Rizal (2022) emphasized its contribution to fostering students' responsibility, self-confidence, and collaborative attitudes. The consistency of these findings across different educational settings suggests that SFAE is not only effective in improving cognitive achievement but also supports the development of essential twenty-first-century competencies in Islamic Religious Education. Beyond cognitive achievement, the implementation of SFE contributes significantly to students' psychosocial development. The repeated experience of presenting ideas, facilitating peer discussions, and explaining concepts promotes communication skills, self-confidence, learning autonomy, and collaborative competence. These outcomes align with the competencies required in twenty-first-century education, particularly critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and self-directed learning.

Overall, the findings confirm that the Student Facilitator and Explaining model is not merely effective in improving academic performance but also serves as a comprehensive pedagogical strategy for fostering active learning, social interaction, and higher-order thinking skills. Consequently, SFE can be recommended as an innovative instructional model capable of enhancing both cognitive and affective dimensions of student learning.

Conclusion

This *Systematic Literature Review* examined the effectiveness of the *Student Facilitator and Explaining* (SFE/SFAE) learning model in enhancing students' learning activeness within the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Based on the synthesis of fourteen empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025, the findings consistently demonstrate that the SFE/SFAE model is an effective student-centered instructional approach that promotes active participation, collaborative learning, meaningful classroom interaction, and knowledge construction. The reviewed evidence further confirms that the model contributes not only to improved cognitive achievement but also to the development of communication skills, critical thinking, self-confidence, learning autonomy, and collaborative competence, which are essential competencies for twenty-first-century education.

The synthesis also indicates that the effectiveness of SFE/SFAE is consistently observed across different educational levels and learning contexts, although variations in instructional media, classroom characteristics, and research designs may influence the magnitude of learning outcomes. The integration of interactive learning media appears to further enhance the effectiveness of the model by increasing students' motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. These findings reinforce the role of SFE/SFAE as a comprehensive pedagogical

strategy capable of transforming Islamic Religious Education from a teacher-centered approach into a more active, interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning process.

From a practical perspective, teachers are encouraged to implement and adapt the SFE/SFAE model by integrating collaborative learning activities, peer explanation, and innovative instructional media that accommodate students' learning characteristics and classroom conditions. Curriculum developers and educational policymakers are also recommended to incorporate student-centered pedagogical approaches such as SFE/SFAE into curriculum planning, teacher professional development programs, and instructional guidelines to strengthen the quality of learning implementation, particularly in Islamic Religious Education.

Although the reviewed studies consistently reported positive findings, most were conducted using quasi-experimental or classroom-based designs with relatively limited samples and short intervention periods. Therefore, future empirical research should involve larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal research designs, standardized assessment instruments, and various educational settings to examine the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the SFE/SFAE model. Further studies are also encouraged to investigate its implementation in digital and blended learning environments, as well as its impact on higher-order thinking skills, character development, and other affective learning outcomes. Such investigations will provide stronger empirical evidence and broader practical implications for the continuous development of student-centered learning in Islamic Religious Education.

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