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Students' Learning Motivation: An Experimental Study of the 7E Learning Cycle Instructional Model

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A B S T R A C T

This study examines the effectiveness of the *Learning Cycle 7E* instructional model in enhancing learners' motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), specifically on the topic "Emulating the Role of Ulama in Spreading Islamic Teachings in Indonesia" at SMK Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung. The research was conducted in response to the low internal drive of learners, which was associated with lecture-dominated instruction and limited interactive learning media. A quasi-experimental posttest-only control group design was employed, involving two randomly selected classes: one experimental group taught using the *Learning Cycle 7E* model and one control group taught through conventional methods. The instrument utilized was a validated and reliable motivation questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.876$). Although Hamzah B. Uno identifies six dimensions of learning motivation, this study focused exclusively on the dimension of learning drive and needs, as it corresponds directly with the objective of analyzing students' internal impulses and perceived necessity to learn during the application of the 7E model. Restricting the measurement to this single dimension enabled a more precise and in-depth examination of internal motivation. The t-test results revealed a significant difference between the two groups ($p < 0.05$), demonstrating that the *Learning Cycle 7E* model effectively increased learners' motivation, particularly in internal drive and learning needs. The study contributes novelty by implementing the 7E model within vocational-level religious education, offering an innovative and interactive approach to support meaningful and sustainable learning.

Keywords
Learning Cycle 7E, Learning motivation, Islamic religious education, Vocational education

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning motivation is an internal drive that encourages learners to engage in the learning process in order to achieve optimal academic performance (Manik et al., 2024; Sitorus et al., 2025; Yeni et al., 2022). This motivation can be intrinsic, such as the desire to achieve success, the drive to learn, and future aspirations, or extrinsic, such as rewards, interests arising from external stimuli, and a supportive learning environment (Nidawati, 2024; Pernaningtik & Darmawan, 2024; Rahman, 2021). Motivation consists of three main

components, needs, drives, and goals which shape learners' attitudes toward learning. This view is supported by classical theories such as Pintrich's (2003) motivational belief framework and Keller's (1987) ARCS Model, both of which emphasize the importance of learners' internal needs and goal-directed behavior (Oktayani et al., 2025; Supriani et al., 2020; D. Utari & Putra, 2021). The aspects of learning motivation can be observed through learners' interest, enthusiasm in completing assignments, sense of responsibility, responsiveness to teachers, and feelings of enjoyment during the learning process (Ansel & Arafat, 2021; Hernawati et al., 2024; Nidhomuddin & Pradikto, 2025). Thus, learners with high motivation are more likely to achieve better learning outcomes (Asmaliyah et al., 2025; Batubara & Oktavia, 2025; Iyai & Helsa, 2025).

The ideal learning process should be learners-centered, foster creativity, and create a learning atmosphere that is enjoyable, challenging, and meaningful (Halawa et al., 2025; D. Utari & Putra, 2021; Wulandari et al., 2023). Learning should not only be oriented toward final outcomes but also emphasize deep understanding, perseverance, and the application of knowledge in everyday life (Iyai & Helsa, 2025; Pernaningtik & Darmawan, 2024; P. A. Utari & Suriansyah, 2023). Appropriate learning media play a crucial role as a means to deliver material in an engaging way, stimulate motivation, and maintain learners' concentration (Nainggolan et al., 2024; Ningsi et al., 2025; Wahyuningtyas & Sulasmono, 2020). A conducive learning environment, appropriate study time, and active learners' participation in asking and answering questions all contribute to the effectiveness of the learning process (Agustina et al., 2020; Immanuella et al., 2023; Pertiwi et al., 2024). Under such conditions, learners will be more focused, motivated, and able to achieve meaningful learning outcomes (Nasution & Syafriani, 2023; Tabriji, 2025).

Based on a preliminary study conducted at SMK Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung on 22 April 2025**,** through interviews with an Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teacher (Mr. S) and several Grade X learners (MF, BP, and IR), as well as a questionnaire administered on 23 April 2025 during the second semester of the 2025 academic year, a number of issues were identified in IRE learning. The teaching method was still predominantly lecture-based, resulting in low learners' engagement and motivation; the learning media lacked variety and made minimal use of technology; some learners experienced difficulties in memorization and were not accustomed to taking notes; learning sessions scheduled in the afternoon reduced learners' focus; and classroom questioning activities were not optimal, as learners tended to remain passive.

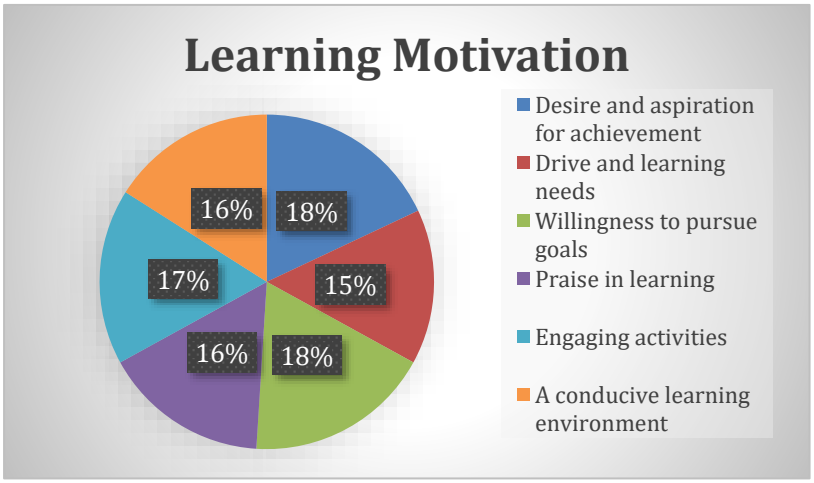

Figure 1. Distribution of learners' learning motivation questionnaire results

Based on the pie chart of learning motivation (Figure 1), the lowest factor was "drive and need in learning," at 15%, while the other factors were relatively balanced in the range of 16–18%. This indicates that although most motivation indicators were relatively good, learners' internal drive remained low. This condition poses a major problem because, without intrinsic motivation, other factors such as the desire for success or external praise tend to be only temporary. Therefore, an approach is needed that can foster learners' internal awareness of the importance of learning, so that their motivation becomes stronger and more sustainable.

To enhance learners' learning motivation in IRE, an instructional model is required that is engaging, enjoyable, and encourages greater learners participation in the learning process (Gea et al., 2024; Holilah et al., 2020; Nurfadhilah et al., 2024). One relevant model is the *Learning Cycle 7E*, which consists of systematic stages, namely *Elicit, Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate*, and *Extend (D. Y. Putri & Ramadhani, 2024; I. C. Putri et al., 2023)*. This model is based on constructivist theory, which emphasizes that learners construct their own knowledge through experience (Sugiarti et al., 2024). Through these stages, learners are encouraged to become more independent, actively collaborate, and engage directly in problem-solving, thereby developing logical thinking skills, higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), and the ability to identify key concepts from the material (Saputri & Rofiki, 2024; Sari & Wahyuni, 2022). Thus, this model can replace conventional methods that tend to be passive with a more interactive and comprehensive approach (Andriana et al., 2021).

The *Learning Cycle 7E* instructional model has been proven to improve and enhance learners' learning motivation by actively engaging them in every stage of the learning process (Aprianingsih et al., 2020; Winda et al., 2023). This engagement not only enhances learners' interest but also fosters the development of scientific attitudes, critical thinking skills, communication, and learning independence (Anisah et al., 2020). In addition, constructivism-based, learners-centered learning strategies make the learning process more meaningful, as learners do not merely receive material passively but instead experience and comprehend it directly (Sa'diyah et al., 2024). This is in line with the view that motivation is an internal drive to achieve goals, and through the *Learning Cycle 7E* model, learners can become more motivated to engage in the learning process comprehensively (Sa'diyah et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that the *Learning Cycle 7E* instructional model has a positive effect on civic education learning outcomes and higher-order thinking skills (Yennita, 2023), scientific literacy (Adi, 2024), as well as learners' mathematical reasoning. However, the study by Aprianingsih et al., (2020) found that this model did not have a significant effect on motivation and learning outcomes in chemistry. Furthermore, most studies have remained limited to science subjects at the senior high school or higher education level, rather than IRE at vocational high schools. Therefore, there is a research gap to be addressed, namely examining the effectiveness of the *Learning Cycle 7E* in enhancing motivation to learn IRE at the vocational level. The novelty of this study lies in its application to a religious subject that has different characteristics from the sciences, while simultaneously focusing on the learning motivation of vocational learners, which has not been widely explored.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to improve IRE learning strategies, which have so far been dominated by lecture methods and have made limited use of interactive

media, resulting in low learners' participation and learning effectiveness. The implication of this study is the identification of an alternative instructional approach that is more aligned with the characteristics and needs of learners, which not only helps enhance their activeness and retention but also provides a tangible contribution for teachers in designing innovative learning. Moreover, the findings of this research could serve as a foundation for schools in implementing comprehensive improvements to the learning system, thereby creating an IRE learning environment that is more engaging, enjoyable, and meaningful.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted at SMK Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year using a *quasi-experimental* design with a posttest-only control group. The researcher randomly selected two classes through simple random sampling. One class was assigned as the experimental group, receiving instruction through the *Learning Cycle 7E* model, and the other served as the control group, receiving conventional instruction. The learning material used for both groups was Chapter 6: The History and Contributions of Islamic Scholars in Spreading Islam in Indonesia**,** with identical content scope, competencies, and learning objectives. The only difference between the two groups was the instructional model used, ensuring that any differences in learning outcomes were attributed to the treatment rather than variations in the material. The learning process in the experimental group was carried out step by step through *Cycle 7E* model (elicit, engage, explore, explain, elaborate, evaluate, and extend) while the control group received lessons in the usual manner from the teacher.

The primary research instrument was an IRE learning motivation questionnaire focusing on the indicator of 'drive and need in learning', adapted from Hamzah B. Uno's motivational theory. A total of 15 items were initially developed for this single indicator. Based on product–moment correlation analysis, 13 items were confirmed valid and suitable for use in the main study. It is important to note that the percentage data reported in the preliminary study (showing other motivation factors ranging from 16% to 18%) were obtained using a different preliminary questionnaire, which included all motivation indicators proposed by Hamzah B. Uno. Meanwhile, the instrument used in the experimental phase was intentionally narrowed to focus solely on the 'drive and need' dimension to align with the specific objectives of the research. These items were then tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.876. This value falls within the category of very high reliability, indicating that the instrument can be trusted to consistently measure learners' level of learning motivation.

Data collection was carried out by administering a learning motivation questionnaire after the instructional treatment was completed. Learners in the experimental class first participated in lessons using the *Learning Cycle 7E* model, beginning with eliciting prior knowledge through contextual questions *(elicit*), followed by discussions to spark interest *(engage*), concept exploration *(explore*), explanation of findings (*explain*), application of new concepts (*elaborate*), assessment of understanding (*evaluate*), and extension of knowledge to other contexts (*extend*). After completing all these steps, learners were asked to complete the motivation questionnaire, and the results were then compared with those of the control class. The collected data were analyzed using a pooled-variance t-test because both groups demonstrated homogeneous variance, as confirmed by the homogeneity test results. Furthermore, this study employed a posttest-only control group design. This design

was chosen based on the assumption that the initial motivation levels of both groups were equivalent**,** as the classes were randomly assigned, giving each class an equal probability of becoming either the experimental or the control group. Therefore, any differences observed in the posttest motivation scores can be attributed to the treatment namely, the implementation of the Learning Cycle 7E model rather than to pre-existing differences between the groups.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results of the normality test

Based on the results of the normality test using the Shapiro–Wilk method, as presented in the Table 1, the significance (Sig.) values for the Learning Motivation variable were 0.105 in the experimental group and 0.200 in the control group. Since both significance values are greater than 0.05, it indicates that the data are normally distributed. Thus, it can be concluded that the Learning Motivation data from both groups meet the normality assumption. This fulfillment is important because normal distribution is one of the prerequisites for conducting the independent samples t-test used in this study.

Table 1. Results of the normality test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Experiment	Control
N		38	38
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	28.8158	27.7368
	Std. Deviation	2.62890	2.48981
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.130	.095
	Positive	.130	.089
	Negative	-.124	-.095
Test Statistic		.130	.095
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.105[c]	.200[c,d]

3.2. Results of the homogeneity test

Table 2. Results of Levene's test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Data	Based on Mean	.106	1	74	.746
	Based on Median	.135	1	74	.715
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.135	1	73.946	.715
	Based on trimmed mean	.092	1	74	.763

The homogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the variances of the two data groups were equal (homogeneity). Based on the results of Levene's test presented in the Table 2, the significance values from various approaches to testing homogeneity were as follows: Based on Mean = 0.746, Based on Median = 0.715, Based on Median and with adjusted df = 0.715, and Based on Trimmed Mean = 0.763. All significance values across

these four approaches were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant differences in variance between the data groups. Thus, it can be concluded that the research data are homogeneous. The homogeneity of variance is one of the key assumptions in conducting an independent samples t-test, ensuring that both groups have equal variances. Since the results confirmed that the data meet the assumption of homogeneity, they are appropriate for further t-test analysis.

3.3. Results of the t-test

The independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in learning motivation between the experimental group taught using the *Learning Cycle 7E* model and the control group taught using conventional methods. Based on the results of the t-test presented in the Table 3, the significance (Sig. 2-tailed) value obtained was 0.020, which is less than 0.05. This indicates a significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the *Learning Cycle 7E* model has a significant effect on increasing learners' learning motivation in IRE.

Table 3. Results of the independent samples t-test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		**t-test for Equality of Means**						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	**Sig.**	**t**	**Df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**	**Lower**	**Upper**
Data	Equal variances assumed	.106	.746	1.837	74	.020	1.07895	.58737	-.09142	2.24931
	Equal variances not assumed			1.837	73.782	.020	1.07895	.58737	-.09148	2.24937

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the 7E Learning Cycle model has a significant effect on learners' motivation to learn IRE at SMK Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung. This effect becomes clearer when the stages of the 7E model are linked to the increased motivation indicator, namely drive and need in learning. For instance, the Elicit stage encourages learners to activate prior knowledge, generating an initial internal urge (drive) to engage with the lesson. The Explore stage requires learners to independently investigate learning materials, which strengthens their learning needs through self-directed activity. The Explain and Elaborate stages further reinforce learners' desire to understand the content more deeply, thereby intensifying both the drive and the perceived need to master the material. Finally, the Evaluate and Extend stages provide opportunities for reflection and application, helping maintain learners sustained internal motivation. These connections show that the structure of the 7E Learning Cycle directly supports the enhancement of the drive and need dimension of learning motivation. This condition aligns with constructivist theory, which underscores the importance of direct experience in knowledge construction, whereby learners are not merely passive recipients of information but active agents in the learning process (Dewi & Arifin, 2023; Hairini et al., 2024; Imami et al., 2025; Rohmah & Hermawan, 2025)

Active learners' engagement from the elicit to the extend stages within the *7e Learning Cycle* model has been shown to encourage greater focus and motivation in

participating in learning activities. This contrasts with the lecture method, which remains dominant in IRE classes and often leads to learners' boredom. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Annurul & Yerizon (2025), Hidayati et al., (2023), Musfiroh et al., (2024), Rizkia et al., (2025), and Safitri & Fathurohman (2024) which state that the *7e Learning Cycle* model is capable of enhancing learners' learning interest, while simultaneously reinforcing the findings of Aprianingsih et al that learning motivation increases when learners are directly engaged in the process of knowledge exploration.

Compared to previous studies, which were predominantly conducted in exact science subjects such as Science, Mathematics, or Chemistry (Labib & Syafe, 2024; Puspita & Fardillah, 2021; Sitanggang & Sudrajat, 2024), This study offers a novel perspective by examining the effectiveness of the *7e Learning Cycle* model in IRE at the vocational high school level. This novelty is significant, as the characteristics of religious education emphasize the understanding of values, reflection, and attitudes, rather than solely cognitive skills. Therefore, the success of this model in enhancing learners' motivation to learn IRE demonstrates its flexibility and relevance within the non-exact sciences domain.

Interestingly, the results of this study differ from the findings of Aprianingsih et al.,, who reported that the *7e Learning Cycle* model did not have a significant effect on learners' motivation to learn Chemistry. This discrepancy can be explained by the subject context and the teacher's approach in managing the *7e Learning Cycle* stages. In IRE instruction, the integration of religious values, discussion, and reflection fosters the development of learners' intrinsic motivation, making the model more effective. Thus, the effectiveness of the *7e Learning Cycle* model is determined not only by its stages but also by the alignment of the learning context.

The increase in learners' motivation to learn IRE through the *7e Learning Cycle* model is also associated with the optimization of motivational indicators, particularly in the aspects of drive and learning needs, which were previously low according to the pre-study. Through the exploration and elaboration stages, learners are trained to identify the relevance of the material to their daily lives, thereby fostering self-driven learning awareness. These findings are consistent with Handayani & Waluya, (2024), Maharani et al., (2024), Rohim & Wardhani (2024), and Yulianti et al., (2024) which emphasize that intrinsic motivation serves as a key determinant for the continuity of the learning process.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that the success of learning is not solely the result of the teacher's strategic interventions but also stems from a combination of learners' internal and external factors. Interactive learning media, a positive classroom atmosphere, and the teacher's role as a facilitator all contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the *7e Learning Cycle* model (Ali et al., 2025; Berutu et al., 2024; Muhammad Imam Syafi'i, Ramdanil Mubarok, 2024; Panjaitan & Hafizzah, 2025). In other words, the effectiveness of this model can be optimized when teachers not only implement the *7e Learning Cycle* model steps procedurally but also integrate creative and contextual approaches.

Theoretically, this study broadens the scope of literature on the effectiveness of the *7e Learning Cycle* model, which has previously focused more on enhancing cognitive learning outcomes. Practically, it provides tangible contributions for IRE teachers in vocational high schools to adopt the *7e Learning Cycle* model as an alternative instructional approach capable of increasing learners' motivation. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in its application within the domain of IRE in vocational schools, as well as its focus on learning motivation—a dimension that has hitherto been underexplored.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the *7E Learning Cycle* model is effective in enhancing learners' motivation to learn IRE at SMK Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung. The statistical analysis demonstrates a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, as indicated by the t-test results ($p < 0.05$). This finding is further supported by the strong reliability of the motivation questionnaire used in the study ($\alpha = 0.876$). Together, these results confirm that the implementation of the 7E Learning Cycle model contributes meaningfully to increasing learners' drive and need in learning. Active learners' engagement at each stage of the *7e Learning Cycle* model has been shown to foster internal drive, interest, and learning awareness that were previously low, thereby making the learning process more meaningful. These findings indicate that the implementation of the *7e Learning Cycle* is not only relevant to exact science subjects, as suggested by previous studies, but also presents a novel application within the context of IRE in vocational schools. Consequently, it can serve as an innovative instructional strategy for teachers to improve both learners' motivation and the quality of IRE learning.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that future researchers further explore the effectiveness of the *7e Learning Cycle* model in broader contexts, including other IRE subjects or different educational levels, to strengthen the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, subsequent studies could integrate other variables, such as cognitive learning outcomes, critical thinking skills, or learners' affective aspects, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the model's impact. In this way, future research is expected to contribute novel insights toward the development of more innovative and contextually relevant instructional strategies in today's educational landscape.

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