

Islamic Religious Education and Socio-Emotional Competency Development: A Case Study in an Elementary School

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INFO ARTIKEL

Received: July 11, 2024

Revised: August 20 21, 2024

Accepted: September 25, 2024

Published: October 29, 2024

Keywords:

Islamic Religious Education;
Social-Emotional Competence;
Elementary School



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ABSTRAK

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays an important role in character building and the development of students' social-emotional competence in elementary schools. This study aims to explore the contribution of PAI in shaping students' social-emotional competence through the integration of religious values, such as empathy, compassion, and tolerance. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study involved 10 students, 5 PAI teachers, and 5 parents in an urban Islamic-based elementary school. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, and then analyzed using thematic methods. The results showed that PAI teaching plays a significant role in improving students' social skills, such as the ability to cooperate, manage emotions, and resolve conflicts. PAI teachers as role models play an important role in this process, while faith-based extracurricular activities strengthen the application of social values such as discipline and empathy. Nonetheless, challenges in integrating religious values with students' social-emotional competencies include lack of family support, time constraints, and variations in understanding between teachers and students. This study recommends the need for more intensive teacher training as well as collaboration between schools, families, and communities to improve the effectiveness of PAI learning in developing students' social-emotional competencies.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education has an important role in shaping student character from an early age. As an integral part of the national education system, Islamic Religious Education not only aims to teach religious knowledge, but also instill moral values that are relevant to everyday life (Rasyidi, 2024). In the context of basic education, religious teaching becomes one of the effective media to shape students' social-emotional competencies. These competencies include the ability to manage emotions, establish positive relationships and make responsible decisions. However, the challenge of integrating religious values with the development of social-emotional competencies is often an issue that requires in-depth study. Therefore, this study aims to understand how

Islamic Religious Education can significantly contribute to the development of students' social-emotional aspects in primary schools. The focus is on how Islamic values, such as empathy, compassion and tolerance, can be applied in learning to create a harmonious and inclusive learning environment.

The integration of religious values in teaching not only enriches learning content, but also shapes students' mindset and behavior. Islamic Religious Education can be a foundation for developing empathy, cooperation skills and mutual respect. These values are important in students' social life, both in the school environment and the wider community. One strategy that can be applied is through religious stories that teach the importance of caring for others (Nawawi, 2023). For example, the story of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which shows the nature of gentleness and compassion can be an inspiration for students in their daily behavior. On the other hand, experiential learning such as group work in religious activities is also effective in improving students' social-emotional skills. However, the success of this integration is highly dependent on the teacher's ability to deliver the material in a relevant and interesting manner.

Islamic Religious Education teachers play a key role in the character building process of students. As authoritative figures, teachers are not only sources of knowledge but also role models in applying religious values in everyday life (Sulaeka & Susanto, 2023). In this context, teachers have the responsibility to direct students to be able to face social-emotional challenges positively. Through appropriate pedagogical approaches, teachers can help students develop social skills, such as the ability to listen, empathize, and resolve conflicts. This can be done through discussions, simulations or educational games relevant to the religious theme. Harmonious teacher-student relationships also contribute to creating a supportive learning atmosphere (Sulthon et.al., 2024). However, the lack of training for teachers in integrating religious and social-emotional education is often an obstacle that needs to be overcome.

One important aspect of Islamic Religious Education is emotional control, which is part of social-emotional competence. Islamic values teach the importance of patience, self-control, and sincerity in dealing with difficult situations (Amelia & Idrayani, 2024). For example, the teaching to restrain anger as taught in the Qur'an and Hadith can help students understand how to manage negative emotions. This emotional control is very important in students' social interactions, both inside and outside the classroom. With this ability, students can avoid unnecessary conflicts and build healthy relationships with their peers. In addition, religious practices such as prayer and meditation can be used as a means to train students' inner calm. However, the main challenge is how to contextually connect these religious teachings with real-life situations faced by students (Mahrus, 2024).

Despite its great potential, the implementation of faith-based social-emotional education is not free from challenges. One of the main obstacles is the lack of clear curriculum guidelines in integrating social-emotional aspects into religious learning (Armini, 2024). Teachers often find it difficult to connect religious values with the context of students' daily lives. In addition, administrative burdens and other academic demands can also reduce teachers' focus on developing social-emotional aspects. Another challenge is the heterogeneity of students in terms of religious understanding and social background, which affects how religious values are accepted and applied (Rosyad et.al., 2020). Therefore, flexible and innovative approaches are needed to overcome these constraints. These approaches include teacher training, curriculum development and the use of creative learning media.

The research also highlights the importance of the school environment in supporting effective implementation of Islamic Religious Education. A conducive school culture, such as regular religious activities and support from all school members, can strengthen the development of students' social-emotional competencies. For example, the practice of congregational prayer or social service activities can be important moments to instill the values of cooperation and solidarity. However, the success of this implementation also relies heavily on support from parents and the surrounding community (Munir & Su'ada, 2024). Collaboration between school, family and community can create a synergistic environment in educating students holistically.

By understanding these phenomena, this research is expected to provide new insights into how Islamic Religious Education can contribute to the development of students' socio-emotional competencies. The case study approach used in this research enables in-depth exploration of the strategies, challenges and successes experienced by elementary schools in integrating religious values into learning. Through the results of this research, practical recommendations are expected to be formulated to improve the effectiveness of teaching Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' character. This research also serves as a foundation for curriculum development that is more integrative and relevant to the needs of students in the modern era.

In conclusion, Islamic Religious Education is not only a means to teach religious knowledge, but also a powerful tool to develop students' social-emotional competencies. With the right approach, religious values can be effectively integrated into learning to help students face social-emotional challenges in daily life. This research offers a holistic and applicable perspective in utilizing Islamic Religious Education as a medium of learning that is not only cognitively oriented, but also affective and social.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' social-emotional competencies in an urban Islamic-based elementary school. The research subjects involved 10 students in grades IV and V, 5 Islamic Religious Education teachers, and 5 parents, who were purposively selected. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations and documentation. The research process began with the preparation stage, followed by data collection through direct observation, interviews, and document analysis such as curriculum and learning records. Data were analyzed thematically using the Miles and Huberman method, including data reduction, presentation, and verification. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of methods and sources, and validation through member checking. The results of this study are expected to provide in-depth insight into the contribution of Islamic Religious Education to students' socio-emotional development and provide recommendations for improving the quality of faith-based education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Integration of Religious Values in the Development of Social-Emotional Competence

The integration of religious values in the development of students' social-emotional competence in elementary schools is done through a systematic and contextual approach. The value of compassion is taught through religious stories such as the story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW who was full of gentleness towards others, which is

conveyed in Islamic Religious Education learning. Teachers also provide direct examples with a friendly and patient attitude in interacting with students, thus creating a conducive learning atmosphere. The observation results show that students are encouraged to imitate the teacher's positive behavior in their social relationships. In addition, teachers praise students' behavior that shows compassion, thus strengthening their motivation to apply the value. One student said that he felt more valued and enjoyed sharing with his friends. This approach is the first step in developing harmonious social relationships in the school environment. The compassion taught not only applies in the classroom but also influences students' attitudes at home, as expressed by their parents.

The value of empathy is developed through practical activities involving group discussions and inspirational stories (Habibah et.al., 2024). In a learning session, students were asked to read a story about someone who needed help and discuss how to help in a similar situation. The teacher also linked this story to Islamic teachings on the importance of helping others in need. Observations showed that students who were previously less caring became more responsive to the needs of their classmates. The school's social service programs, such as visiting orphanages or giving donations to orphans, also strengthened students' understanding of empathy in real life. One student revealed that these activities made him feel more grateful and wanted to continue sharing with others. Teachers also noted an increase in students' initiative in helping friends who are struggling during learning activities. This experience provides a strong foundation for students to develop better social-emotional skills.

Tolerance is taught by encouraging students to accept different opinions and work together with friends who have different backgrounds. Teachers use Qur'anic verses, such as QS. Al-Hujurat:13, to instill the importance of living in harmony and respecting each other. In group discussions, students are encouraged to complete tasks together despite having different views. Observations showed that students became more open to their friends' ideas and were able to resolve minor conflicts through discussion. Interviews with students revealed that they felt more confident in working with friends of different characters. Parents also noted positive changes in their children's attitudes towards their siblings at home. However, teachers face challenges in helping students apply the value of tolerance outside of school, especially due to the influence of diverse social environments (Nurmanita et.al., 2024). To overcome this, teachers try to provide concrete examples of tolerance through real stories and daily experiences.

The results showed that the integration of the values of compassion, empathy, and tolerance significantly supported the development of students' social-emotional competence. Observations show that students who are active in religious value-based learning have a better ability to manage conflict and show a caring attitude towards others. Parents also reported positive changes in their children's attitudes at home, such as being more respectful of family members. However, the study also found challenges in connecting religious values to students' daily lives, especially those influenced by the out-of-school environment. To optimize results, training is needed for teachers to be more creative in conveying religious values in relevant ways. Collaboration between schools, parents and communities is also important to ensure consistent application of these values. With this integrated approach, Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in shaping students who are not only academically intelligent, but also socially and emotionally mature.

2. The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Children's Character

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play an important role in shaping students' social-emotional character through learning approaches that focus on religious values. Teachers use a variety of creative methods to convey religious messages, such as telling stories about Islamic figures who have exemplary characters, including the story of the Prophet Muhammad. This method is designed to help students understand and internalize values such as honesty, responsibility and compassion (Yusuf et.al., 2024). Teachers also conduct group discussions that encourage students to analyze the application of these values in daily life. Observations show that students are more inspired to model the values after hearing stories or discussions. Teachers utilize individual reflection as a tool to evaluate how students try to apply the values at home. The example set by teachers through daily interactions also strengthens students' character building process (Hamu, 2023). In interviews, students admitted that the way teachers behave became a direct inspiration to improve their behavior.

As role models, PAI teachers demonstrate consistent positive attitudes in interactions with students. When minor conflicts occur in class, teachers resolve them in a calm and educational manner, providing real examples of how to deal with problems peacefully. This approach not only resolves conflicts but also teaches students about self-control and respect for others. Observations show that students imitate the way the teacher resolves conflicts in their interactions with friends. One student even said that he felt more respected and learned to listen to others from the attitude the teacher modeled. Teachers also give praise or positive reinforcement when students show behavior that reflects religious values (Ningsih, 2024). This strategy is effective in building students' confidence and motivating them to continue improving their character. The impact is evident in students' increasingly harmonious social relationships, both in the classroom and outside the school environment.

Religion-based extracurricular activities are also an effective means for PAI teachers to shape student character more practically (Suprpto, 2020). Activities such as Qur'an recitation training and social service programs provide direct experience for students to apply values such as discipline, responsibility, and empathy. In social service, students are invited to help underprivileged communities, for example by making donations or visiting orphanages. Observations show that these activities help students understand the importance of sharing and caring for others. Some students reported that this experience made them feel more grateful and encouraged them to continue doing good. The students' parents also gave positive feedback, stating that their children showed better behavioral changes at home. The PAI teacher ensured that each activity was always linked to religious teachings, so that students understood the relevance of these values in real life.

However, some challenges emerged in the implementation of the PAI teacher's role, especially those related to the out-of-school environment. Not all students get enough support from their families or communities to continue the values taught at school (Sari et.al., 2019). In an interview, a teacher mentioned that the lack of synergy between school and family makes the character building process less than optimal for some students. To overcome this problem, teachers proactively communicate with parents, providing suggestions on how to support children's character building at home. Nevertheless, the results show that students who are consistently exposed to this approach tend to have more mature social-emotional characters. They become more disciplined,

patient and show greater empathy towards others. With a combination of teaching methods, role models, and practical activities, PAI teachers succeeded in creating a learning environment that not only focused on academics but also supported students' character building holistically.

3. The Effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education on Student Emotional Control

This study found that teaching Islamic values through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a significant role in helping students control their negative emotions, such as anger and sadness, in various daily situations. Based on the results of interviews with students and teachers, students who actively participated in PAI learning showed a better ability to control their emotions compared to those who had limited understanding of Islamic values. Values such as patience, empathy, and tawakkal taught in this subject help students understand how to cope with emotional distress. One student in an interview stated,

“After learning about patience, I am more able to control my anger when my friends upset me.”

These results show that value-based teaching has a positive impact in shaping students' mindset and behavior in dealing with stress and negative emotions.

In learning activities, PAI teachers use various methods to teach these values, such as discussion, storytelling, and reflection methods. These methods help students understand the context and application of values in daily life (Ridwan et.al., 2023). Based on the observation, students who actively participate in group discussions have a better understanding of emotion management than students who are less active. This can be seen from their ability to discuss calmly and find solutions together when facing problems. The teacher also gave examples of the application of values such as tawakkal when facing failure or disappointment. In interviews, some students revealed that understanding these values helped them to relieve feelings of sadness and anger with a positive approach. With this approach, students can develop healthier emotion management skills in their social environment.

Practical activities such as reflection and skills training also enhance the effectiveness of PAI learning in controlling students' emotions. Through reflection, students are invited to understand their feelings and evaluate how they respond to situations that trigger negative emotions. For example, when experiencing anger due to conflict with friends, students are invited to understand the cause of the anger and think about more positive solutions. Observations show that this activity is effective in helping students understand the impact of negative emotional expression and leads to more peaceful conflict resolution options. In addition, teacher-guided skill practice sessions also help students practice how to manage feelings such as deep breathing, positive thinking, and speaking calmly. With this hands-on practice, students have real experience in controlling their emotions.

Nonetheless, this study also identified some challenges in the implementation of PAI to control students' emotions. One of them is the lack of support from the family environment in supporting the application of values taught at school. Some students experienced difficulties due to a non-conducive home environment or did not understand the importance of emotion management. The teacher in the interview stated that despite providing intensive teaching, support from the family remains an important factor in ensuring its effectiveness. In addition, some students have difficulty understanding

abstract value concepts, such as patience and tawakkal, without hands-on practice to support their understanding. Therefore, stronger cooperation between schools and families is needed to support the effectiveness of this education. Overall, however, the results show that teaching Islamic values through Islamic Religious Education is successful in helping students manage their emotions better, reduce anger and feelings of sadness, and form positive mindsets that support their well-being in their daily social environment

4. Challenges and Obstacles in the Implementation of Religion-Based Social-Emotional Education

This study identified several challenges and obstacles faced in integrating social-emotional education with the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in elementary schools. Based on interviews with teachers, students and related parties, one of the main obstacles is the lack of teachers' understanding in integrating social-emotional concepts with religious values effectively. Some teachers revealed that they still need special training in order to understand and implement this approach well. Without adequate understanding, the learning process becomes less optimal, causing students' understanding of the social-emotional concepts taught to be limited (Gusti, 2021). Teachers also admitted to having difficulties in adjusting teaching methods to combine religious aspects and social-emotional skill development with relevant contexts that are easy for students to understand.

In addition, the support of the family environment is also a significant obstacle in the implementation of faith-based social-emotional education. Some students face challenges when the values taught at school conflict with their home environment which may have a different understanding. This leads to a gap between the understanding of values provided by teachers and their application in the students' daily environment. Interviews with parents showed that not all families have the same understanding of the importance of developing social-emotional skills through religious education. As a result, some students find it difficult to apply the values taught at school to their daily practices at home. This obstacle indicates the need for more intensive communication between schools and families so that there is synergy in supporting the implementation of social-emotional values.

Another factor that becomes an obstacle is the limited time in an already crowded curriculum. Islamic Religious Education usually has a limited time allocation compared to other subjects, so teachers have difficulty providing learning that focuses on integrating religious values with social-emotional concepts. In addition, the methods and media used in teaching religion-based social-emotional values are still limited, which results in students' lack of understanding and appreciation of the material taught. Based on observations, monotonous or less innovative teaching methods often make students lose interest and focus during learning activities. Therefore, strengthening methods and providing creative teaching aids are important factors to overcome this obstacle, but still require optimal support from various parties.

Finally, there are obstacles related to students' different perceptions of the values taught in faith-based social-emotional education. Some students still have difficulty understanding the relationship between religious values and emotional management practices in daily life. Students who have family backgrounds with different understandings often experience confusion in understanding the meaning of social-

emotional values taught at school (Sholeh & Maryati, 2021). These barriers emphasize the importance of a more inclusive and flexible approach in designing faith-based social-emotional education methods. By considering the various backgrounds of students, teachers can create methods that are more friendly, easy to understand and acceptable to all students regardless of their backgrounds.

Despite these obstacles, the results show that the challenges can be overcome through strong cooperation between teachers, schools and families. Adequate support in the form of teacher training, improved innovative learning methods and good communication with the family environment can reduce the barriers to implementing faith-based social-emotional education. By overcoming these obstacles, faith-based social-emotional education has great potential to help students build positive character and manage emotions more effectively in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the integration of religious values in the development of students' social-emotional competence in elementary schools has a positive impact on students' character. The values of compassion, empathy and tolerance taught through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) help students develop better social skills. Students who engage in religious value-based learning tend to have a more caring attitude, able to manage conflicts, and cooperate with friends from different backgrounds. PAI teachers serve as role models by demonstrating positive attitudes in daily interactions, which inspire students to emulate such good behavior. In addition, faith-based extracurricular activities, such as Qur'an recitation training and social service, reinforce the application of values such as discipline and empathy. Nonetheless, challenges arise from a lack of family support and difficulties connecting religious values to students' daily lives. Islamic Religious Education is also effective in helping students control negative emotions such as anger and sadness, by teaching values such as patience and tawakkal. Other constraints include limited time in the curriculum and varying understanding between teachers and students. To overcome this, there is a need for more intensive teacher training as well as collaboration between schools, parents and communities.

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