

The Urgency of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Students' Emotional Intelligence at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan

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Abstract: Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a crucial role in shaping students' emotional intelligence, particularly at the junior high school level. Emotional intelligence includes the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others, which significantly impacts students' social interactions and academic success. This study aims to analyze the urgency of IRE in shaping students' emotional intelligence at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. The research employs a qualitative approach using interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that IRE significantly contributes to enhancing students' self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills. Therefore, integrating religious values into education is a crucial aspect of developing students' character and emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Emotional Intelligence; Character; Students.

Abstrak: Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk kecerdasan emosional siswa, terutama di tingkat Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP). Kecerdasan emosional mencakup kemampuan mengenali, memahami, dan mengelola emosi diri serta orang lain, yang sangat berpengaruh terhadap interaksi sosial dan keberhasilan akademik siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis urgensi PAI dalam membentuk kecerdasan emosional siswa di SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran PAI berkontribusi signifikan dalam meningkatkan kesadaran diri, pengendalian emosi, empati, serta keterampilan sosial siswa.

Artikel Info

Received:
September 10, 2024

Revised:
October 23, 2024

Accepted:
December 25, 2024

Published:
January 28, 2025

Oleh karena itu, integrasi nilai-nilai agama dalam pendidikan menjadi aspek krusial dalam membangun karakter dan kecerdasan emosional siswa.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam, Kecerdasan Emosional, Karakter, Siswa

A. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is one of the fundamental aspects of the education system that functions to shape students' character and personality according to Islamic teachings. Education is not only aimed at enhancing cognitive aspects but also plays a significant role in developing students' emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence includes the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others, which significantly impacts students' social interactions and academic success (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In the context of education in Indonesia, IRE serves as an essential instrument in shaping students' character and morals. Quality education should encompass both intellectual and spiritual aspects so that students can face life's challenges wisely (Zakiyah & Mukhtar, 2018). IRE not only teaches theological concepts but also helps students understand and manage their emotions in accordance with religious and social norms (Yusuf & Wahyudi, 2021).

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in students' daily lives. According to Goleman (1995), individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to be more successful in social and academic life than those who rely solely on intellectual intelligence. In this regard, IRE can serve as a medium to enhance students' emotional intelligence through the Islamic values taught in the curriculum.

SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan, as an Islamic educational institution, has the responsibility to equip students with comprehensive religious education. A good religious education can help students develop the ability to recognize and manage their emotions, thereby shaping better personalities and improving social relationships with their surroundings (Rahman & Fauziah, 2020).

In the field of education, emotional intelligence is often overlooked as more attention is given to cognitive aspects such as academic achievement. However, research shows that emotional intelligence has a more significant impact on long-term success than intellectual intelligence alone (Mayer et al., 2000). Therefore, integrating IRE with emotional intelligence development needs to be strengthened in the education system.

One important aspect of emotional intelligence is self-awareness, which is the ability to understand one's own feelings and emotions. Through IRE learning, students are taught to recognize their feelings and how to control them according to Islamic teachings. For example, the concepts of patience, gratitude, and reliance on God (tawakkul) are part of Islamic teachings that can help students manage their emotions better (Al-Ghazali, 2011).

Besides self-awareness, IRE also aids in self-regulation, which is the ability to control emotions to avoid impulsive actions. In Islam, self-control is taught through concepts such as fasting, prayer, and dhikr, which serve as mediums to train patience and inner peace (Hamka, 2016). Thus, students can learn to face various challenging situations calmly and thoughtfully.

Empathy is another aspect of emotional intelligence that can be developed through IRE. Islam teaches the importance of understanding others' feelings and doing good to others. Values such as compassion, mutual assistance, and social concern are part of IRE learning that can enhance students' ability to empathize with others (Qardhawi, 2005).

Social skills are also a vital part of emotional intelligence. In Islam, social skills are taught through the concept of ukhuwah Islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood), which teaches students to build good relationships with fellow humans. IRE can help students develop effective communication skills, enabling them to establish harmonious social relationships (Nasution, 2017).

Research indicates that students with good emotional intelligence are more capable of managing stress, working in teams, and resolving conflicts effectively (Bar-On, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial for schools to incorporate emotional intelligence aspects into their curriculum through IRE learning.

At SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan, IRE has been implemented in various forms, including religious extracurricular activities such as Quranic recitation, congregational prayers, and Islamic discussions. These activities provide students with opportunities to apply religious values in their daily lives, ultimately enhancing their emotional intelligence (Suryani, 2019).

Additionally, the teaching approach used in IRE also plays a role in developing students' emotional intelligence. Experience-based approaches, such as case studies and self-reflection, can help students understand Islamic concepts more deeply and apply them in their lives (Mujib, 2014).

However, challenges remain in implementing IRE to shape students' emotional intelligence. One major challenge is the lack of teachers' understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence and how to integrate it into teaching (Wahyudi, 2021). Therefore, training is needed for teachers so they can effectively teach IRE in the context of developing students' emotional intelligence.

Moreover, environmental factors also play an essential role in shaping students' emotional intelligence. A conducive school environment, parental support, and positive social interactions can reinforce the lessons students receive in class (Santrock, 2011). Therefore, a holistic approach involving various educational stakeholders must be implemented to achieve optimal results.

In facing the digital era, IRE learning must also adapt to technological advancements. The use of digital media in education can be an effective tool for enhancing students' understanding of Islamic values and how to apply them in everyday life (Hidayatullah, 2020).

In conclusion, IRE plays a crucial role in shaping students' emotional intelligence. By teaching Islamic values related to self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, IRE can help students face life's challenges more effectively. Therefore, the integration of IRE and emotional intelligence should continue to be enhanced in the education system.

This study will further discuss how IRE can be effectively implemented in shaping students' emotional intelligence at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. This research

will also explore various challenges and solutions in implementing IRE-oriented learning for emotional intelligence development.

Thus, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and relevant Islamic education curricula in addressing students' needs in facing modern life challenges.

B. Methods

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in developing students' emotional intelligence at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. The research focuses on the perceptions and experiences of students, teachers, and school administrators regarding the integration of emotional intelligence within the IRE curriculum.

Research Subjects

The subjects of this study include IRE teachers, students, and school administrators at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. A purposive sampling technique is used to select participants who have a direct role in IRE learning and its implementation in fostering students' emotional intelligence.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection methods include:

1. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews are conducted with teachers and administrators to understand their perspectives on the integration of emotional intelligence in IRE.
2. **Observations:** Classroom observations are carried out to examine how emotional intelligence is integrated into teaching and learning activities.
3. **Documentation:** Analysis of lesson plans, teaching materials, and student assignments to assess how Islamic values and emotional intelligence are reflected in IRE teaching.

Data Analysis

The collected data is analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach. Data is categorized, coded, and interpreted to identify patterns and themes related to the role of IRE in shaping students' emotional intelligence.

Research Validity

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, triangulation is applied by comparing data from multiple sources, including interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking is also conducted by discussing findings with participants to confirm accuracy and credibility.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to ethical research standards, including informed consent from participants, confidentiality of responses, and the voluntary nature of participation.

C. Results and Discussion

This study aims to explore the urgency of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in shaping students' emotional intelligence at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. To achieve this goal, the study identifies various aspects of the implementation of IRE at the school and how it influences the development of students' emotional intelligence. Based on the analysis of the data collected, several key factors were found to serve as a foundation for the development of students' emotional intelligence through IRE.

First, the IRE curriculum at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan has been designed with the goal of not only imparting religious knowledge but also shaping students' character and emotional intelligence. IRE at this school does not merely focus on the theoretical teaching of religion, but also on the development of moral and ethical values related to emotional management, such as patience, sincerity, and trust in Allah (Nurhasanah, 2020). For instance, lessons about patience in facing life's trials and difficulties have become an integral part of the learning process in class.

Observational results show that students who actively participate in IRE lessons at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan demonstrate higher emotional intelligence compared to students who are less involved. This finding aligns with Goleman's (1995) theory, which explains that emotional intelligence includes the ability to recognize and manage

one's own feelings, as well as to understand and interact with others' emotions. In the context of IRE, teaching values such as love, tolerance, and empathy becomes the foundation in building these abilities.

Next, extracurricular activities based on religion also play an important role in the development of students' emotional intelligence. SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan offers a variety of extracurricular activities such as religious study groups, halaqah, and social activities that involve students in direct interaction with their peers. These activities support students in developing empathy, cooperation, and self-control, which are crucial elements of emotional intelligence (Suciati, 2021).

On the other hand, the role of IRE teachers is highly significant in shaping students' emotional intelligence. IRE teachers at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan do not only teach in a conventional approach but also integrate techniques that encourage students to reflect on and manage their emotions. For example, in teaching about virtuous behavior in Islam, teachers often ask students to discuss how these values can be applied in everyday life, including in situations that trigger emotions such as anger or disappointment (Widodo, 2019).

In addition, interviews with students reveal that they feel more prepared in dealing with emotional challenges due to the learning they receive through IRE. They feel more capable of handling stress and frustration and are able to build better relationships with their friends and teachers. This shows that the application of emotional intelligence concepts in IRE at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan is effective in helping students manage their feelings better.

Emotional intelligence is also closely related to character development in students. According to Hidayat (2018), good character includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, all of which are key components of emotional intelligence. The character-building lessons taught in IRE indirectly enhance students' ability to recognize and manage their emotions. For instance, teaching about sincerity in good deeds teaches students to accept reality with an open heart, which is one indicator of good emotional intelligence.

Further, in the aspect of conflict management, IRE also plays a crucial role. Teaching values such as helping others, respecting one another, and patience helps

students manage disagreements constructively. This is in line with research conducted by Sukirno and Hidayat (2019), which found that religious education based on moral values can assist students in managing conflicts and improving their interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, the results of the study show that there is a strong correlation between parental involvement in religious education and students' emotional intelligence. Parents who are involved in their children's religious education tend to have children who are better able to manage their emotions (Ahmad, 2020). SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan actively involves parents in activities related to IRE, which contributes to the development of students' emotional intelligence.

However, despite these positive results, challenges remain. Some students expressed difficulty in applying the values taught in IRE to their daily lives, especially when faced with social pressures from their peers. Therefore, it is important for schools to continuously develop more contextual and relevant teaching methods for students' situations.

On the other hand, the cultural and background diversity of students at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan presents specific challenges in implementing IRE-based emotional intelligence development. As the school has students from diverse backgrounds, it is important to consider the differences in how students respond to religious education and provide more intensive support to those who are struggling (Suyanto, 2022).

It is also important to emphasize that emotional intelligence is not something that can be developed in a short period of time. It requires an ongoing process and the involvement of various parties, including teachers, parents, and the surrounding community. Therefore, the school must collaborate with parents to create an environment that supports the development of students' emotional intelligence, both inside and outside the classroom.

Additionally, technology also plays a role in supporting the development of students' emotional intelligence. SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan has utilized digital platforms to support religious education and character development for students. Through mobile applications and social media, students can access religious education

materials that help them improve their understanding and management of their emotions (Sari, 2023).

However, there are concerns regarding excessive use of technology, which may reduce direct social interaction between students and teachers, something that is essential in emotional intelligence development. Therefore, the use of technology should be balanced and adapted to the needs and context of student learning (Mahmud, 2021).

It is also essential to assess the effectiveness of IRE from the students' perspective. Based on the questionnaires given to students, the majority of them feel that IRE has a positive impact on their lives, particularly in managing their emotions and improving their relationships with friends and family. This indicates that IRE at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan has a significant urgency in shaping students' emotional intelligence and should be given more attention in educational policies at schools.

In conclusion, this study shows that Islamic Religious Education plays a very important role in shaping students' emotional intelligence at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. IRE does not only function as a medium for conveying religious knowledge, but also as a means of character building and enhancing students' ability to manage their emotions. Therefore, the urgency of IRE in the context of emotional education is clearly evident and deserves more attention in school educational policies.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in shaping students' emotional intelligence at SMP Al-Wasliyah 31 Medan. The curriculum and teaching methods in IRE go beyond imparting religious knowledge, focusing on the development of students' emotional intelligence through character-building lessons that emphasize values like patience, empathy, and self-control. The involvement of teachers, parents, and extracurricular activities further strengthens the positive impact of IRE on students' emotional development.

The findings demonstrate that students who actively participate in IRE show higher levels of emotional intelligence, particularly in areas such as self-awareness, social skills, and emotional regulation. This supports the notion that emotional

intelligence is not only crucial for personal growth but also for fostering harmonious relationships within school and community environments. The study suggests that the integration of emotional intelligence concepts into IRE is effective and has long-term benefits for students, helping them navigate emotional challenges in their daily lives.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also identifies challenges such as the diverse backgrounds of students and the varying levels of engagement. It is essential to continuously adapt teaching methods and provide additional support to ensure that all students can fully benefit from IRE in developing their emotional intelligence. Overall, the urgency of IRE in emotional intelligence development should be prioritized, with a continued focus on collaboration between schools, teachers, parents, and the broader community.

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