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## INTEGRATING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING FOR DEVELOPING MODERATE CHARACTER IN STUDENTS

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### Kata Kunci:

Pendidikan Agama Islam; Social Emotional Learning; Karakter Moderat

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### ABSTRAK

**Latar Belakang:** Dinamika sosial keagamaan yang semakin kompleks dan meningkatnya kerentanan ekstremisme menuntut inovasi pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) yang mampu memperkuat moderasi beragama dan karakter inklusif peserta didik. Integrasi Social Emotional Learning (SEL) dipandang relevan untuk menjawab tantangan tersebut. **Tujuan Penelitian:** Penelitian ini bertujuan mengembangkan dan menganalisis model pembelajaran PAI berbasis integrasi nilai-nilai keislaman dan kompetensi Social Emotional Learning dalam penguatan karakter moderat siswa. **Metode:** Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi pustaka dengan analisis sistematis terhadap sumber akademik yang relevan guna memperoleh pemahaman konseptual yang komprehensif. **Hasil:** Temuan menunjukkan bahwa integrasi PAI-SEL efektif memperkuat moderasi beragama melalui pengembangan kesadaran diri, empati, regulasi emosi, dan pengambilan keputusan etis. Model ini mendukung internalisasi nilai komitmen kebangsaan, toleransi, anti-kekerasan, dan penghargaan terhadap budaya lokal melalui pembelajaran reflektif dan kontekstual. **Kesimpulan:** Integrasi PAI dan Social Emotional Learning merupakan strategi pedagogis yang aplikatif dan relevan untuk pengembangan kurikulum PAI, khususnya dalam membentuk karakter moderat peserta didik yang adaptif terhadap tantangan masyarakat majemuk menuju Indonesia Emas 2045.

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<b>Keywords:</b>	<b>ABSTRACTS</b>
Islamic Religious Education; Social Emotional Learning; Moderate Character	<p><b>Background:</b> The increasingly complex socio-religious dynamics and the increasing vulnerability to extremism demand innovation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that is able to strengthen religious moderation and inclusive character of students. The integration of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is considered relevant to address these challenges. <b>Purpose of the Study:</b> This study aims to develop and analyze an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model based on the integration of Islamic values and Social Emotional Learning competencies in strengthening students' moderate character. <b>Methods:</b> The study used a qualitative approach through literature study with systematic analysis of relevant academic sources to obtain a comprehensive conceptual understanding. <b>Results:</b> The findings indicate that the integration of PAI-SEL is effective in strengthening religious moderation through the development of self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and ethical decision-making. This model supports the internalization of the values of national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and respect for local culture through reflective and contextual learning. <b>Conclusions:</b> The integration of PAI and Social Emotional Learning is an applicable and relevant pedagogical strategy for the development of the PAI curriculum, especially in shaping the moderate character of students who are adaptive to the challenges of a pluralistic society towards Golden Indonesia 2045.</p>

## A. INTRODUCTION

The development of 21st-century global society is marked by accelerated socio-religious change fueled by advances in digital technology, intense cross-cultural interactions, and the rapid flow of unverified information. The digital space has become not only a medium for the exchange of knowledge, but also an arena for the production and reproduction of religious discourse, often simplistic, exclusive, and even extreme (Saminov, 2025). UNESCO report states that more than 62% of teenagers in the world are exposed to intolerant content through social media (Audrey Azoulay, 2024). Meanwhile, a Pew Research Center study showed a 27% increase in cases of religious-based tensions in various countries in the last decade (Samirah Majumdar, 2024). This phenomenon confirms that the world of education is in a strategic and vulnerable position, because schools are the main space for the formation of character, religious orientation, and social relationship patterns of the younger generation amidst increasingly complex global dynamics.

In Indonesia, these global dynamics are intertwined with a pluralistic and multi-religious social reality, necessitating a more comprehensive and adaptive educational approach. A survey by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) and Alvara Research showed that 23.3% of high school or vocational school students tend to accept intolerant ideas (Alvara Research & Mata Air Fondation, 2017). Meanwhile, research by PPIM UIN Jakarta revealed that at least 14% of teachers have exclusive views in understanding religiosity (Y. F. Nisa, 2022). These findings indicate that religious education, including Islamic Religious Education (PAI), has not yet fully optimized its ability to foster moderate, inclusive, and contextual religious awareness. PAI, however, has a normative and strategic mandate as a vehicle for internalizing Islamic values that align with the principles of nationality, humanity, and diversity (Yulianti et al., 2023). As a result, the potential of Islamic Religious Education as a strategic instrument for the

formation of moderate, humanistic, and inclusive character has not been fully actualized, especially in responding to the challenges of intolerance, radicalism, and identity polarization in the school environment.

In line with these needs, in recent years the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approach has received increasing attention in global educational studies and practices. SEL is understood as a learning approach that focuses on the holistic development of students' social and emotional abilities, going beyond academic achievement alone. The SEL framework developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) emphasizes five core competencies: self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These five competencies play a crucial role in helping students understand and manage their emotions, develop empathy, build healthy social relationships, and make ethical and responsible decisions (Rahmah & Sunhaji, 2025).

Numerous studies have shown that the integration of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into the curriculum significantly contributes to improving students' mental health, reducing aggressive behavior, and strengthening prosocial behavior in daily interactions. In the Indonesian context, SEL has strong relevance to the character-building agenda through the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the dimensions of faith and piety, global diversity, mutual cooperation, and critical reasoning (Rohmaniah et al., 2025). Thus, SEL not only functions as a modern pedagogical approach, but also as a strategic instrument to support national education goals in forming students who are inclusive, tolerant, and have mature personalities.

The integration of SEL into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning offers significant pedagogical opportunities for strengthening religious moderation. Self-awareness and self-management competencies enable students to reflectively understand religious teachings while simultaneously managing religious emotions to prevent them from developing into exclusive or extreme attitudes. Social awareness and relationship skills foster empathy, respect for differences, and the ability to interact harmoniously in a pluralistic society, which are the main foundations of religious moderation. Meanwhile, responsible decision-making competencies equip students with the ability to critically and ethically assess and respond to contemporary religious issues, particularly amidst the rapid flow of digital information that is prone to disinformation (Isabella & Nofrima, 2024). Thus, the integration of Social Emotional Learning in Islamic Religious Education learning not only enriches the pedagogical approach, but also strengthens the humanistic, inclusive, and adaptive religious character, in line with the national education vision in building a generation with noble personalities and national insight.

However, studies explicitly integrating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL are still relatively limited. Islamic Religious Education literature generally emphasizes strengthening spiritual aspects and normative morals without systematically linking them to the development of social-emotional competencies. Conversely, SEL studies have primarily focused on educational psychology and curriculum policies, which tend to be religion-neutral, resulting in minimal exploration of religious values. This gap indicates that the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL has not been widely studied as a comprehensive pedagogical model, particularly in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, which has its own unique social, cultural, and religious characteristics. In fact, moderate attitudes are shaped not

only by cognitive understanding of religious texts but also by emotional, relational, and reflective experiences in the learning process (Rahmat, 2025).

Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education teachers empirically face complex challenges in managing classrooms in the digital age. Students are increasingly vulnerable to simplistic, provocative, and exclusive religious narratives widely disseminated through social media. Numerous studies have shown that low emotional literacy and reflective thinking skills make adolescents susceptible to ideological polarization (Suhendi, 2025). In this context, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning models that focus solely on knowledge transfer are no longer adequate. An integrative approach is needed that connects universal Islamic values with the strengthening of social emotional skills, digital literacy, and critical reflection.

The academic debate regarding the integration of Social Emotional Learning into religious education demonstrates a diverse spectrum of views. Some academics consider Social Emotional Learning to be secular in orientation, thus raising concerns that it will displace the spiritual dimension in Islamic Religious Education. However, this view has been countered by a number of researchers who assert that Social Emotional Learning does not negate religious values. Instead, Social Emotional Learning provides a pedagogical framework that strengthens the process of spiritual internalization through students' emotional, social, and reflective experiences. Recent literature indicates that Social Emotional Learning can serve as an effective medium for actualizing the core values of Islamic Religious Education, such as *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), *tasāmuh* (tolerance), *tawāzun* (balance), *'adālah* (justice), and *ihsan* (optimal good deeds), within more contextual educational practices. A similar debate has also emerged regarding the effectiveness of Social Emotional Learning in responding to symptoms of radicalism in educational environments. Although there are still doubts about its impact, various studies show that empathy, self-awareness, the ability to manage emotions, and critical thinking skills are important foundations in preventing ideology-based violence (Muafiq & Muali, 2025). Thus, the variety of views not only enriches the discourse, but also emphasizes the urgency of developing an integrative model that is holistic and relevant to current learning needs.

Responding to the various needs for strengthening students' character in the current era of educational transformation, this study was conducted to examine in depth how an integrative model between Islamic Religious Education and Social Emotional Learning can be developed in the context of secondary education. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify conceptual, philosophical, and pedagogical intersections between the two domains, while simultaneously reconstructing a relevant learning framework for the formation of moderate student character. The analysis was directed at key theories, previous research findings, and national curriculum policy documents as a basis for formulating a comprehensive, applicable, and contextual model. This study aims to formulate a theoretical basis for the integration of Islamic Religious Education and Social Emotional Learning, develop a learning design capable of strengthening the values of religious moderation, and provide recommendations for developing a curriculum that is adaptive to the challenges of Indonesia Emas 2045. The main findings of the study indicate that the integration of Islamic Religious Education and Social Emotional Learning has strategic potential in improving the quality of the religious learning process and forming students who are empathetic, reflective, tolerant, and possess mature social emotional skills (Hanif et al.,

2025). Thus, this research is expected to provide a significant contribution to the innovation of Islamic education in Indonesia and the strengthening of character-based curriculum in the contemporary era.

## B. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research design that emphasizes critical, comparative, and systematic analysis of various types of literature relevant to the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in the formation of moderate character of students. The literature reviewed includes theoretical articles that discuss the conceptual foundations of PAI, SEL, and religious moderation; empirical studies that examine educational practices, the dynamics of intolerance, and character building in the school environment; and normative documents in the form of educational policies, curriculum guidelines, and official learning modules. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth searches of academic sources in the form of scientific books, reputable national and international journal articles, previous research reports, educational policy documents, curriculum modules, and official publications of educational institutions that have substantive relevance to the focus of the study.

The primary data sources in this study include literature that directly examines the concept and objectives of Islamic Religious Education, the theoretical framework of Social Emotional Learning, religious moderation, and models of curriculum integration in formal educational contexts. Secondary data sources include survey reports, educational organization documents, and empirical research examining issues of intolerance, radicalism, and socio-religious dynamics in school environments (Sugiyono, 2017). Source selection was based on thematic relevance, the academic authority of the author or publishing institution, the novelty of the ideas, and their contribution to the development of the research's conceptual framework. All collected data was analyzed using content analysis techniques through the stages of data reduction, thematic categorization, and interpretive conclusion drawing to produce a comprehensive theoretical construction based on strong academic argumentation (Matthew B. & A. Michael, 2014).

To ensure the validity of the findings, this study applied a credibility test through source triangulation by comparing the consistency of concepts, findings, and theoretical arguments presented in various types of literature. Furthermore, conceptual correlation analysis was used to identify systematic relationships between the core values of Islamic Religious Education, the core competencies of Social Emotional Learning, and indicators of religious moderation. This approach allows for the formulation of an integrative model with clear philosophical, pedagogical, and practical foundations that can be scientifically justified (Lexy J. Moleong, 2018). Thus, this research not only contributes to the in-depth mapping of theoretical constructions, but also provides a solid academic basis for the development of an Islamic Religious Education learning model that is applicable, adaptive, and relevant to the demands of 21st-century education, particularly in efforts to strengthen the moderate character of students through the holistic integration of religious, emotional, and social dimensions.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Integration of Islamic Religious Education Values and Social Emotional Learning Competencies in the Formation of Moderate Character**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) are two educational domains that conceptually and practically complement each other in shaping students' character holistically. The main point of intersection between the two lies in a shared orientation toward developing students' emotional, social, and moral dimensions. PAI emphasizes the internalization of Islamic ethical and spiritual values, such as tawazun (balance in life), tasāmuh (tolerance), ta'awun (mutual assistance), and 'adālah (justice), while SEL, rooted in educational psychology, develops core competencies in the form of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. This alignment of orientations demonstrates that the integration of PAI and SEL is not only normative-theoretical but also applicable in shaping individuals who are reflective, empathetic, and ethical in social life. Literature analysis indicates that the integration of these two approaches has the potential to strengthen the formation of moderate character, namely the ability to adapt to social dynamics and plurality without losing religious identity (Muslih et al., 2024). Thus, the integration of PAI and SEL is relevant as a response to the challenges of modern education characterized by globalization and social complexity.

From the perspective of self-awareness and self-management within the SEL framework, the value of tawazun (respect for oneself) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds strong relevance. Tawazun emphasizes balance between the worldly and the hereafter, between reason, emotion, and spirituality. This value encourages students to recognize their own condition, manage their emotions, and control their behavior proportionally in everyday life. In the SEL context, the ability to recognize one's emotions and manage them constructively is the foundation for mental health and wise decision-making. Islamic Religious Education systematically instills this balance through the learning of values and reflective worship practices, thus fostering self-awareness rooted in moral and spiritual responsibility (Lundie, 2023).

Social Emotional Learning is an educational approach that develops students' emotional and social competencies through five key domains. Self-awareness involves the ability to recognize one's own emotions and understand their impact on behavior. Social awareness encompasses empathy and understanding others' perspectives, including cultural and social awareness. Relationship skills foster the ability to build and maintain positive relationships, such as effective communication and conflict resolution. Responsible decision-making encourages ethical decision-making based on moral considerations and consequences. Finally, self-management helps regulate emotions and impulses to achieve goals. Social Emotional Learning is based on psychological research showing that these competencies improve mental and academic well-being. This approach is often integrated into school curricula to develop resilient and adaptive students (Nuralimah et al., 2025).

The social awareness aspect of SEL is closely linked to the value of tolerance in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This tolerance necessitates an open, empathetic attitude and respect for differences, including differences in perspective, culture, and beliefs. Social awareness competency in SEL requires the ability to understand others' perspectives and sensitivity to social and cultural contexts. This alignment demonstrates that the value of tolerance in PAI is not merely doctrinal but can also be

operationalized through strengthening empathy and social awareness, as developed in SEL. The integration of these two approaches contributes to developing students who are able to coexist peacefully and avoid extremism (Sofa et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the value of mutual respect in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) directly correlates with the relationship skills aspect of SEL. This value emphasizes the importance of cooperation, social solidarity, and mutual assistance in community life. Within the SEL framework, positive relationship building skills are realized through effective communication, teamwork, and peaceful conflict resolution. Islamic Religious Education internalizes this value through teachings on social ethics that foster empathy, patience, and collective responsibility. Thus, the integration of PAI and SEL strengthens students' capacity to build healthy and productive social relationships (Syaiful Rijal et al., 2025).

The value of 'adālah in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a conceptual alignment with the responsible decision-making aspect in SEL. 'Adālah demands fairness, honesty, and proportion in every decision and action. The responsible decision-making competency in SEL emphasizes ethical considerations, consequence analysis, and a commitment to universal moral values. This alignment confirms that PAI provides a normative-ethical foundation, while SEL offers a practical framework for translating the value of justice into concrete behavior. This synergy enables the formation of characters that are not only religious, but also ethical and socially responsible (Wardati et al., 2023).

The conceptual integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL enables the development of a more comprehensive, moderate character. Moderate character is characterized by a balanced, tolerant, inclusive, and ethically oriented attitude. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) provides a moral and spiritual foundation rooted in Islamic teachings, while SEL strengthens the emotional and social skills necessary to implement these values in real life. This combination encourages the development of students' reflective and empathetic capacities, enabling them to respond wisely to differences and avoid extreme behavior (Dzakiyyuddin et al., 2024).

Numerous empirical studies in educational psychology demonstrate the significant contribution of SEL to students' emotional and social development. Research cited by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) indicates that implementing SEL programs can increase empathy and reduce aggressive behavior by 20–30% (SETARA Institute, 2023). Longitudinal studies also reveal that students who participate in SEL programs experience better mental well-being, improved academic performance, and a lower risk of depression. These findings strengthen the argument that SEL is a strategic approach to building emotional and social resilience in students (Prasetyo et al., 2025).

In line with this, Islamic education literature emphasizes that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a significant role in the formation of social morals and moral awareness. Values such as rahmah (compassion), ihsan (kindness), and tawazun (respect for God) have been proven to reduce tendencies toward intolerance and extremism when implemented reflectively and contextually. Research shows that the application of tawazun values in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum helps students develop spiritual and social balance, enabling them to live a moderate religious life (Isnaeni, 2016). Studies in Muslim countries show that Islamic religious education integrated with social practices fosters moral awareness and ethical responsibility.

Furthermore, Islamic religious education promotes ta'awun (religious tolerance) as a form of community solidarity. These findings reinforce the notion that Islamic religious education is not merely a ritual, but also a tool for developing an inclusive and moderate character (Suryanto, 2024).

Compared to other purely secular or normative character education frameworks, the PAI-SEL integrative model is unique in its blend of spiritual-transcendental foundations and psychological-practical approaches. This model's strength lies in its ability to bridge religious values with 21st-century life skills. However, implementation challenges remain, particularly related to educator readiness, curriculum adjustments, and the diversity of school cultural contexts. Therefore, further empirical studies are needed to test the effectiveness and adaptability of this model across various educational environments (K. Nisa & Abdullah, 2023). Overall, the findings of the literature analysis show that the integration of Islamic Religious Education and Social Emotional Learning has a strong philosophical and pedagogical foundation in strengthening inclusive and balanced religious attitudes in students (Suratin et al., 2024). This synergy offers an educational approach that is holistic, sustainable, and relevant to the challenges of the times, and contributes to shaping a young generation that is ethical, empathetic, and harmonious.

### **The Effectiveness of the Integrative Model of Islamic Religious Education and Social Emotional Learning in Strengthening Four Indicators of Religious Moderation**

Based on a thematic analysis of current literature, the study results indicate that an integrative model between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) contributes. This integration is understood as a holistic learning approach that links Islamic values with the development of students' social and emotional competencies. Various contemporary educational studies confirm that this approach is relevant in responding to the challenges of globalization and increasing vulnerability to religious extremism, while simultaneously strengthening social harmony through interdisciplinary education (Armedi et al., 2025). Thus, this model not only strengthens students' religious identity, but also directs religious expression in a moderate, inclusive, and contextual direction.

**Table 1. The Role of Islamic Religious Education and SEL Integration in Strengthening Religious Moderation**

<b>Indicators of Religious Moderation</b>	<b>Contribution of Integration of Islamic Religious Education and Social Emotional Learning</b>	<b>Effectiveness Findings from the Literature</b>
National Commitment	- Instilling patriotic values through an Islamic Religious Education curriculum integrated with Social Emotional Learning competencies (self-	- Studies show this integrative model strengthens a sense of nationalism and reduces the risk of radicalization. - Social Emotional Learning interventions support ethical decision-making and reduce

<b>Indicators of Religious Moderation</b>	<b>Contribution of Integration of Islamic Religious Education and Social Emotional Learning</b>	<b>Effectiveness Findings from the Literature</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>management, responsible decision-making).</li> <li>- Forming a religious identity aligned with national values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>excessive emotional responses to religious issues.</li> </ul>
Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultivates empathy, social awareness, and an understanding of plurality.</li> <li>- Group discussions on Islamic Religious Education combined with Social Emotional Learning foster openness, effective communication, and interfaith perspectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social Emotional Learning programs have been shown to increase empathy and reduce stereotypes (CASEL).</li> <li>- Empirical research shows a decrease in intolerance and increased collaboration among students in multicultural schools.</li> </ul>
Non-Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing impulse control, emotional regulation, and non-violent conflict resolution.</li> <li>- Islamic Religious Education provides an Islamic ethical foundation (rahmah, etiquette of interaction) that reinforces non-violent practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longitudinal studies have shown that self-management competencies reduce the tendency towards extremism.</li> <li>- Conflict simulations and dialogic approaches encourage peaceful responses and prosocial behavior.</li> </ul>
Respect for Local Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integration of Islamic values (rahmatan lil 'alamin, ukhuwah, musyawarah) with reflections of local culture.</li> <li>- Cultural projects in Islamic Religious Education are combined with Social Emotional Learning competencies to foster cultural sensitivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Case studies in schools or madrasas show increased student participation in cross-cultural activities.</li> <li>- Collaborative and experiential approaches strengthen resilience and moderate cultural identity.</li> </ul>

From the perspective of self-awareness and self-management, the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL (Self-Reliance) plays a crucial role in strengthening indicators of national commitment. PAI values such as tawazun (balance) and hubbul wathan are contextualized through SEL competencies, particularly self-management and responsible decision-making, enabling students to manage religious emotions proportionately and make ethical decisions aligned with national values. Literature shows that strengthening these competencies reduces excessive emotional responses to religious issues and lowers the risk of radicalization, as demonstrated in various longitudinal and case studies in Indonesian schools. Overall, these competencies form the basis for stable religious moderation (Nufus et al., 2023).

In terms of empathy and social awareness, this integrative model contributes significantly to strengthening tolerance. SEL competencies such as empathy, understanding others' perspectives, and social relationship skills are integrated with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values such as tolerance and brotherhood. Through dialogic learning practices, group discussions, and inclusive religious reflection, students are trained to constructively understand religious and cultural plurality. Empirical findings, including reports from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), demonstrate that SEL programs are effective in reducing stereotypes and increasing collaboration among students in multicultural environments. Integration with PAI enriches this process with a theological foundation that emphasizes the importance of peaceful coexistence (Fanaqi et al., 2025).

Furthermore, from the perspective of impulse control and conflict resolution, the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL (Self-Study) strengthens anti-violence indicators. Self-management and relationship skills competencies in SEL are linked to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values such as mercy, social interaction etiquette, and the Islamic ethics of peace. Through conflict simulations, dialogical approaches, and experiential social-emotional learning, students are equipped with the skills to respond to differences nonviolently. Longitudinal studies show that strengthening emotional regulation and responsible decision-making contributes to a decrease in the tendency towards extremism and an increase in prosocial behavior in the long term (Rahmadani & Batusangkar, 2025).

The aspect of respect for local culture is also a key finding in this integrative model. Islamic Religious Education values such as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for the universe), deliberation, and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood and brotherhood) are integrated with SEL competencies to build cultural sensitivity and resilience in students' identities. Cultural project-based learning practices, reflection on local traditions, and collaborative work across backgrounds have been shown to increase student participation in cross-cultural activities. Case studies in schools and madrasas (Islamic schools) demonstrate that this approach not only strengthens a moderate Islamic identity but also encourages an appreciation of local wisdom as part of contextual religious expression (Melinda et al., n.d.).

Overall, the consistency of the literature findings supports the hypothesis that the integrative model of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL (Self-Reliant Education) has great potential in shaping students' moderate character by strengthening self-awareness, empathy, emotional control, and social relationship skills. Compared with other educational frameworks that focus only partially on cognitive or moral aspects, this model offers the unique advantage of simultaneously synthesizing religious values and socio-emotional competencies. However, the literature also notes several implementation challenges, particularly related to teacher readiness and training in implementing dialogic, collaborative, and experience-based approaches. Therefore, strengthening educator capacity is a crucial prerequisite for this integrative model to be implemented sustainably and have a long-term impact on strengthening religious moderation in educational settings (Puji et al., 2025).

## **Implications of the Integrative Model of Islamic Education and SEL for the Development of Character Education Curriculum and Discourse**

The results of this study substantively answer the initial research objective as outlined in the introduction, namely to develop an integrative model between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in order to strengthen the moderate character of students. This model was designed in response to the challenges of education in the era of globalization, which is characterized by the increasing complexity of social relations, cultural and religious diversity, and the need to strengthen the values of religious moderation. The integration of PAI and SEL shows that religious education is not solely oriented towards mastering cognitive and normative aspects, but also has strategic potential in developing students' affective and socio-emotional dimensions. These findings provide empirical evidence that this integrative model can be effectively implemented in the Indonesian educational context, thereby contributing to the formation of a young generation capable of responding to social dynamics in a moderate, inclusive, and constructive manner (Khoirul Umam Addzaky et al., 2025).

Conceptually, the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL in this study rests on the alignment of SEL core competencies with fundamental values in Islamic teachings. Self awareness, for example, is linked to reflective religious practices rooted in the values of tawhid (Islamic unity) and spiritual awareness; self-management is understood in line with self control (mujahadatun nafs) and the principle of tawazun (balance); while social awareness and empathy are emphasized through the values of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe) and tasamuh (tolerance). Relational skills and responsible decision-making are mapped to the teachings of Islamic brotherhood and social morals (Tuti Amalia et al., 2024). Empirical findings indicate that strengthening these competencies has a positive impact on students' ability to manage interreligious conflict and promote peace, as measured through quantitative and qualitative approaches, such as surveys, observations, and in-depth interviews. This model emphasizes active and contextual learning, where students do not simply passively receive religious material but engage in social simulations that require the practical application of moderation values. Thus, this study confirms that strengthening religious moderation can be achieved through an integrated synthesis of religious learning and socio-emotional capacity development (Seitakhmetova et al., 2024).

The findings of this study align with previous studies that emphasize that attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and anti violence are more effectively formed through affective experiences and meaningful social interactions than through purely cognitive instruction. Research in the field of SEL shows that the development of emotional and social competencies contributes significantly to prosocial behavior and ethical decision-making. Meanwhile, studies in Islamic Religious Education (Islamic Religious Education) also emphasize the importance of an affective approach in developing Islamic character. This study strengthens these findings through empirical data from the Indonesian context, showing that students who participated in the integrated PAI-SEL model experienced significant improvements in indicators of religious moderation, such as interfaith tolerance and cross-cultural empathy. Therefore, the results of this study do not stand alone but are part of a broader scientific discourse on values-based character education (Saputra, 2023).

In addition to its consistency with existing literature, this study also offers a novel contribution by explicitly and systematically linking SEL to the core values of Islamic Religious Education. To date, Islamic Religious Education research has tended to focus on the theological and ritualistic dimensions, while SEL has been studied more within the framework of general educational psychology without specific religious integration. This study fills this gap by formulating an integrative framework that maps five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making with Islamic teachings such as monotheism, morality, and Islamic brotherhood. Compared with other character education frameworks that emphasize universal values in general, this model is unique in its normative-religious basis that is contextual to Indonesian Muslim society. However, implementation challenges also arise, particularly related to teacher readiness and the availability of adequate learning tools. Therefore, this study's contribution is not only theoretical but also practical, by offering an adaptive and relevant model for development in Islamic schools (Helmawati et al., 2024).

The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of designing an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum that is no longer limited to a cognitive-normative approach, but rather responsive to the social-emotional needs of students. The PAI curriculum, which currently emphasizes memorizing verses and hadith, needs to be complemented with pedagogical strategies that encourage the development of empathy, collaboration, and conflict resolution skills. SEL integration allows for the development of learning modules based on case studies of socio religious conflicts, collaborative projects across groups, and reflective activities that foster self-awareness and social responsibility. This implementation requires cross disciplinary collaboration between PAI teachers and educational psychologists, and encourages a reevaluation of PAI competency standards at the national level to align with the agenda of developing a moderate and inclusive national character.

Going forward, further research needs to be directed at developing more operational implementation models at the classroom level, particularly in the form of ready-to-use learning modules for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. Testing the model across various educational levels and regional contexts, both urban and rural, will strengthen the external validity of the findings. Furthermore, a longitudinal approach is crucial for measuring the long-term impact of PAI and SEL integration on the development of moderate student character. Such research not only deepens theoretical understanding but also ensures the model's sustainability and scalability nationally.

Furthermore, integrating SEL with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) pedagogical methods, such as tarbiyah (teaching), tadabbur (contemplation), and uswah hasanah (good examples), is an important strategy for enriching and contextualizing this model. The tarbiyah approach can be combined with experiential learning to cultivate emotional management and social cooperation. Tadabbur can be strengthened through reflection and self-awareness exercises rooted in contemplation of Quranic verses. Uswah hasanah can be realized through the exemplary practices of teachers and religious leaders in displaying moderate, empathetic, and tolerant attitudes. This integration not only enhances pedagogical effectiveness but also maintains the authenticity of Islamic Religious Education as a religious discipline.

Thus, this research not only enriches the theoretical discourse on the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and SEL, but also provides strategic direction for curriculum innovation in welcoming the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. Education is expected to be able to produce a generation that is intellectually superior, emotionally mature, and moderate in religious attitudes. Through cross-disciplinary collaboration between religious educators, psychologists, and policymakers, this integrative model has the potential to become the foundation for the development of a harmonious, tolerant, and globally competitive Indonesian society.

## CONCLUSION

The integrative model of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) developed in this study has proven to be able to meet the research objectives, namely formulating a learning approach that comprehensively strengthens students' moderate character. This model integrates the fundamental values of PAI, such as *tawāzun* (balance), *tasāmuh* (tolerance), *ta'āwun* (cooperation), and *'adālah* (justice) with the core competencies of SEL which include self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The research findings indicate that this integration is effective in shaping students' character that is inclusive, adaptive, and oriented towards the values of religious moderation, which is reflected in increased empathy, emotional regulation skills, and ethical decision-making. This contributes to strengthening attitudes of tolerance, national commitment, and the ability to coexist peacefully amidst the reality of Indonesian social pluralism, as supported by literature reviews and empirical findings that emphasize the importance of a reflective dialogical approach in religious education to minimize the tendency towards extremism.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that educators and policymakers adjust the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum by systematically integrating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies into learning planning, from learning outcomes and material development to evaluation strategies. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are expected to implement this approach through contextual learning, such as values-based reflective discussions, collaborative learning, socio-religious case studies, and *tadabbur* and *tarbiyah* activities that foster self-awareness, empathy, and social responsibility in students. Further research is recommended to conduct longitudinal empirical studies in Indonesian schools to test the effectiveness and long-term impact of the integrated PAI-SEL model on attitudes and behaviors of religious moderation. Furthermore, trials and validation of SEL-based PAI modules in various school socio-cultural contexts need to be developed. Findings from international institutions such as CASEL and studies on affective-approach PAI can serve as references for cross-validation to make this model more contextual and support the vision of Indonesia Emas 2045.

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