

INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' CHARACTER BASED ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract. *This study aims to develop an integrative model of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Guidance and counseling in strengthening students' character based on emotional intelligence in the digital era. The research employed a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. The qualitative phase used a case study approach to explore the implementation of IRE and Guidance and counseling integration in schools, while the quantitative phase measured students' emotional intelligence and character through structured questionnaires. The findings revealed that IRE plays an important role in internalizing moral and religious values, whereas Guidance and counseling contributes to improving emotional regulation and social interaction. Quantitative results showed that 28% of students had high emotional intelligence, 54% moderate, and 18% low. However, the integration between IRE and Guidance and counseling remains partial and unsystematic. This study proposes an integrative model positioning IRE as the source of values, emotional intelligence as the mediating variable, and Guidance and counseling as the psychological intervention approach. The model contributes to the development of holistic character education through the integration of cognitive, affective, and social dimensions.*

Keywords:

Islamic Religious Education, Guidance and counseling, Character Education, Emotional Intelligence, Digital Era

Introduction

Strengthening students' character is a strategic issue in contemporary education, especially in the digital era. The phenomenon of low digital communication ethics, aggressive behavior on social media, and weak self-control shows that education has not succeeded in building a balance between intellectual intelligence and student character. In the context of national education, character strengthening is an important part of realizing the goals of education, as stated in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003, namely, forming human beings who have faith, piety, noble character, and responsibility. Based on initial observations across several schools, some students still showed low emotional control, a lack of empathy, and weak discipline in their use of digital media.

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning in schools still tends to be oriented towards cognitive and normative aspects, so that it has not fully touched the affective and behavioral dimensions of students. Research shows that the internalization of character values through Islamic Religious Education learning significantly influences students' religious and social behavior (Muthoharoh, 2021).

Guidance and Counseling services are important for helping students develop their potential, address psychological issues, and build social skills. From the

perspective of emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize, manage, and express emotions appropriately is an important factor in the formation of students' character (Goleman, 1995).

Islamic Religious Education learning shapes students' religious character by fostering the internalization of moral and spiritual values (Abdi, 2021). Another study confirms that emotional intelligence affects students' social skills, self-control, and behavior in the educational environment (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023). Most of the research still discusses Islamic Religious Education, Guidance and Counseling, and emotional intelligence separately. Studies that integrate these three aspects into a single, systematic conceptual model remain relatively limited.

Although various studies have demonstrated the contribution of Islamic Religious Education to the formation of students' religious character and the role of emotional intelligence in the development of social behavior and self-control, most studies still treat the two aspects separately. Research on Guidance and Counseling services also focuses more on addressing students' psychological problems rather than systematically integrating them with the internalization of religious values. As a result, there is no conceptual model that comprehensively connects Islamic Religious Education, emotional intelligence, and Guidance and counseling as a single strategy to strengthen students' character in the digital era. This gap is the main focus of the research.

In light of these problems, this study aims to develop an integrative model of Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and counseling to strengthen students' character through emotional intelligence in the digital era. The novelty of this research lies in the development of a model that positions Islamic Religious Education as a source of value internalization, emotional intelligence as a mediating variable, and Guidance and Counseling as a psychological intervention approach in the formation of students' character.

The formulation of the problem in this study is: How to develop an integrative model of Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling grounded in emotional intelligence to strengthen students' character in the digital era? This research question serves as the basis for preparing a conceptual model that integrates religious, psychological, and social dimensions in the formation of students' character. This research is expected to make theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic education studies and character education, as well as practical contributions for Islamic Religious Education teachers, school counselors, and education policymakers in building a more holistic and integrative character education system.

Method

This study uses a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory (Qual→Quan) design. This design aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the integration of Islamic Religious Education (Islamic Religious Education) and guidance and counseling to strengthen students' character through emotional intelligence. The mixed-methods approach was chosen because it combined the

depth of qualitative analysis with the reinforcement of quantitative data to produce a more comprehensive interpretation of the research (Creswell, 2014).

The first stage of the research was conducted qualitatively using a case study approach. This stage aims to explore in depth the practice of integrating Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling in schools. The case study was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the phenomenon holistically, contextually, and deeply, grounded in the experiences of the informants. In the second stage, the research continued using a quantitative approach to strengthen the qualitative findings by measuring students' emotional intelligence and character levels.

The research was conducted at one of the Senior High Schools in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, which actively provides Islamic Religious Education and counseling services. The selection of research locations was purposive, based on the relevance of the school to the research focus.

The research subjects at the qualitative stage were selected purposively. The research informants at the qualitative stage consisted of 10 people selected purposively: 1 school principal, 2 Islamic Religious Education teachers, 2 Guidance and Counseling teachers, and 5 students who were considered actively involved in character-strengthening programs in schools. The selection of informants is based on their experience, involvement, and knowledge regarding the implementation of character education through the integration of Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling.

At the quantitative stage, the research population is all students in the school. The research sample was taken using the proportional random sampling technique. The research sample consisted of 60 students, selected proportionally from several classes. The quantitative findings in this study are not intended to generalize to the wider population, but rather to reinforce and confirm the qualitative findings in the context of the research.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Male	28	46,7%
Women	32	53,3%
Class X	20	33,3%
Class XI	20	33,3%
Class XII	20	33,3%

Data collection techniques at the qualitative stage include in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with school principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, and students to gather information on the implementation of integrating Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling to strengthen students' character. Observations were made on the learning process of Islamic Religious Education, guidance and counseling services, and school activities related to character

education. Documentation is used to obtain supporting data, including syllabi, lesson plans, guidance and counseling programs, school rules, and other relevant documents.

At the quantitative stage, data were collected using a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Emotional intelligence instruments are compiled based on the indicators outlined by Goleman: self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Meanwhile, student character instruments were developed based on indicators of religious character, discipline, responsibility, social concern, and tolerance.

The content validity test was conducted by two experts with competence in Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and counseling, and the test was deemed suitable for use with several editorial improvements. Furthermore, the reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's alpha. The test results showed that the reliability values for the emotional intelligence instrument (0.87) and the student character instrument (0.85) were very high, indicating that both are highly reliable and suitable for use as research data-collection tools.

Qualitative data analysis uses the interactive model of [Miles and Huberman \(1994\)](#), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. To maintain data validity, the source triangulation technique and the triangulation method are used. Meanwhile, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, and score categorization, to describe students' emotional intelligence and character.

Data integration in mixed-methods research occurs during the interpretation of results, as qualitative and quantitative findings are linked. Quantitative data were used to strengthen the results of the qualitative exploration, thereby producing a more comprehensive understanding of the integrative model of Islamic Religious Education and guidance and counseling for strengthening students' character through emotional intelligence. To increase the credibility of the research results, the researcher conducts member checking with the main informant to ensure the researcher's interpretation aligns with the informant's experience in Islamic Religious Education. This step is taken to ensure the research findings have high confidence and can describe the empirical conditions objectively and in depth.

Results and Discussion

Results

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning in Character Strengthening

Islamic Religious Education significantly strengthens students' character. Islamic Religious Education teachers not only convey learning materials but also serve as moral examples in shaping students' religious behavior. As a result of the interview, Islamic Religious Education teachers consistently integrate character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social care through daily habits in the learning process.

One of the teachers of Islamic Religious Education stated: "It is not enough to just welcome Islamic Religious Education theory, but also how students can familiarize themselves with these values in their daily lives." In addition to presenting Islamic Religious Education material, the internalization of character values is also carried out through religious habituation activities, such as joint prayer, cults, learning reflection, and moral advice at the end of each lesson. Observations indicate that these activities can foster a religious atmosphere that supports the development of students' character. However, the implementation of character education in Islamic Religious Education learning remains implicit and is not structured within a systematic learning model.

These findings show that Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in shaping students' morals, particularly by strengthening the religious dimension and social ethics. The results of this study align with [Lickona's \(1991\)](#) view, which emphasizes that character education must be carried out through consistent habituation of moral values in the educational environment.

The Role of Guidance and Counseling in the Development of Emotional Intelligence

The study's results show that guidance and counseling services play an important role in helping students develop emotional intelligence. The Guidance and Counseling teacher revealed that most of the problems students face at school are related to emotional control, social conflicts, low motivation to learn, and difficulties in interacting healthily in the school environment and on digital media. One of the Guidance and Counseling teachers explains: "Many students actually understand what is good and what is bad, but they have difficulty controlling their emotions when faced with social pressure and conflict with their peers."

The findings were reinforced by interviews with students, who often reported having difficulty controlling their emotions when facing personal problems and when interacting on social media. This condition shows that understanding moral values alone is not enough to form positive behavior without good emotional management skills.

In the practice of Guidance and Counseling services, teachers use individual and group counseling, along with a persuasive approach grounded in religious values, to help students develop self-awareness, empathy, and self-control. The approach shows that Guidance and Counseling services have a strategic role in strengthening students' emotional dimension as part of character education.

The results of this study strengthen [Goleman's \(1995\)](#) theory of emotional intelligence, which holds that the ability to recognize and manage emotions is an important factor in individuals' success in building social relationships and engaging in moral behavior.

Quantitative Data on Emotional Intelligence & Character:

Table 2. Student's Emotional Intelligence Level

Category	Percentage
High	28%
Medium	54%
Low	18%

Table 3. Integrative Indicators of Character and Emotional Intelligence

El Aspects	El Indicators	Character Value (Islamic Religious Education)
Self-awareness	Recognizing self-emotions	Honesty
Self-control	Managing emotions	Patience
Motivation	Internal Encouragement	Responsibilities
Empathy	Understanding others	Concern
Social skills	Social Interaction	Tolerance

The quantitative data analysis showed that students' emotional intelligence was in the medium range. Among the total research respondents, 28% were in the high category, 54% in the medium category, and 18% in the low category.

These findings show that most students already have quite strong emotional abilities, especially in self-awareness and social relationships. However, some students still experience difficulties controlling emotions and managing social conflicts.

In addition, the study's results show a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and students' character values. Students with high emotional intelligence tend to exhibit better religious behavior, discipline, responsibility, and social concern than those with low emotional intelligence.

These findings show that emotional intelligence serves as a mediator in the process of internalizing character values. In other words, the religious values acquired by students through Islamic Religious Education will be more effectively realized in behavior when supported by strong emotional management skills.

Integration of Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling

This study found that the integration of Islamic Religious Education and guidance and counseling in schools remains partial and is not systematically structured. Collaboration between Islamic Religious Education teachers and Guidance and Counseling teachers is generally informal, focusing on students with behavioral and disciplinary problems.

The principal stated that the school supports religious- and emotionally-based character building, but does not have a standard integration model for Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling services.

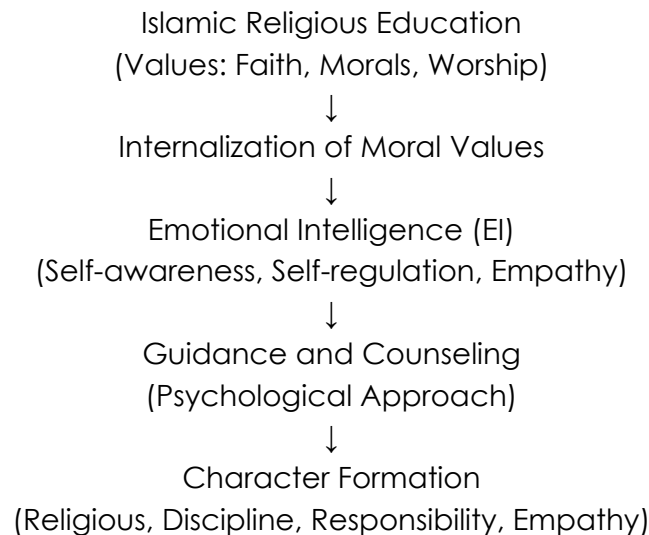
Nonetheless, several forms of integrative practice were found that showed the potential for the development of collaborative models, such as: 1) Counseling based on religious values. 2) Collaboration between Islamic Religious Education teachers and Guidance and Counseling teachers in student development. 3) Spiritual strengthening in counseling services. 4) Religious habituation as part of character education.

The findings show that integrating Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling has great potential to build a more holistic character education.

Islamic religious education serves as a source of moral and spiritual values, while Guidance and Counseling help students internalize these values through psychological and emotional approaches.

Integrative Model of Islamic Religious Education–Guidance And Counseling in Emotional Intelligence-Based Character Strengthening

The following is a conceptual model resulting from the research:



Based on the research results, an integrative model of Islamic Religious Education and guidance and counseling to strengthen character through emotional intelligence was developed. This model positions Islamic Religious Education as the primary source of values encompassing faith, worship, and morals. These values are then internalized through strengthening emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-control, empathy, motivation, and social skills.

In this model, counseling tutoring services serve as a psychological intervention approach that helps students manage emotions and apply moral values in their daily lives. The model's final output is the formation of student characters who are religious, disciplined, responsible, tolerant, and socially concerned.

This integrative model shows that effective character education requires synergy between religious values, approaches, and psychological approaches. Thus, character strengthening is not only carried out through the transmission of moral knowledge but also through the development of students' emotional awareness and social experiences.

Discussion

The study's findings show that strengthening students' character cannot be achieved solely through normative and cognitive approaches; it also requires strengthening the emotional and social dimensions. Islamic religious education makes an important contribution to the development of students' moral and religious values. Still, the effectiveness of internalizing these values is greatly influenced by students' ability to manage emotions and social behavior.

The results of this research are about moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In the context of this study, Islamic Religious Education learning plays a role in moral development by presenting Islamic Religious Education values and religious teachings. At the same time, guidance and counseling services contribute to the moral feeling aspect by strengthening students' emotional awareness. The integration of the two encourages the formation of moral action in students' daily behavior.

In addition, the research findings confirm that an individual's success is not determined solely by intellectual intelligence but also by the ability to manage emotions, build empathy, and establish healthy social relationships. In the context of character education, emotional intelligence serves as a mediator, connecting understanding of moral values with the enactment of real behavior.

In the digital era, the challenges of character education have become increasingly complex due to the influence of social media, the culture of instant gratification, and the decline in the quality of social interaction among teenagers. This finding aligns with [Jaya et al. \(2025\)](#), who found that integrating guidance and counseling services into learning in the digital era can increase students' motivation, confidence, and active involvement. This study also shows that the integration of Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling still faces obstacles in structural aspects and school policies. This condition shows that the success of character education is greatly influenced by managerial support and school policies. In this context, research in education management emphasizes that strengthening discipline, teacher coordination, and a collaborative school culture are important factors in the successful implementation of character education programs.

There is no systematic collaborative model because Guidance and Counseling integration occurs incidentally and depends on each teacher's initiative. Therefore, a school policy is needed to support collaboration between Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling teachers in preparing an integrated character education program.

The findings of this study show that the success of character education cannot be fully explained by the internalization of religious values, as emphasized in some previous Islamic Religious Education research. The results of the study show that students' ability to recognize, manage, and direct emotions is a factor that determines the success of applying these values in real behavior. Thus, this study expands the perspective of character education, which has tended to focus on the normative dimension, towards a more integrative approach by including emotional and psychological aspects as inseparable elements of the character formation process.

Conceptually, the integrative model produced in this study makes a new contribution to the development of emotional intelligence-based character education. The model places Islamic Religious Education as a source of value internalization, emotional intelligence as a mediating variable, and guidance and counseling as a psychological intervention approach. Thus, this research offers a

more holistic approach to character education by integrating cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social dimensions.

The results of this study show that integrating Islamic Religious Education and guidance and counseling is highly relevant to addressing educational challenges in the digital era. The development of information technology and social media has affected students' interaction patterns, behaviors, and ways of thinking, so that character problems are no longer limited to violations of conventional norms, but also include low digital ethics, increased individualism, and weak emotional control in virtual spaces. This condition demands an educational approach that is not only oriented to the transmission of moral knowledge but also to the sustainable strengthening of students' emotional and social abilities. In this context, the integration of Islamic Religious Education and Guidance and Counseling is important because it can connect the spiritual, emotional, and psychological dimensions in the process of forming students' character.

This study finds that character education grounded in religious values will be more effective when supported by a counseling approach that attends to students' emotional well-being. The study showed that collaboration between religious teachers and school counselors increased self-awareness and social empathy and effectively controlled student behavior. In addition, emotional intelligence is significantly related to students' social behavior and school discipline. This shows that the ability to manage emotions is an important factor in successfully internalizing character values in daily life.

In addition, this study shows that counseling services grounded in Islamic values can be a strategic approach to more humanely building students' character. Counseling approaches that integrate spiritual values have been proven to help students build better self-awareness, reflection skills, and emotional control. Thus, character education is not only understood as a normative moral development process, but also as a psychological mentoring process that helps students internalize religious values in real behavior.

Furthermore, the integrative model produced in this study shows that the success of character education requires synergy between educational elements in schools. Islamic Religious Education teachers cannot work alone in shaping students' character, nor do Guidance and Counseling teachers need the support of religious values to ensure counseling services have a strong moral and spiritual foundation. Therefore, school policies are needed to encourage systematic collaboration through integrated character education programs, strengthen the school's religious culture, and develop emotional intelligence-based counseling services. With this synergy, character education in the digital era can be carried out in a more contextual, adaptive, and sustainable manner.

Theoretically, this study offers a conceptual development of the character education model by placing emotional intelligence as a connecting variable between the internalization of religious values and character behavior. In many previous studies, Islamic Religious Education and Counseling Services were presented as two parallel approaches. However, this study shows that the effectiveness of both is greatly influenced by students' ability to manage emotions,

build empathy, and develop self-awareness. Therefore, the resulting integrative model not only connects the religious and psychological dimensions but also explains the mechanisms by which religious values can be transformed into character behavior through the strengthening of emotional intelligence. These findings enrich the theory of character education by offering an integrative perspective on the spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions in the context of digital-era education.

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