Islamic Religious Pedagogy and Affective Literacy: Constructing Socio-Emotional Education Frameworks

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Abstract:

The demand for socio-emotional competencies in education increasingly emphasizes the importance of integrating affective literacy into Islamic pedagogy. This study aims to develop a framework for socio-emotional education grounded in Islamic values by examining affective literacy practices in religious learning. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations, non-formal activities, and document analysis. These data were then analyzed through data condensation, display, and verification. The results of the study show three main findings: first, Islamic pedagogy is successfully integrated with affective literacy by linking verses and hadiths to students' emotional experiences; second, non-formal activities function as a socio-emotional laboratory to train empathy, patience, and cooperation; third, these practices produce a comprehensive framework that includes Qur'anic values, reflective learning, non-formal practices, and ongoing development. This study contributes by offering an Islamic alternative to the Western Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) model. This study recommends the application of an Islamic-based socio-emotional framework to strengthen moral and emotional intelligence in various educational institutions.

Key Words: *Islamic Pedagogy, Affective Literacy, Socio-Emotional Education, Character Formation*

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the rapid flow of globalization and the development of digital technology, Muslim communities face significant challenges in maintaining a balance between intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intelligence. Islamic religious education is often portrayed as a moral bulwark; however, social reality indicates that these noble values have not yet fully taken root in the behavior of the younger generation (Ba-Aoum et al., 2024; Schmidt et al., 2024; Seo, 2023). The increasing intolerance, bullying in schools, and declining empathy reflect how religious education remains predominantly cognitive. Several character education surveys even show that high levels of spiritual knowledge do not always correlate with positive social attitudes (Assylbekova et al., 2024; Brandt

et al., 2023). This situation highlights the need for Islamic education to extend beyond merely teaching memorization and rules, also to foster emotional awareness and social skills. Therefore, integrating affective literacy into Islamic religious pedagogy is a crucial agenda to address the needs of the wider community.

If examined more closely, the fundamental problem lies in the education system's imbalance, which still emphasises cognitive achievement to the exclusion of other aspects. Madrasas and Islamic schools often prioritise religious exam scores and memorisation, but provide limited opportunities for developing emotional management, empathy, and collaboration skills (Fithriani et al., 2024; Mahmud & Malik, 2024). As a result, a generation is born that is theoretically proficient in understanding religious texts, but often struggles to apply them in everyday social interactions. Educational psychology research shows that low affective literacy increases the potential for interpersonal conflict and weakens social adaptability (Gunawan et al., 2023; Hussein et al., 2020). Unbeknownst to us, religious education that lacks affective engagement risks producing emotionally drained students. Therefore, it is time to address this problem seriously by formulating a new framework that balances Islamic religious pedagogy and socio-emotional education.

In the classroom, this phenomenon is evident. A religious teacher often spends most of the time giving a lengthy lecture, while students passively take notes or memorize verses. After the lesson is over, many students continue to exhibit behaviour that contradicts the material they just learned, such as engaging in bullying, belittling each other, or ignoring friends who are struggling (Mujahid, 2021; Sarkadi et al., 2020). A similar finding was reported in a national survey on character education, where many students who received intensive religious instruction still demonstrated poor social skills. This situation highlights a significant disparity between the ideals of Islamic religious education and its actual practice. The religious knowledge taught does not fully address the emotional realm of students (Abbas et al., 2021). From this, it is clear that integrating affective literacy is urgently needed to bridge theory with real social practice.

Many academic studies have been conducted on Islamic religious education, particularly regarding its role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation. Several researchers, including Mohd et al. (2024), Saleem (2021), and Dorji et al. (2024), have emphasised the effectiveness of religious education in instilling the values of discipline, responsibility, and obedience. However, upon closer examination, the majority of these studies still focus on normative aspects and external behaviour, as noted by McLaren et al. (2024) and Taştekin (2021). Instead, they argue that more subtle affective dimensions, such as the ability to understand one's emotions, express feelings healthily, and manage social relationships, are often overlooked. As a result, existing literature tends to emphasise "what to do" without explaining "how students can deeply

experience it." This reveals a gap that needs to be addressed: how Islamic pedagogy can be integrated with affective literacy so that religious values truly live out in students' daily lives.

Meanwhile, international literature on social-emotional learning (SEL) provides a strong picture of the importance of emotional education in supporting students' academic and social success. Numerous Western studies have demonstrated that integrating emotional aspects into the curriculum can reduce deviant behaviour and increase empathy among students, as seen in studies by Ptaszek et al. (2023), Yahya et al. (2024), and Ghiasvand (2024). Unfortunately, these studies are rarely contextualised within the framework of Islamic pedagogy. Some adaptation efforts have been made, but they often fall into the trap of paradigm and cultural differences. In other words, previous research still leaves a crucial gap: how to formulate a socio-emotional education model that is not only compatible with modern theory but also aligned with Quranic values and Islamic tradition. This research aims to address this gap by designing an integrative, Islamic-based framework that is both relevant and applicable.

This is where the novelty of this research lies. Rather than simply adopting the Western SEL model or repeating the traditional cognitive pattern of Islamic religious education, this research aims to integrate the two within a new framework: Islamic religious pedagogy combined with affective literacy. This approach offers state-of-the-art value because it focuses not only on the transfer of religious knowledge but also on the development of emotional and social awareness as part of worship and morality. Thus, religious education is no longer understood merely as rules to be memorised, but rather as a life experience that shapes personal integrity (Rustan, 2021). This research is crucial to complete, as it has the potential to enrich academic discourse and provide practical guidance for Islamic schools, madrasas, and educational institutions.

Based on the description above, the research problem can be formulated as a central question: how to design a socio-emotional educational framework based on Islamic religious pedagogy and affective literacy? This question arises from the concern that the existing Islamic education system remains strongly imbalanced in cognition but weak in affect. The tentative answer proposed is that integrating Islamic pedagogy with affective literacy will create a more comprehensive educational approach, balancing aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and emotional skills. This argument also emphasises that Islamic education must produce individuals who are not only intelligent in understanding texts but also sensitive to their social context.

This research's contribution is expected to be present on two levels. First, conceptually, it offers a new theoretical framework that connects Islamic religious pedagogy with affective literacy as the foundation of socio-emotional education. Second, practically, it provides guidance for teachers, curricula, and Islamic educational institutions to develop learning that is more humanistic, dialogical, and relevant to contemporary needs. This research also argues that

affective literacy should not be seen as an addition but rather as the core of proper Islamic education, shaping individuals who are knowledgeable, moral, and empathetic. Thus, this research not only addresses the shortcomings of previous literature but also provides concrete solutions for the world of contemporary Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was chosen because the research not only aims to describe the reality of Islamic religious education but also to examine in-depth the dynamics of affective literacy within the specific context of educational institutions (Sulistiyo, 2023). Case studies offer an opportunity to explore real-life practices, experiences, and interactions, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Islamic religious pedagogy and socio-emotional education. This design was also chosen based on its suitability to the research objective, which is to formulate a contextual educational framework. Thus, case studies allow researchers to explore in detail how religious values, learning strategies, and affective literacy interact in students' daily lives within the school environment.

The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid (MANJ), an Islamic secondary education institution under the auspices of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, Paiton, Probolinggo. This location was chosen because MA Nurul Jadid has unique characteristics: it integrates a modern formal education system with a strong Islamic boarding school culture. This madrasah is renowned for its emphasis on the cognitive aspects of religion and its focus on moral development through religious activities, studies, and character building. This makes it an ideal location to examine the relevance between Islamic religious pedagogy and affective literacy, particularly in building a socio-emotional educational framework. Furthermore, MA Nurul Jadid is renowned as an innovative madrasah that strives to balance the national curriculum with the needs of affective-based Islamic education, thus aligning with the research theme.

Data was collected through three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021). Observations were conducted to record teacher-student interactions in religious instruction and non-formal activities containing affective values, such as organisational activities and religious study groups. In-depth interviews were conducted with the madrasah principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, dormitory supervisors, and students to explore their perceptions, experiences, and strategies for integrating affective literacy into religious pedagogy. Documentation included the collection of curricula, lesson plans, religious activity records, and student guidance reports. The combination of these three techniques was chosen to provide comprehensive data, so that the research

results were not based on a single perspective, but rather on a triangulation of sources and methods.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, as discussed in detail in the research by Dakir et al. (2021). The first stage is data condensation, which involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying field data to align with the research focus. For example, only data relevant to Islamic pedagogy and affective literacy are retained. The second stage involves data display, where findings are compiled into matrices, narratives, and interview quotations to demonstrate relationship patterns clearly. The third stage is data verification, which involves drawing tentative conclusions that are then confirmed through the analysis of additional data. This process is carried out cyclically until a consistent picture of the socio-emotional educational framework at MA Nurul Jadid is obtained. Therefore, data analysis is not linear, but somewhat iterative to ensure the validity of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

This research findings section presents the main findings emerging from observations, interviews, and documentation at MA Nurul Jadid. The primary focus is on how educational practices at this madrasah are not solely cognitively oriented but also integrate affective and spiritual dimensions. The research findings are then systematically outlined in three major sub-findings, highlighting the integration of Islamic pedagogy with affective literacy, non-formal activities as socio-emotional laboratories, and an Islamic-based socio-emotional educational framework.

Integration of Islamic Pedagogy with Affective Literacy Practices in Learning

The integration of Islamic pedagogy with affective literacy in the context of this research is understood as a process that unites the cognitive, spiritual, and emotional dimensions in learning practices. Islamic pedagogy, which typically emphasizes mastery of sacred texts such as the Qur'an, hadith, and fiqh, is operationalized at MA Nurul Jadid by linking these values to students' emotional experiences. This is evident in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher's strategy, which emphasises not only memorising verses and laws but also inviting students to reflect on the emotional meaning behind the verses, such as patience, empathy, or compassion. With this approach, religious learning not only shapes intellectual understanding but also builds students' social and emotional sensitivity, which is more evident in everyday life.

Field findings from interviews with teachers and students corroborate this integration. An Islamic Religious Education teacher explained, "When I teach verses about patience, I do not just tell them to memorise them. I ask them to tell me about the last time they truly had to control their emotions." Meanwhile, a student said, "I find it easier to understand the meaning of patience when I am

asked to tell a story about a conflict with a friend. It feels more alive than just memorising verses." From these two quotes, it can be inferred that religious teachings that combine the affective and cognitive dimensions make students feel more relevant to religious teachings in real life. The teacher acts as a facilitator who fosters emotional awareness, while students become active subjects who reflect on their own experiences. This pattern demonstrates the close connection between religious understanding and emotional literacy.

Classroom observations further strengthened the findings from the interviews. In one learning session, the teacher began the lesson by reading a verse about patience and then allowed several students to share their personal experiences. Students appeared enthusiastic, and the classroom atmosphere became conducive; each story was met with attention from their peers. Researchers noted that this activity not only increased participation but also created a warm and reflective emotional atmosphere. This confirms that the affective literacy approach in Islamic pedagogy makes religious learning more meaningful. Rather than simply transferring knowledge, the classroom transformed into a dialogic space that fostered empathy, solidarity, and social sensitivity in students. These observations demonstrate how the integration of religious and affective values is practically manifested in everyday classroom interactions.

Based on the descriptions of the interviews and observations above, it can be reaffirmed that the integration of Islamic pedagogy with affective literacy is a consistent practice at MA Nurul Jadid. Teachers play an active role in connecting sacred texts with students' emotional experiences, while students respond positively with reflective engagement. The emerging pattern is the creation of a learning cycle that involves religious understanding, emotional reflection, and the strengthening of social character. A restatement of these findings confirms that religious education does not stop at the cognitive aspect, but instead develops into a space for holistic character formation. The method of describing the visible pattern demonstrates that this approach is practical in creating a classroom environment that fosters the growth of spiritual awareness and emotional intelligence, ultimately strengthening the role of religious education in forming individuals with faith, morals, and empathy.

Non-formal Activities as a Socio-Emotional Laboratory

In the context of this research, non-formal activities are defined as all student activities outside of formal school hours at MA Nurul Jadid, including halaqah (student group), student organisations, dormitory mentoring, and Islamic-themed extracurricular activities. These activities not only aim to broaden knowledge and skills but also serve as concrete means for learning affective literacy. They are called socio-emotional laboratories because in them, students practice managing conflict, expressing emotions, building cooperation, and learning to internalise Islamic values , such as deliberation, tolerance, and

brotherhood. Within the framework of Islamic pedagogy, these non-formal spaces serve to complement cognitive learning with real-life, affective experiences, allowing character formation to occur more deeply and effectively.

An interview with a student organisation advisor revealed that informal activities often serve as a platform for emotional learning. He stated: "When there are differences of opinion in OSIM meetings, we direct students not just to vote, but to sit together and deliberate. From there, they learn to be patient, listen, and understand their peers' perspectives." This statement suggests that minor conflicts within the organisation are viewed as opportunities to develop emotional intelligence. The researcher interprets the deliberation approach as not merely a formal problem-solving mechanism, but rather a vehicle for developing reflective habits, communication skills, and self-control. Thus, affective literacy develops through direct experiences that demand students' emotional engagement in real-life situations.
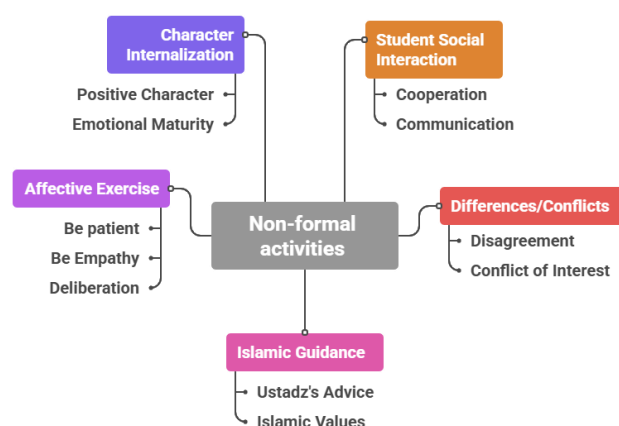
Figure 1. Non-formal Activities as a Socio-Emotional Laboratory

Field observations revealed the fundamental dynamics of this process. During a student organisation meeting, researchers observed minor tensions arising from the differing views of two groups on how to implement an activity. Rather than allowing the conflict to escalate, the advisor intervened with instructions to apply the principle of deliberation. The initially heated discussion then softened; students began to listen to each other, and some even gave in for the sake of togetherness. This situation demonstrated that affective values are not only taught but also practised in a realistic and challenging setting. Researchers interpreted this type of activity as effective in fostering self-regulation and social awareness, as students learn to set aside their personal egos for the sake of collective goals.

Overall, these findings suggest that non-formal activities at MA Nurul Jadid truly function as a socio-emotional laboratory. Students are not only taught theories of empathy, patience, or deliberation, but they are also repeatedly practised in fundamental interactions, both in halaqah, organisations, and dormitories. The data pattern that is visible is: collective activity → emergence of

emotional interaction → Islamic guidance → affective internalisation → character strengthening. This suggests that affective literacy-based character education is more effective when delivered through repeated life experiences, rather than just instructions. Thus, non-formal activities at madrasah are not just time fillers, but important pillars within the framework of Islamic socio-emotional education.

Islamic-Based Socio-Emotional Education Framework

The most significant finding of this study is the formation of a unique Islamic-based socio-emotional educational framework at MA Nurul Jadid. This framework was born from the synergy between the formal curriculum, Islamic boarding school culture, and affective literacy practices implemented by teachers and mentors. Important elements in this framework include: (1) the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values as a spiritual foundation, (2) reflective learning that links religious teachings to students' emotional experiences, (3) socio-emotional practices in non-formal activities, and (4) ongoing development through dormitory and extracurricular activities. The result is an educational model that not only teaches "what to know" and "what to do," but also "how to feel deeply." This framework demonstrates that Islamic education can provide a more authentic socio-emotional approach, distinct from the Western social-emotional learning (SEL) model, as it is grounded in religious values and contextualised within Islamic boarding school culture.

To strengthen the validity of the findings, the researcher presents the results of observations of activities at MA Nurul Jadid in the form of the following table, which summarizes the dimensions of the Islamic-based socio-emotional education framework:

Table 1. Results of observations of activities at MA Nurul Jadid

Framework Dimensions	Real Practice at MA Nurul Jadid	Socio-Emotional Impact
Quranic & Hadith Values	PAI teachers emphasise the meaning of patience and gratitude in every lesson	Students are more reflective & empathetic.
Reflective Learning	Discussion of personal experiences related to emotional conflict	Students are trained to manage emotions
Non-formal activities	Deliberation in organisations & halaqah	Students learn cooperation & tolerance
Dormitory Development	Moral guidance & joint worship activities	Strengthening discipline & sense of responsibility

Table 1 shows that the Islamic-based socio-emotional educational framework at MA Nurul Jadid has four main, mutually supporting dimensions. First, Qur'anic and Hadith values serve as the spiritual foundation that shapes students' awareness of faith. Second, reflective classroom learning connects sacred texts with personal experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of the context. Third, non-formal activities serve as a social practice space, where students practice empathy, deliberation, and conflict resolution skills. Fourth,

dormitory development serves as a continuous platform that internalises morals through disciplined living together. Researchers interpret that the existence of these four pillars makes the educational framework more systematic, integrative, and in line with the madrasah's Islamic identity.

The researcher's observations show that this framework is genuinely present in students' daily practices. For example, in the tafsir (Islamic exegesis) class, the teacher not only explains the textual meaning of verses but also relates them to students' feelings when facing life's trials. In the dormitory, the researcher observed the instructor emphasising the value of brotherhood when students differed on duties. In organisational activities, deliberation always takes precedence over voting, allowing conflicts to be resolved peacefully. This phenomenon demonstrates the mutually reinforcing continuity between formal, non-formal, and informal spaces. The researcher's interpretation confirms that this framework naturally emerged from the synergy of various educational aspects at madrasah, rather than being merely the result of a written curriculum.

It can be reaffirmed that the Islamic-based socio-emotional education framework at MA Nurul Jadid comprises four main elements: the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values, reflective learning, non-formal activities, and dormitory development. The data pattern shows a consistent flow: spiritual values → cognitive-affective reflection → social practice → internalisation of character. This restatement makes it easier for readers to see that religious education at this madrasah not only transfers knowledge but also forms individuals who are faithful, moral, empathetic, and socially responsible. Thus, this framework presents a distinctive model of Islamic socio-emotional education, while also making an important contribution to the development of Islamic pedagogy in the modern era.

Discussion

The discussion of this research demonstrates the integration of Islamic pedagogy with affective literacy in learning, non-formal activities, and a unique Islamic-based socio-emotional educational framework. These findings align with research by Rustandi (2023), Malla et al. (2023), and Herlina (2023), which confirms that socio-emotional education effectively builds empathy and self-regulation when integrated into the curriculum. The difference is that the approach at MA Nurul Jadid emphasises the spiritual basis of the Quran and Hadith, which gives religious meaning to students' emotional experiences. This demonstrates a fundamental difference from Western models of social-emotional learning (SEL), which tend to be secular in nature. Therefore, this study fills a gap in the literature by adding an Islamic perspective as a socio-emotional foundation that more fully unifies cognitive, spiritual, and emotional aspects.

When compared with research by Nursikin (2021) and Zamroni et al. (2020) on multicultural religious education, the findings at MA Nurul Jadid reveal a pattern that places greater emphasis on the affective dimension. While

previous research has focused on strengthening tolerance through textual discourse, the results of this study indicate that affective literacy grows stronger when students are involved in real-life experiences, such as organisational deliberations, dormitory development, and reflection on personal experiences in class. This distinction makes a new contribution: Islamic religious education not only teaches doctrine and values, but also transforms them into a living, emotional, and social experience. The theoretical implication is that Islamic pedagogy can be developed into an affective-reflective model, rather than merely a cognitive-normative one (Ismail et al., 2024; Usman et al., 2021).

Non-formal activities that function as socio-emotional laboratories also support research findings by Munawwaroh (2024), Jali (2025), and Aziz (2025), which state that emotional learning is more successful through direct experience. However, a significant contribution of this research is the evidence that such experiences need to be framed within Islamic values to avoid being trapped in emotionally neutral practices. For example, student organisation deliberations not only hone communication skills but also instil patience, brotherhood, and responsibility, as emphasised in Islamic teachings. The practical implication of this is that madrasas can make non-formal activities not just a way to fill time, but a systematic vehicle for developing affective Islamic character (Nisa' & R, 2024; Rizkiyah Hasanah, 2024).

The Islamic-based socio-emotional educational framework that emerged from this research also aligns with holistic education theory, as presented by Widiasari (2024) and Herlina (2024), which emphasises the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects. The madrasah framework, however, adds a unique Islamic boarding school context with four main pillars: Qur'anic-Hadith values, reflective learning, non-formal practices, and dormitory development. These findings provide a theoretical contribution in the form of an Islamic socio-emotional education model that could serve as an alternative to the Western SEL framework. Practically, this framework can serve as a reference for Islamic education policy, particularly in madrasas, to develop more integrative and contextual character development programs.

Overall, this study confirms that Islamic pedagogy combined with affective literacy can produce holistic character education. The findings of this study not only strengthen the literature on the importance of emotional education but also expand it with an Islamic perspective rooted in sacred texts and Islamic boarding school traditions. The theoretical implication is the need to construct a new paradigm in Islamic pedagogy that is more reflective and affective. Meanwhile, practical implications include the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching methods based on emotional reflection, optimising non-formal activities as socio-emotional spaces, and establishing a madrasah curriculum that balances cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects. Thus, this study makes a significant contribution to both academic discourse and the practice of contemporary Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study found that integrating Islamic pedagogy with affective literacy can produce a unique Islamic-based socio-emotional educational framework, as seen in practice at MA Nurul Jadid. This finding teaches an important lesson: religious education does not solely focus on the transfer of cognitive knowledge, but can also be operationalized to shape emotional sensitivity, spiritual reflection, and social skills. The four main pillars of Qur'anic and Hadith values, reflective learning, non-formal activities, and dormitory development, are proven to support one another in creating a more authentic and meaningful learning experience. The scientific contribution of this study lies in the development of an Islamic-based socio-emotional education model that not only serves as an alternative but also represents a significant differentiator from the Western social-emotional learning (SEL) framework. Thus, the results of this study enrich the Islamic pedagogy literature by providing a new perspective that affective literacy can be an important instrument in building a holistic, religious, and contextual education.

While these findings make a valuable contribution, the study also has limitations. First, the study's scope was limited to a single educational institution, so generalizations to other madrasas (Islamic schools) should be approached with caution. Second, the approach employed focused primarily on qualitative data, thus underexploring quantitative measures of the effectiveness of the socio-emotional education framework. Therefore, further research could be directed toward comparative studies across madrasas or Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) to assess the relevance of these findings in a broader context. Furthermore, the development of quantitative instruments to assess the framework's tangible impact on students' academic, spiritual, and socio-emotional outcomes is needed. With this approach, future research is expected not only to strengthen the framework's validity but also to transform it into an applicable model that can be applied across various levels of modern Islamic education.

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