

Teacher Strategies in Developing Students' Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Binjai

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze teachers' strategies in developing students' spiritual and emotional intelligence at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Binjai. In the context of Islamic education, spiritual intelligence functions as the foundation for shaping moral values and faith, while emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in fostering emotional balance and students' social relationships. This research employed a qualitative method with a field study approach, supported by interviews with teachers and students conducted from late June to early August 2025. The findings indicate that teachers at MAN Binjai implement integrative learning strategies through role modeling, habituation of worship, Islamic counseling guidance, and collaborative approaches involving teachers, parents, and the school administration. Furthermore, emotional reinforcement strategies are carried out by building empathetic communication, applying humanistic classroom management, and organizing extracurricular activities based on Islamic values. These findings affirm the importance of synergy between academic, spiritual, and emotional strategies in shaping a generation of students with exemplary character.

Keywords: *Teacher Strategies; Spiritual Intelligence; Emotional Intelligence; MAN Binjai; Islamic Education.*

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Introduction

Education is one of the key instruments in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also possesses a holistic personality [1]. In the context of globalization, filled with various challenges, the role of education cannot be limited merely to the transfer of knowledge. Education must be able to cultivate spiritual values and self-control so that students can face the dynamics of modern life with resilience [2]. Therefore, formal educational institutions, particularly those with an Islamic foundation, are required to design strategies that can simultaneously develop students' spiritual and emotional aspects.

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN), as one of the Islamic educational institutions, holds a significant responsibility in producing a generation that is both knowledgeable and virtuous. MAN Binjai, located in the city of Binjai, North Sumatra, is a madrasah with unique characteristics, as most of its students come from Muslim families. The institution functions not only as a teaching center but also as a hub for fostering religious values and personality development. This highlights the increasingly vital role of teachers in madrasahs, as they serve not only as knowledge transmitters but also as role models in daily life.

Current phenomena among adolescents indicate serious challenges in the field of education. The increasing prevalence of deviant behavior, such as low discipline in learning, difficulty in controlling emotions, and violent acts within the school environment, serve as an alarming signal for all stakeholders. This situation underscores the urgent need to strengthen spiritual and emotional aspects in the educational process. For Madrasah Aliyah students, who are at a crucial stage of identity formation, an education that emphasizes spirituality and emotional control will significantly influence their character development in the future [3].

Spiritual intelligence serves as a moral foundation, enabling individuals to connect their lives with divine values. A student with high spiritual intelligence is able to frame every learning activity as an act of worship and possess a clear and meaningful life orientation [4]. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence is essential in training students to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions. The integration of both aspects leads to balanced individuals in terms of faith, morality, and social competence [5].

In everyday educational practice, teachers play a central role in developing students' spiritual and emotional intelligence [6]. Teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but also behavioral models imitated by students. The words, attitudes, and actions of teachers often leave a more profound impression than the lessons themselves [7]. Consequently, the strategies employed by teachers become a critical factor in shaping students' character, both spiritually and emotionally [8].

MAN Binjai has developed several flagship programs designed to nurture religious and moral character in its students. Programs such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation before lessons, and short sermons after the Zuhur prayer are examples of habituation that support the development of spiritual intelligence. However, the effectiveness of these programs largely depends on teachers' strategies in internalizing these values into students' daily lives. Teachers who consistently model good practices have a stronger influence than those who rely solely on verbal instructions.

In addition to spiritual reinforcement, teachers at MAN Binjai face the challenge of guiding students in managing their emotions. Adolescents, often characterized by emotional volatility, are prone to provocation, lack of self-control, and vulnerability to academic and social stress. In this context, teacher strategies emphasizing empathetic communication, humanistic classroom management, and Islamic counseling become crucial. These approaches not only help resolve conflicts but also train students to think clearly and act wisely when facing pressures.

The urgency of this study is further strengthened by the fact that much of the previous research has focused only on either spiritual or emotional intelligence in isolation. In the context of Islamic education, however, these two dimensions are interrelated and inseparable. Spiritual intelligence without emotional intelligence risks producing rigid personalities, whereas

emotional intelligence without spiritual grounding may result in pragmatic individuals lacking moral direction. Thus, the integration of teacher strategies in simultaneously developing both aspects is the primary focus of this research.

This study was conducted at MAN Binjai, involving teachers, students, and school administrators as data sources. The research focuses on teacher strategies in developing students' spiritual and emotional intelligence through classroom practices, worship habituation, extracurricular activities, and counseling services. Interviews were carried out from late June to early August 2025 to obtain a real picture of educational practices in the field. The data collected are expected to contribute scientifically to strengthening theories regarding the role of teachers in character development.

Based on the above background, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher strategies at MAN Binjai in fostering students' spiritual and emotional intelligence. The findings of this study are also expected to serve as references for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in designing more effective strategies to develop a generation that excels not only academically but also spiritually and emotionally. Thus, this research is relevant not only for MAN Binjai but also as a potential model for other Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

Literature Review

Spiritual intelligence (SQ) refers to the ability to relate life activities to deeper meaning, including transcendental values. From an Islamic perspective, spiritual intelligence is closely linked to faith, obedience, and the practice of religious teachings [9]. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence (EQ) encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as to empathize with others [10]. Several studies in Indonesia indicate that teachers play a vital role in shaping both spiritual and emotional intelligence through role modeling, habituation, and classroom management [11]. Previous research has largely focused on developing only one of these aspects, whereas this study emphasizes the integration of teacher strategies in developing both simultaneously at MAN Binjai.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with a field research design. The research site is Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Binjai, with the research subjects including religious studies teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, and students in grades XI and XII. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation of learning and extracurricular activities, as well as school documentation. The interviews were conducted from late June to early August 2025 to obtain an up-to-date overview of teachers' strategies in developing students' spiritual and emotional intelligence. Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive qualitative method, involving data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (Huberman & Miles, 2002), by comparing information from teachers, students, and school documents.

Result

4.1 Strategies for Developing Spiritual Intelligence through Role Modeling and Worship Habituation

The findings of this study reveal that teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Binjai position themselves as primary role models in fostering students' spiritual growth. Role modeling is considered the most effective strategy, as students tend to imitate what they observe rather than merely follow instructions. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers emphasize that their attitudes, both inside and outside the classroom, serve as lasting reflections for students. Thus, consistency in teachers' behavior becomes the key to instilling spiritual values.

One concrete example of role modeling is teachers' participation in worship activities alongside students. In an interview conducted on June 28, 2025, a PAI teacher explained: *"We always try to be present at the school mosque, leading prayers as imams, or at least joining*

congregational prayers with students. This way, students feel that what they do is also a practice exemplified by their teachers." This demonstrates that worship practices are not merely student obligations but also part of the school culture guided by teachers.

Worship habituation at MAN Binjai is also implemented through the *tadarus Al-Qur'an* program before classes begin. Each morning, students are directed to read the Qur'an for 10–15 minutes in turns, accompanied by teachers who provide recitation guidance. This activity not only strengthens Qur'an reading skills but also helps students start the day with spiritual values. A grade XI student expressed during an interview on July 5, 2025: *"We feel calmer and more ready to learn after reading the Qur'an together."*

In addition to *tadarus*, the short sermon (*kultum*) program after the noon congregational prayer serves as another habituation strategy, instilling spiritual values while training students' confidence. Every day, students are assigned in rotation to deliver brief sermons under teacher guidance. This activity not only hones rhetorical skills but also deepens religious understanding, with teachers ensuring the content aligns with proper Islamic values.

Worship habituation is further reinforced through the commemoration of Islamic holidays, which engage both students and teachers. For example, during the Islamic New Year or the Prophet's Birthday, students are encouraged to actively participate in religious competitions such as Qur'an recitation, Hadith memorization, and Islamic speech. Teachers act as facilitators, ensuring that each activity carries meaningful experiences and helps internalize spiritual values into students' daily lives.

An interview with a grade XII student on July 10, 2025 highlighted that teachers' consistency in providing role models serves as the main source of motivation. He stated: *"If our teachers only told us what to do without joining in, we might not be motivated. But because they always participate, we feel embarrassed to be lazy."* This underscores the importance of alignment between teachers' words and actions in shaping students' spiritual intelligence.

Research observations also found that teachers at MAN Binjai emphasize not only formal worship but also everyday morals. Teachers strive to demonstrate patience, humility, and courtesy in their interactions with students. For example, when students make mistakes, teachers prefer persuasive advice over harsh punishment. This indirectly teaches students that spirituality is not limited to ritual worship but also extends to behavior in daily life.

The implementation of these strategies is strongly supported by the school administration. In an interview on July 20, 2025, the principal affirmed: *"We want MAN Binjai to be recognized not only for academic achievements but also as a school that produces students with noble character. Therefore, all teachers must serve as role models for students."* This structural support ensures that the development of spirituality is not merely an individual initiative but a collective program of the school.

Nevertheless, the study also identified challenges in implementing these strategies. Some students remain inconsistent in participating in worship programs due to habits at home or external environments that are less supportive. Teachers respond to this challenge with a personal approach, such as providing individual guidance to less disciplined students. In this way, teachers strive to ensure that every student receives attention in their spiritual development process.

Overall, the strategies of role modeling and worship habituation implemented at MAN Binjai have proven effective in nurturing students' spiritual awareness. Congregational prayers, daily Qur'an recitation, *kultum*, and Islamic holiday celebrations form a strong religious culture within the school. Teachers' exemplary behavior further reinforces the internalization of spiritual values among students. Through these strategies, MAN Binjai successfully positions religious education not only as a subject but also as a lifestyle that shapes students' spiritual character.

4.2 Strategies for Developing Emotional Intelligence through Empathic Communication and Extracurricular Activities

The findings of this study indicate that the development of students' emotional intelligence at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Binjai is largely achieved through empathic communication approaches implemented by teachers, particularly Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers and homeroom teachers. Teachers recognize that adolescents are in an emotionally vulnerable phase; therefore, guidance must be carried out with a calming approach that involves attentive listening and providing space for students to express themselves.

In an interview on July 25, 2025, a BK teacher explained: *"We do not simply reprimand students when problems occur, but first listen to what they feel. Many students have emotional outbursts because they feel misunderstood. By listening, they become more open and can eventually be guided."* This statement highlights empathy as the core strategy in helping students manage their emotions.

One observed empathic communication strategy was the use of polite and understanding language in teacher–student interactions. Teachers avoided raising their voices or using demeaning words, instead choosing calming expressions. This approach made students feel respected and more receptive to advice. The researcher's classroom observation on July 29, 2025, showed how a teacher handled a conflict among students by initiating dialogue rather than imposing punishment.

An interview with a grade XII student on August 2, 2025 reinforced this finding. The student noted: *"Our teachers don't immediately get angry when we make mistakes. They usually ask what the problem is first, then help us find a solution. It makes us feel heard."* This statement illustrates how empathic communication not only de-escalates emotions but also fosters student trust in teachers as mentors.

Beyond empathic communication, emotional intelligence development was also cultivated through extracurricular activities designed to shape social and emotional character. MAN Binjai provides a range of activities such as scouting, the student council (OSIS), the Islamic spirituality organization (Rohis), and Islamic arts. These activities serve as platforms for students to practice cooperation, leadership, and healthy conflict resolution.

A scouting advisor in an interview on July 30, 2025 remarked: *"Through scouting, students are trained to be patient, disciplined, and able to control their emotions when facing challenges in the field. These values are very beneficial in their daily school life."* This confirms that extracurriculars are not mere leisure activities, but structured avenues for emotional education.

The student council (OSIS) also plays an important role in nurturing emotional intelligence. By engaging in organizational work, students learn to communicate with diverse individuals, resolve differences of opinion, and make collective decisions. A grade XI OSIS member explained on August 1, 2025: *"Sometimes we disagree in meetings, but our advisor teaches us how to express opinions properly without hurting others."* This provides students with real-life practice in managing emotions within social contexts.

Islamic arts activities, such as *marhaban*, *nasyid*, and Islamic drama, further offer effective outlets for channeling emotions positively. Through these, students can express their feelings in culturally and religiously meaningful ways. A cultural arts teacher interviewed on August 3, 2025 stated: *"Students who tend to be emotional are usually directed to arts activities. They can express themselves positively and more controllably."*

Overall, the study found that the combination of empathic communication and extracurricular participation significantly impacts the development of students' emotional intelligence. Students become more open, capable of managing conflict constructively, and empathetic toward others. The researcher also observed that students actively involved in extracurriculars displayed greater patience, cooperation, and discipline compared to their less active peers.

Thus, strategies for emotional intelligence development at MAN Binjai extend beyond formal classroom learning to include communication approaches and non-academic activities. Teachers act as facilitators who create emotionally supportive environments, while extracurricular activities provide practical arenas for students to exercise emotional skills. The synergy between these strategies positions MAN Binjai as an institution that not only imparts knowledge but also equips students with emotional competencies essential for navigating broader life challenges.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Binjai employ integrative strategies in developing students' spiritual and emotional intelligence. In the spiritual dimension, teachers emphasize consistent role modeling and worship habituation, enabling students to internalize religious behavior in their daily lives. Meanwhile, in the emotional dimension, the primary strategies include empathic communication, Islamic-based counseling, and educational extracurricular activities.

The synergy between these two dimensions highlights that teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as mentors who shape students' holistic character. The findings affirm the strategic role of teachers in nurturing a generation that excels not only academically but also embodies strong spiritual and emotional character—fully aligned with the vision of Islamic education.

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