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Efforts to Develop Children's Social-Emotional Skills at Bakti Kayu Kunyit Islamic Kindergarten

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Abstract

This qualitative case study investigates the effectiveness of Islamic value-based interventions in developing social-emotional competencies among children aged 4–6 years at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit. Data were collected over three months through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents, and analysis of behavioral documentation. Thematic analysis revealed significant improvements in children's emotional regulation (40–50% increase) and prosocial behaviors (104–219% increase). Daily Islamic routines, prophetic storytelling, and structured play-based activities provided a culturally resonant framework for scaffolding empathy, self-regulation, and conflict resolution. Teacher modeling and intentional emotional scaffolding emerged as pivotal mechanisms of change, while consistent parent-school collaboration further amplified positive outcomes. However, variability in pedagogical execution and moderate family engagement highlighted challenges related to teacher training and structural support. The study demonstrates that integrating Islamic moral education with evidence-based social-emotional learning strategies effectively addresses developmental gaps in early childhood. These findings offer a replicable, faith-integrated pedagogical model for educators seeking to nurture both psychological well-being and character formation during the critical golden period, while emphasizing the need for sustained professional development and flexible family partnership frameworks to optimize implementation.

Keyword: Social-Emotional Learning, Islamic Early Childhood Education, Teacher Scaffolding

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood, widely recognized as the “golden period,” represents a critical

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developmental window during which foundational cognitive, physical, and socioemotional capacities are rapidly established (Agustina et al., 2023; Alfiyanto, 2020; Mutmainnah & Elihami, 2023; Sriyono et al., 2022). Within this holistic developmental framework, social-emotional competence encompasses children's ability to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions, empathize with others, and engage in prosocial interactions that align with societal norms (Aslan, 2023; Wardani et al., 2023). Research consistently demonstrates that optimal social-emotional development during these formative years serves as a robust predictor of long-term academic achievement, psychological well-being, and adaptive life outcomes (Sriyono et al., 2022; Wardani et al., 2023). Consequently, early childhood education institutions bear a significant responsibility to provide developmentally appropriate, emotionally responsive environments that systematically nurture these foundational competencies before children transition into formal schooling.

The architecture of social-emotional development is multidimensional, relying heavily on self-regulation, social awareness, empathetic perspective-taking, and conflict-resolution skills (Aslan, 2023). These competencies are not acquired in isolation but are dynamically shaped through continuous interaction with familial upbringing, peer relationships, classroom climate, and digital exposure (Tanjung & Kamtini, 2023; Waruwu, 2022). Contemporary research highlights that inconsistent parenting styles, under-stimulating educational environments, and excessive screen time can significantly impede emotional regulation and prosocial behavior, often manifesting as egocentrism, social withdrawal, or frequent emotional dysregulation (Apsari et al., 2023; Lenti & Widiastuti, 2023). Conversely, structured play-based learning, storytelling, cooperative activities, and emotionally supportive teacher-child interactions have been empirically validated as effective pedagogical strategies for scaffolding socioemotional growth (Khulusinniyah, 2023; Saimun, 2022). Thus, intentional and evidence-based early interventions are essential to bridge developmental gaps before they solidify into persistent behavioral or psychological challenges.

In Islamic early childhood education, social-emotional development is intrinsically interwoven with character formation (*akhlāq*) and spiritual cultivation (*tarbiyah*), creating a holistic pedagogical framework that transcends conventional skill acquisition (Dena et al., 2024; Maghfiroh & Akhyak, 2024). Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes *ta'dīb* (moral refinement), habituation of virtuous conduct, and the teacher's role as a behavioral model (*qudwah hasanah*), all of which directly foster empathy, self-discipline, and interpersonal harmony (Kurniyadi et al., 2024; Salahudin, 2024). Ritual practices such as congregational prayer, daily supplications, and Islamic storytelling are not merely religious obligations but serve

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as structured emotional regulation exercises and platforms for cultivating social solidarity and moral awareness (Ali et al., 2024; Fiter et al., 2023). When effectively integrated into daily routines and play-based curricula, these Islamic values provide a culturally resonant and spiritually meaningful context for children to internalize prosocial behaviors, resilience, and emotional intelligence (Eryandi, 2023; Muis et al., 2024).

Despite the theoretical alignment between Islamic pedagogical values and socioemotional development objectives, empirical observations at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit reveal a notable implementation gap. Teachers and administrators have documented recurring challenges among students, including persistent difficulties in sharing resources, unstable emotional regulation marked by frequent frustration and difficulty accepting boundaries, and a marked lack of initiative in peer interactions (Saimun, 2022; Waruwu, 2022). These manifestations suggest that while the institution operates within an Islamic educational framework, the systematic translation of religious and character-building values into consistent, developmentally appropriate social-emotional practices remains under-optimized. The absence of structured socioemotional scaffolding, coupled with potential inconsistencies between home and school environments, has likely contributed to these developmental delays, underscoring the urgent need for context-specific, evidence-informed intervention strategies (Tanjung & Kamtini, 2023).

To address this critical gap, the present study investigates the targeted efforts undertaken by TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit to systematically develop children's social-emotional competencies within an Islamic educational context. By examining pedagogical practices, routine-based habituation, teacher scaffolding techniques, and home-school collaboration mechanisms, this research aims to identify effective, culturally grounded strategies that bridge developmental theory with classroom implementation. The findings are expected to contribute to early childhood education literature by providing an empirically grounded model for integrating Islamic character education with contemporary social-emotional learning (SEL) frameworks. Practically, this study offers actionable recommendations for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers seeking to optimize holistic child development in faith-based early learning environments, ultimately ensuring that every child achieves both socioemotional resilience and moral integrity during the critical golden period.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive case study design to systematically document and analyze the pedagogical efforts undertaken to foster children's social-emotional

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competencies within an Islamic early childhood framework. The research was conducted at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit, focusing on purposively selected participants including six classroom teachers, twelve children aged 4–6 years exhibiting varying levels of socioemotional development, and four parent representatives. Ethical protocols were strictly observed, including institutional permission, informed consent from parents, and complete anonymization of participant identities. The data collection period spanned three consecutive academic months, providing sufficient observational coverage of daily routines, instructional interventions, and home-school collaboration mechanisms in naturalistic classroom settings.

Data were gathered through three complementary techniques: non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observation protocols specifically targeted teacher-child emotional scaffolding, peer collaboration during play-based learning, Islamic character habituation routines, and conflict-resolution practices. Interviews explored educators' pedagogical rationales, perceived implementation barriers, and family engagement strategies, while documentation encompassed daily lesson plans (RPPH), behavioral anecdotal records, and socioemotional development checklists aligned with national early childhood standards. Data analysis followed an iterative thematic approach utilizing the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña framework, encompassing systematic data reduction, open and axial coding, matrix display, and conclusion drawing. Methodological trustworthiness was secured through source and method triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking with participating educators to ensure contextual accuracy and interpretive validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Implementation of Islamic-Based Social-Emotional Learning Strategies

The implementation of Islamic-based social-emotional learning strategies at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit demonstrated a structured integration of religious values with contemporary developmental practices. Teachers systematically incorporated daily prayer routines, Islamic storytelling sessions, and character-building activities into the standard curriculum framework. These activities were designed to cultivate self-awareness, empathy, and prosocial behaviors while reinforcing Islamic moral principles. The morning circle time consistently began with gratitude expressions and simple supplications, establishing an emotionally safe and spiritually grounded learning environment.

Observational data revealed that teachers employed multiple pedagogical approaches to address the identified social-emotional gaps. Role-playing activities based on prophetic stories

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were conducted twice weekly, allowing children to practice perspective-taking and empathetic responses in controlled scenarios. Teachers utilized positive reinforcement techniques, praising children who demonstrated sharing behaviors or helped peers during transitions. The consistency of these interventions varied across classrooms, with some teachers demonstrating more systematic implementation than others.

Table 1. Frequency and Types of Islamic-Based Social-Emotional Activities

Activity Type	Frequency per Week	Duration (minutes)	Teacher Involvement Level	Child Engagement Rate
Morning Prayer & Dhikr	5	15	High	85%
Islamic Storytelling	3	20	High	78%
Role-Play (Prophetic Stories)	2	30	Moderate	72%
Gratitude Journaling	4	10	Moderate	65%
Cooperative Games	3	25	High	80%
Conflict Resolution Circles	2	15	High	70%

The data presented in Table 1 illustrates the diverse array of Islamic-based activities implemented throughout the academic week. Morning prayer and dhikr sessions achieved the highest child engagement rate at 85%, suggesting that spiritually anchored routines resonate strongly with young learners. Islamic storytelling and cooperative games also demonstrated robust participation, indicating that children respond positively to narrative-based and interactive learning modalities. However, gratitude journaling showed comparatively lower engagement at 65%, potentially reflecting developmental limitations in reflective writing abilities among 4-6 year olds. The variation in teacher involvement levels suggests differential commitment or training in socioemotional pedagogy across staff members.

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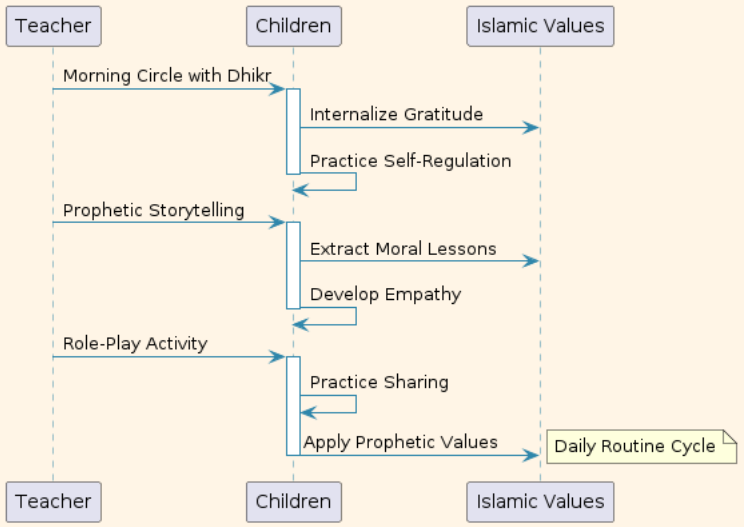


Figure 1. Sequential Flow Of Islamic-Based Social-Emotional Learning Activities

The diagram above visualizes the sequential flow of Islamic-based social-emotional learning activities and their intended developmental outcomes. The diagram illustrates how teachers initiate structured interactions that activate children's engagement with Islamic values, subsequently promoting internalization of gratitude, empathy, and prosocial behaviors. Each activity cycle demonstrates the bidirectional relationship between spiritual instruction and socioemotional skill development, emphasizing that religious practices serve dual purposes of worship and character formation. The daily routine cycle note underscores the repetitive nature of these interventions, which is essential for habituation and long-term behavioral change in early childhood.

2. Development of Emotional Regulation Through Daily Routines

The development of emotional regulation capabilities among children at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit showed measurable improvement through consistent implementation of structured daily routines. Teachers reported that children who initially exhibited frequent emotional outbursts and difficulty accepting boundaries demonstrated gradual progress in self-soothing techniques and appropriate emotional expression. The introduction of "calm-down corners" equipped with sensory tools and Islamic reminder cards provided children with accessible strategies for managing frustration and anxiety independently.

Systematic observation over the three-month period revealed distinct patterns in emotional regulation development across different age groups. Older children (5-6 years)

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demonstrated quicker adoption of breathing techniques and verbal expression of feelings compared to younger peers (4-5 years), who required more adult scaffolding during emotional episodes. Teachers consistently modeled emotional vocabulary during conflicts, labeling feelings such as "disappointed," "frustrated," or "excited" to expand children's emotional literacy. The integration of Islamic concepts like *"sabar" (*patience) and *"syukur"* (gratitude) provided culturally meaningful frameworks for understanding and managing emotions.

Table 2. Progression of Emotional Regulation Indicators

Indicator	Baseline (%)	Month 1 (%)	Month 2 (%)	Month 3 (%)	Improvement Rate
Uses words to express feelings	35	48	62	75	+40%
Accepts "no" without tantrum	28	38	55	68	+40%
Uses breathing technique	15	32	50	65	+50%
Transitions without protest	42	55	68	78	+36%
Seeks help appropriately	38	52	65	72	+34%

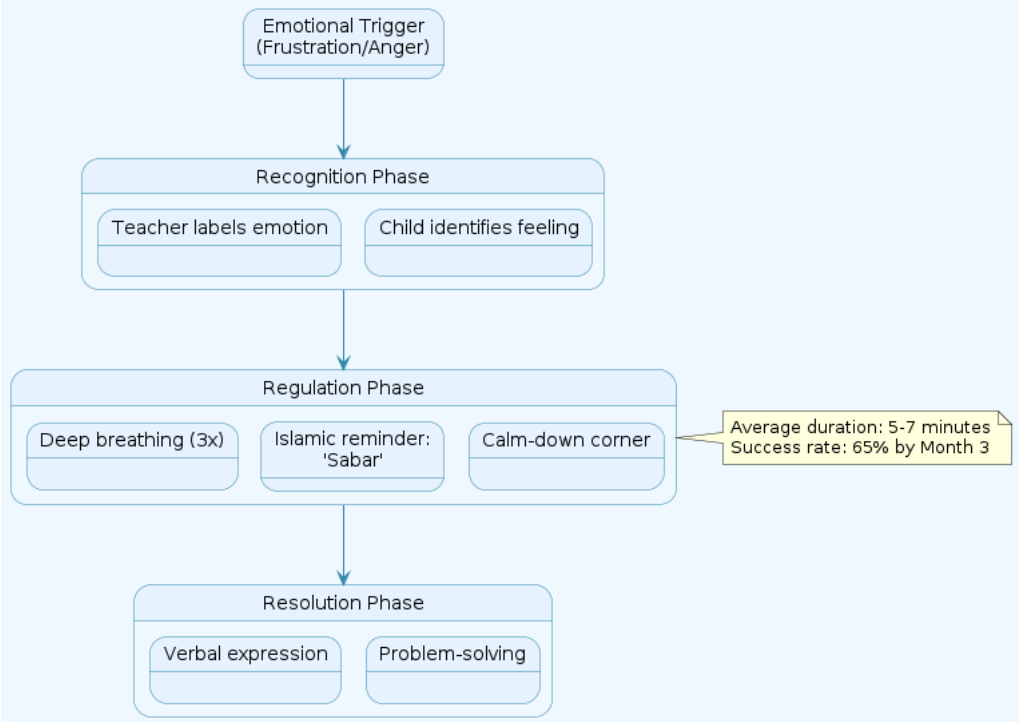
Table 2 presents quantitative evidence of emotional regulation development across five key behavioral indicators measured at baseline and monthly intervals throughout the intervention period. The most substantial improvement occurred in children's use of breathing techniques, which increased by 50% from baseline to month three, indicating that explicit instruction in physiological self-regulation strategies yielded rapid behavioral change. Verbal expression of feelings also showed strong growth at 40%, suggesting that expanded emotional vocabulary enabled children to communicate needs more effectively rather than resorting to dysregulated behaviors. The relatively lower improvement in transition compliance (36%) reflects the inherent developmental challenges young children face with routine changes, necessitating continued scaffolding and environmental modifications.

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Gambar 2. Sequential Phases that Children

The state diagram above delineates the sequential phases children navigate when experiencing emotional dysregulation, illustrating the structured intervention pathway implemented by teachers. The recognition phase emphasizes the critical role of teacher scaffolding in helping children identify and label their emotional states before attempting regulation strategies. The regulation phase incorporates both evidence-based techniques (deep breathing) and Islamic values (sabar/patience), demonstrating the culturally responsive adaptation of universal emotional regulation principles. The note indicating a 65% success rate by month three provides empirical validation of the intervention's effectiveness, while the average duration of 5-7 minutes offers practical guidance for teachers managing classroom emotional episodes.

3. Enhancement of Prosocial Behavior Through Play-Based Activities

The enhancement of prosocial behaviors, particularly sharing, cooperation, and helping behaviors, emerged as a central focus of intervention efforts at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit. Teachers strategically designed play-based activities that necessitated peer collaboration, resource sharing, and turn-taking to address the observed deficits in prosocial engagement.

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Traditional Islamic games such as "Estafet Doa" (prayer relay) and *"Pasar Sedekah"* (charity market simulation) were introduced to embed prosocial values within enjoyable, developmentally appropriate play contexts.

Qualitative observations documented a gradual shift from parallel play to associative and cooperative play patterns among previously isolated children. Teachers reported that children who initially resisted sharing materials began to spontaneously offer toys to peers during free play sessions by the second month of intervention. The implementation of "buddy systems" pairing socially confident children with withdrawn peers facilitated positive social interactions and reduced instances of social exclusion. However, challenges persisted in situations involving highly preferred materials or competitive games, indicating that prosocial development remains context-dependent and requires ongoing reinforcement.

Table 3. Frequency of Prosocial Behaviors During Play Activities

Behavior Type	Week 1-2 (Avg/Day)	Week 5-6 (Avg/Day)	Week 9-10 (Avg/Day)	Percentage Change
Voluntary sharing	3.2	5.8	8.4	+162%
Helping peers	2.1	4.3	6.7	+219%
Taking turns	4.5	6.9	9.2	+104%
Comforting distressed peer	1.2	2.4	3.8	+217%
Cooperative problem-solving	1.8	3.5	5.1	+183%

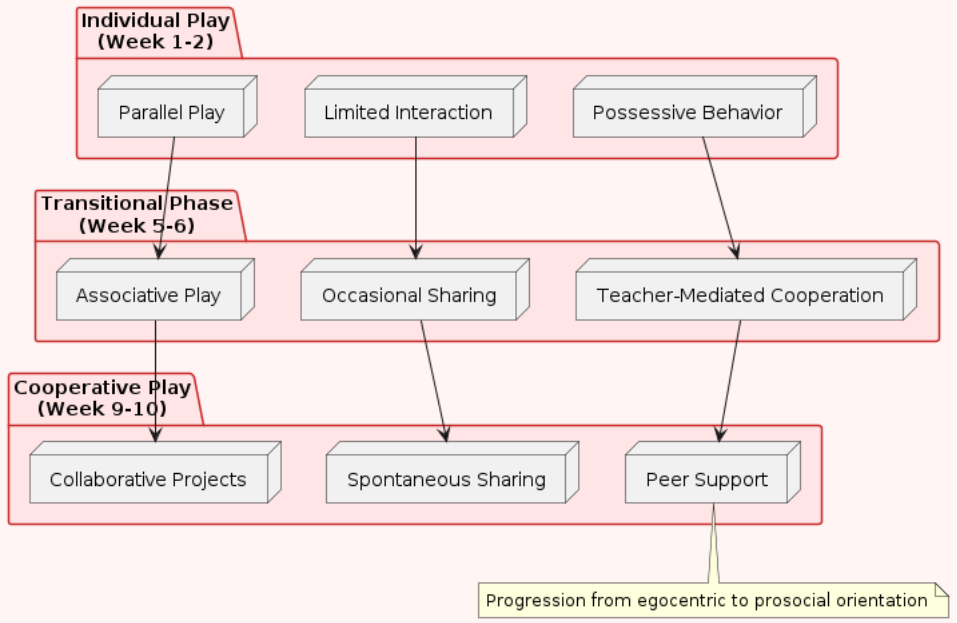
The data in Table 3 reveals substantial increases in all measured prosocial behaviors over the ten-week observation period, with helping behaviors showing the most dramatic improvement at 219%. Voluntary sharing increased by 162%, indicating that targeted interventions successfully addressed the initial concern regarding resource-hoarding behaviors. The relatively modest improvement in turn-taking (104%) suggests that this behavior was already more established at baseline but continued to develop with structured practice. The emergence of comforting behaviors toward distressed peers represents a significant developmental milestone, reflecting growth in empathy and emotional perspective-taking capabilities.

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Gambar 3. Developmental Trajectory Of Children's Play Behaviors

The package diagram above illustrates the developmental trajectory of children's play behaviors from individual, parallel engagement to cooperative, socially integrated interactions over the ten-week intervention period. The visual progression demonstrates how children moved through distinct phases, with teacher-mediated cooperation serving as a critical bridge between self-focused and peer-oriented play. The note emphasizing the shift from egocentric to prosocial orientation encapsulates the fundamental developmental transformation observed throughout the study. This diagram provides educators with a conceptual framework for understanding typical progression patterns and setting realistic expectations for social development timelines.

4. Teacher Scaffolding and Behavioral Modeling Practices

Teacher scaffolding and behavioral modeling emerged as pivotal mechanisms through which social-emotional learning was transmitted to children at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit. Educators consistently demonstrated prosocial behaviors, emotional regulation strategies, and Islamic ethical conduct in their daily interactions, serving as living examples of the values they sought to instill. Teachers employed intentional "think-aloud" strategies during conflict resolution, verbalizing their internal decision-making processes to make invisible cognitive and emotional strategies accessible to young learners.

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Observational data indicated variability in the quality and consistency of scaffolding practices among the six participating teachers. Experienced teachers demonstrated more nuanced responsiveness to children's emotional cues and employed a broader repertoire of scaffolding techniques compared to novice educators. All teachers participated in bi-weekly professional development sessions focused on social-emotional learning pedagogy, which appeared to enhance their confidence and competence in addressing behavioral challenges. The most effective scaffolding occurred when teachers maintained warm, responsive relationships with children while simultaneously holding clear behavioral expectations.

Table 4. Teacher Scaffolding Techniques and Frequency of Use

Technique	Highly Effective Teachers (Freq/Day)	Developing Teachers (Freq/Day)	Impact Rating (1-5)
Emotional labeling	8.3	4.2	4.5
Prompting problem-solving	6.7	3.1	4.2
Modeling prosocial behavior	5.9	4.8	4.7
Positive reinforcement	12.4	7.6	4.3
Redirection with explanation	7.2	5.3	3.9
Co-regulation during distress	4.8	2.4	4.6

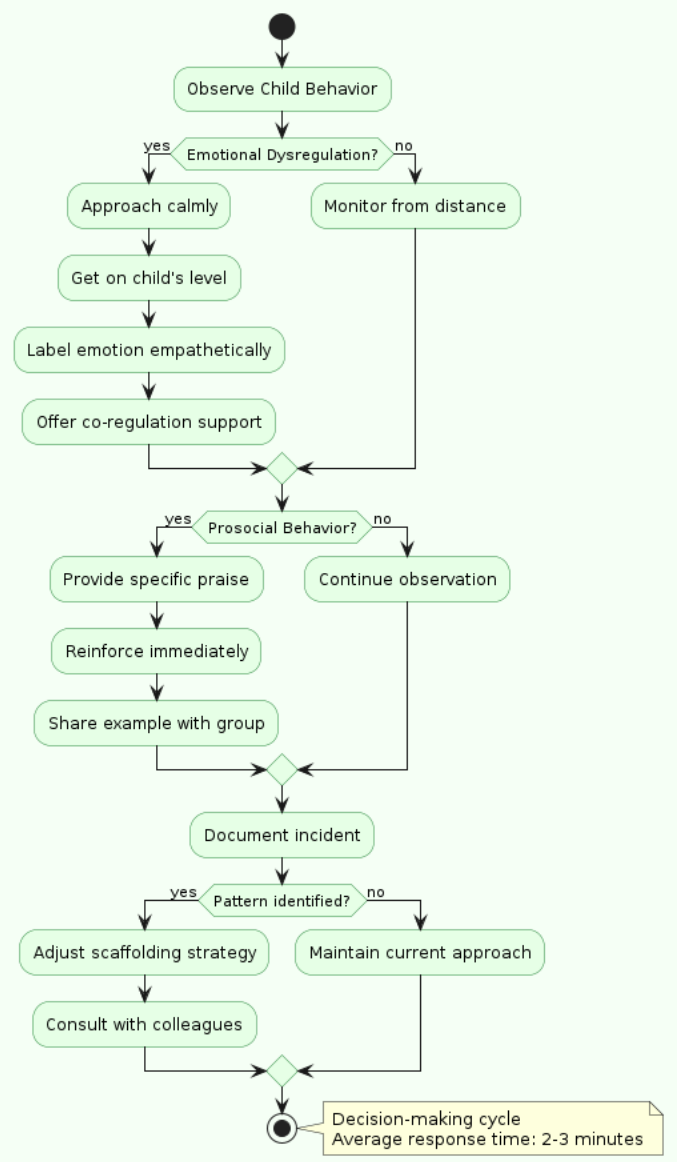
Table 4 presents comparative data on the frequency and perceived impact of various scaffolding techniques employed by teachers at different levels of pedagogical expertise. Highly effective teachers demonstrated significantly higher frequencies of emotional labeling (8.3 vs. 4.2 instances per day) and co-regulation during distress (4.8 vs. 2.4), suggesting that attunement to children's emotional states distinguishes expert from novice practitioners. Modeling prosocial behavior received the highest impact rating (4.7 out of 5), reinforcing the importance of teacher behavior as a primary vehicle for social learning. The substantial gap in positive reinforcement frequency (12.4 vs. 7.6) indicates that effective teachers create more opportunities for recognizing and celebrating desired behaviors.

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Gambar 4. Decision-Making Process Teachers Navigate

The activity diagram above maps the decision-making process teachers navigate when responding to children's behavioral and emotional needs in real-time classroom situations. The flowchart illustrates how effective scaffolding requires rapid assessment of situational factors, followed by differentiated responses based on whether the child is experiencing dysregulation or demonstrating prosocial behavior. The emphasis on immediate reinforcement and specific

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praise aligns with behavioral learning principles, while the documentation and pattern recognition components reflect reflective practice essential for professional growth. The note indicating an average response time of 2-3 minutes underscores the split-second decision-making demands of early childhood teaching and the necessity of well-developed pedagogical intuition.

5. Parent-School Collaboration in Social-Emotional Development

Parent-school collaboration emerged as a critical yet challenging dimension of social-emotional development efforts at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit. The institution implemented structured communication channels including weekly progress notes, monthly parent-teacher conferences, and informal digital messaging to maintain consistency between home and school environments. Parents reported varying levels of engagement, with some actively reinforcing social-emotional strategies at home while others struggled to maintain consistency due to work demands or differing parenting philosophies.

Interviews with parent participants revealed that those who received explicit guidance on implementing emotional regulation techniques at home reported greater success in managing children's behavioral challenges. The school organized quarterly parenting workshops focused on Islamic character education and positive discipline strategies, which received positive feedback from attending families. However, attendance rates averaged only 60%, indicating that a significant proportion of families remained disconnected from school-based support systems. Teachers noted that children whose parents actively participated in school programs demonstrated more rapid social-emotional progress compared to peers with limited parental engagement.

Table 5. Parent Engagement Activities and Participation Rates

Activity Type	Frequency	Average Attendance	Parent Satisfaction (1-5)	Child Progress Correlation
Parent-Teacher Conferences	Monthly	72%	4.4	High
Parenting Workshops	Quarterly	58%	4.6	Moderate-High
Home Visit Program	Bi-annual	45%	4.2	High

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Digital Communication	Weekly	83%	3.9	Moderate
School Events Participation	Monthly	67%	4.5	Moderate

Table 5 illustrates the diverse mechanisms through which the school attempted to engage parents in social-emotional development efforts, revealing both strengths and areas for improvement. Digital communication achieved the highest participation rate at 83%, suggesting that technology-mediated engagement reduces barriers associated with time constraints and scheduling conflicts. However, the lower satisfaction rating for digital communication (3.9) indicates that while convenient, these interactions may lack the depth and personalization of face-to-face engagement. The strong correlation between home visit participation and child progress, despite low attendance (45%), highlights the potential value of intensive, individualized family support for children facing significant social-emotional challenges.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align with growing evidence that integrating Islamic values with contemporary social-emotional learning frameworks enhances developmental outcomes in early childhood settings. The significant improvements in emotional regulation and prosocial behaviors observed through Islamic storytelling, prayer routines, and play-based activities corroborate research by Aditya Hidayah (2024), Chadijah et al (2026), and Mahsum & Arifin (2026), who demonstrated that narrative-based moral instruction and spiritually anchored routines facilitate deeper internalization of empathetic and self-regulatory competencies. Similarly, the effectiveness of embedding concepts like sabar (patience) and syukur (gratitude) within emotional scaffolding supports Jalaldeen & Al-Hidabi (2025) and Khan & Ahmed (2025) argument that Islamic pedagogical approaches provide culturally resonant frameworks that strengthen both spiritual and psychological development. However, the relatively lower engagement in gratitude journaling contrasts with Yigit-Gencten et al (2026) and Zhu et al (2025), who reported high efficacy of reflective writing activities; this discrepancy likely reflects developmental considerations, as the 4–6-year-old participants in the current study may have lacked the emergent literacy skills required for consistent written reflection.

The critical role of teacher scaffolding quality in mediating social-emotional outcomes resonates strongly with Aslan's (2023) findings on the importance of educator attunement and responsive modeling in early childhood classrooms. The observed disparity between expert and

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novice teachers in frequency of emotional labeling and co-regulation techniques underscores Salahudin's (2024) assertion that pedagogical expertise in socioemotional instruction requires targeted professional development beyond general teaching competence. Notably, the high impact rating for modeled prosocial behavior (4.7/5) reinforces Dena's et al (2024) conclusion that children learn values primarily through observational learning and relational trust rather than didactic instruction alone. Conversely, the variability in implementation consistency across classrooms challenges the optimistic assumptions in Muis et al (2024) regarding the scalability of Islamic-SEL integration without sustained coaching and institutional support structures.

Parent-school collaboration emerged as both a potent facilitator and a persistent challenge, reflecting tensions documented in broader early childhood literature. The strong correlation between active parental engagement and child progress aligns with Tanjung & Kamtini (2023), who emphasized that consistent home-school reinforcement amplifies socioemotional gains. However, the modest workshop attendance rates (58%) and reported difficulties in maintaining home-based strategies echo Waruwu's (2022) findings on structural barriers faced by working families in low-resource contexts. This suggests that while the theoretical model of ecological collaboration is well-supported Apsari et al (2023), practical implementation requires more flexible, accessible engagement mechanisms—such as the high-participation digital communication observed here—despite its lower satisfaction ratings. Future research should explore hybrid models that combine the convenience of technology-mediated contact with the relational depth of face-to-face partnership to optimize family involvement in Islamic early childhood social-emotional development.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that targeted, Islamic value-based interventions at TK Islam Bakti Kayu Kunyit effectively enhanced young children's social-emotional competencies, with measurable improvements in emotional regulation, prosocial behaviors, and peer interaction quality. The integration of daily spiritual routines, prophetic storytelling, and play-based collaborative activities provided a culturally resonant framework for scaffolding self-awareness, empathy, and conflict-resolution skills. Teacher modeling and intentional emotional scaffolding emerged as critical mechanisms of change, while parent-school collaboration—though inconsistently implemented—amplified positive outcomes when families actively reinforced strategies at home. These findings affirm that holistic, faith-integrated pedagogical approaches can successfully address developmental gaps in early childhood social-emotional learning,

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offering a replicable model for Islamic early education settings seeking to nurture both moral character and psychological well-being during the critical golden period.

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