



The Implementation of Mindful Self-Compassion in Managing Academic Emotions through Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Learning at Senior High School

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the implementation of mindfulness, particularly mindful self-compassion, in managing academic emotions in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning at SMA 1 Bae. This study addresses the absence of a holistic approach in assessing students' spiritual development, particularly in terms of emotional management under academic challenges. Integrating mindfulness into Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning is viewed as a vital teaching method to improve students' emotional balance and spiritual well-being. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, involving in-depth interviews with students, Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers, and school counselors. Observations and thematic analyses were also conducted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. The findings reveal that mindfulness practices encompassing self-kindness, common humanity, and mindful awareness help students manage academic anxiety, cope with failure, and build hope, empathy, and positive social interactions. The integration of mindfulness into Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning not only strengthens students' emotional management but also fosters their character and spiritual development. This study contributes to the development of a comprehensive model of religious education that extends to cognitive assessment by focusing on

students' emotional and spiritual well-being in the context of secondary education.

Keywords: Academic Emotions, Mindfulness, Spiritual Students

A. Introduction

Islamic and Moral at senior high school level plays a vital role in building students' character, moral, and spirituality (Haikal & Anwar, 2024). This subject not only imparts religious values, but also strives to instil ethical conducts and moral integrity in students. Islamic education focuses on Islamic teachings such as faith (*akidah*), worship (*ibadah*), and ethical conduct (*akhlak*), whereas moral education emphasizes the development of noble values such as empathy, respect, and social responsibility (Pedoman Penerapan Kurikulum Dalam Rangka Pemulihan Pembelajaran, 2022). Yet, the teaching and learning process of this subject often remains mainly cognitive, concentrating on religious doctrines understanding while neglecting emotional dimensions which are equally essential for holistic learning (Alamsyah et al., 2024). One of the major issues in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning is the lack of attention paid to managing students' academic emotions, which can have a considerable impact on both academic achievement and overall psychological well-being (Imron et l., 2025).

Academic emotions, such as anxiety, stress, and feeling of failure, are inseparable from students' learning experiences in senior high school, particularly when they deal with exams or performance-based assignments (Briliant & Mustofa, 2025). Academic anxiety is often a major impediment to students achieving their full learning potentials. It can impair concentration, reduce the quality of learning performance, and inhibit intrinsic motivation. In this context, emotional management is important; yet, many students lack the required abilities to properly manage their emotions, whether during study preparation, classroom learning, or post-learning reflection. Students commonly feel overwhelmed by existing academic pressures, which has a negative impact on the quality of their learning as well as the spirituality and character building, both of which are core objectives of Islamic Religious Education subject. In line with this perspective, Sujadi found that mindfulness and self-compassion are significantly effective in reducing students' academic anxiety (Sujadi, 2022). Similarly, a study conducted by Yulianti and Wahyuni, who designed a mindful self-compassion-based workbook, underlined the relevance of emotional regulation abilities in improving the students' psychological well-being (Yulianti & Wahyuni, 2023). In the context of senior high school students, Febrianti and Boediman discovered that self-compassion strategies can effectively

help reduce academic stress, yet their impacts vary by individual (Febrianti & Boediman, 2024). Furthermore, Bustamam et al. confirmed that religiosity is strongly associated to emotional regulation among high school students, indicating that religious education could be an important media for improving emotional management (Bustamam et al., 2024). Thus, religiosity and spirituality play important roles in helping students regulate their emotions. Collectively, these studies point out the potential for integrating mindfulness, self-compassion, and religious education, particularly in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, as an appealing approach to help students manage academic pressures in a healthier, more balanced, and meaningful way.

In recent years, there has been an increasing academic interest in the implementation of mindfulness in educational contexts, particularly religious education. Fauzan et al. claimed that mindfulness can improve students' psychological and emotional well-being, hence improving their learning abilities (Fauzan et al., 2025, p. 90). Meanwhile, more specific studies on mindfulness in religious education, such as that undertaken by Qurratina et al. has shown that mindfulness can help students engage more deeply in religious teachings and increase the quality of their spiritual life (Qurratina & Muhid, 2025, p. 165). Although this study suggests the potential of mindfulness to build deeper understanding of religious values, it is still mostly theoretical and does not go into detail about how mindfulness might be used to evaluate spiritual development in religious learning. Similar findings were made by Wiraja et al., who found that mindfulness helps students build their emotional intelligence, which in turn helps them grow spiritually and as individuals (Wiraja et al., 2025, p. 1163). By fostering social and emotional development and stress-reduction abilities, mindfulness integration in the classroom has been proven to contribute to both academic achievement and student well-being. A balanced approach is necessarily needed to optimize its advantages and minimize any potential disadvantages (Bastomi et al., 2025, p. 420).

Previous studies have lacked a focus on the implementation of mindfulness in regulating students' academic emotions in the context of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning. Most current existing studies have focused on mindfulness in relation to students' overall psychological well-being, without necessarily pertaining it to spiritual dimensions and character building in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education. In fact, effective emotional management in academic settings is not only necessary for students' psychological

well-being, but it also has a direct impact on their character building and spiritual growth, both of which are main objectives of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education.

This study seeks to address the research gap by implementing Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC), an approach that integrates mindfulness and self-compassion, into the management of academic emotions in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning at senior high school level. The MSC framework underlines the importance of being kind to oneself, recognizing failure as a normal part of the learning process, and avoiding excessive self-criticism when facing academic challenges. Through MSC, students are expected to improve their ability to manage their academic anxiety, increase their emotional resilience, and deepen their character and spirituality. This approach is particularly relevant to Islamic Religious Education and Character Education, where building students' character and spirituality is an important part of the learning process, with real-world implications for their daily lives and social interactions.

The position of this study is to integrate MSC into Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning as an effort to create a more holistic approach to managing students' academic emotions. This study aims to provide a novel pedagogical method for dealing with emotional issues in academic contexts, particularly in the context of Islamic education. The significance of this study stems from its potential to help establish a more integrated educational paradigm for Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning that integrates psychological and spiritual approaches. This study employed the MSC framework to extend the theoretical landscape of religious education, focusing on academic emotional management and character building. Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide teachers with useful insights into how to promote students' psychological and spiritual well-being through practical and applicable methods. In the long run, this study seeks to help students become not only cognitively competent, but also emotionally resilient and morally-oriented as they deal with life's problems, making them better prepared for success in their future careers.

A descriptive qualitative approach was employed in this study, focusing on the implementation of spiritual mindfulness in the context of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning at senior high school level. This approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth exploration of phenomena related to students' spiritual and character building, as well as the impact of mindfulness practices in the context of religious education (W.Creswell, 1998).

Data were collected through observations and in-depth interviews with 12th-grade students participating in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education classes at SMA 1 Bae. Interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers and school counsellors (guidance and counselling teacher). The main objective was to investigate the participants' experiences, thoughts, and perceptions regarding mindfulness in learning and its impact on emotional regulation and spiritual development. Individual interviews were conducted with three students using open-ended questions to obtain personal reflections on their feelings toward the learning materials, interactions with teachers and peers, and how they practiced mindfulness when facing academic difficulties at school and in their daily lives.

Interviews with Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers, as well as with school counsellors, were administered to gain insights into the implementation of mindfulness in the learning process and its impacts on students' character and spiritual development. The Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teachers were interviewed in order to learn how they brought mindfulness-related principles into their teaching practices and what problems they faced when teaching religious and ethical values. Meanwhile, the school counsellors were asked on their roles in supporting students' psychological and emotional well-being, as well as using mindfulness techniques in both individual and group counselling sessions.

The data gathered from observation and interviews were then analysed using a thematic approach (Fazal-ur Rehman, 2024, p. 45). Each interview transcript was carefully examined to discover patterns and themes of self-awareness, emotional regulation, and character building in the context of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning. The analysis approach began with data coding, which classified the statements derived from students and teachers into relevant groups (Braun & Clarke, 2024, p. 80). The resulting themes were then investigated to determine the relationships between mindfulness, emotional regulation, and the implementation of religious ideals in students' daily lives. The findings of this investigation provided a better understanding of how mindfulness was carried out in the learning process and how it influenced students' spiritual and character building at SMA 1 Bae (Mohammadi et al., 2024, p. 95).

B. Result and Discussion

1. Academic Emotions in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Learning

Academic emotions play a crucial role in affecting students' performance in the learning context. Various emotions that arise when students face academic challenges, such as exams or major assignments, can have a considerable impact on both their learning outcomes and overall psychological well-being (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007)

One of the most common academic emotions encountered is *academic anxiety* (Zeidner, 1998)(Camacho-Morles et al., 2021). This type of anxiety commonly disturbs students' concentration, impairs clear thinking, and decreases overall quality of their performances. For example, a survey conducted at the school showed that 40% of students reported feeling nervous during exam periods, mainly due to lack of preparation. Student P explained: "I try not to be scared and to always be grateful no matter what the result is. I can deal with things more peacefully if I calm myself down and think positively." This example highlights how mindfulness strategies help students regulate their anxiety. Another case example is from Student P, who shared: "Before exams, I used to feel nervous, but after attending the mindfulness workshop offered by the counsellor, I learned how to calm myself using deep breathing."

Besides the students' internal strategies, teachers play an important role in regulating academic anxiety (Putwain et al., 2022). The school counsellor explained, "We allow students to ask questions whenever they experience difficulties, and we provide remedial opportunities to help reduce anxiety during exams." This demonstrates the implementation of mindfulness and self-compassion principles in the school's approach to emotional regulation. Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher shared, "We provide individual attention to students who struggle with anxiety, offering one-on-one sessions to help them manage their stress during exam periods." These cases reinforce the notion that a supportive environment, combining both student efforts and institutional support, can significantly alleviate academic anxiety and enhance students' emotional regulation.

Besides anxiety, hope and optimism have a considerable impact on students' academic emotions (Stephan et al., 2019). A number of students have high expectations for their exam and assignment results, assuming that persistent work

will provide satisfactory results. Several students even extend their study hours or attend extra tutoring sessions outside of school. This positive attitude not only boosts intrinsic motivation, but also improves emotional resilience when dealing with academic stress. As one Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher put it, "We provide additional support through enrichment sessions and extra guidance to help students remain confident when facing exams."

The Self-Compassion theory points out the need of being kind and compassionate with oneself when facing failure (Neff, 2012). Students' high expectations indicate their ability to stay motivated and grateful for their efforts, even when exam results or assignments fall short of expectations. Instead of criticizing themselves, they learn to see problems as chances for growth, perseverance, and ongoing self-improvement (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021).

After completing assignments or exams, students often express pleasure and satisfaction. They show feelings of relief, satisfaction, and gratitude for their achievements. Such feelings reflect strong intrinsic motivation and boost student self-efficacy. Student B commented, "I was overjoyed and proud after successfully finishing my project. It was important to me since it encouraged me to continue improving myself." Teachers emphasize the importance of recognizing student's unique learning processes rather than focusing exclusively on outcomes. One teacher said, "We always remind students to appreciate their efforts so that their sense of pride becomes a source of ongoing motivation." This sense of pride is consistent with intrinsic motivation theory, which holds that self-recognition and personal satisfaction may promote one's desire for continuous advancement in both academic and personal domains (Hamzah, 2020). Furthermore, numerous students claimed that even when their grades do not match expectations, they are offered the opportunity to attend remedial sessions or teacher consultations. These experiences enable them to escape from feelings of complete failure while remaining motivated to learn and perform better in future challenges.

In contrast, sentiments of pessimism and helplessness can be significant impediments to academic success (Stephan et al., 2019). Some students commonly feel sad and disappointed when the exam results do not meet expectations; however, they usually seek constructive solutions such as consulting with teachers, extending their study time, or developing new learning strategies, such as collaborative study sessions with peers. Notably, there are no signs of protracted sadness, indicating that students find efficient coping skills and high emotional resilience. The school counsellor reiterated on this role, stating, "When students feel

hopeless, we conduct individual or group counselling sessions to help them regain motivation and plan improvement strategies." This finding is consistent with emotional resilience theory, which holds that individuals with high resilience can face failure without losing direction or intrinsic motivation (da Silva-Sauer et al., 2025). Students who effectively overcome feeling of hopelessness reveal the ability to learn from their mistakes and perseverance, which is essential for long-term academic achievement (Pekrun et al., 2011).

The implementation of Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) among students suggests the integration of *self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness* in overcoming learning difficulties (Surajiah et al., 2023). Many students remain calm and concentrated on self-improvement, attending additional tutoring sessions or extending their study time. According to the school counsellor statement, "We guide students to forgive themselves, accept failure as a part of the learning process, and stay focused on future improvement." Students also realize that failure is a universal experience and an essential component of the learning process. The counsellor pointed out: "We remind students that failure is normal and should be used as motivation to study more diligently, so they do not feel alone in their struggles." The counsellor's role as a facilitator, through both individual and group counselling, is important in helping students deal with academic challenges and emotional setbacks (DeLucia-Waack et al., 2013). Students also realize that failure is a natural part of the learning experience shared by everyone, which helps them feel less isolated when facing academic challenges. Through mindfulness approach, students remain focus and more aware of their emotional states and employ stress-management activities, such as prayer, thorough planning, and teacher consultation. Furthermore, interaction with peers provides valuable social support, resulting in a favourable and emotionally safe learning environment (Miller & Verhaeghen, 2022).

The Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning at SMA 1 Bae offers students with a solid foundation for managing their academic emotions (Karimah et al., 2024). In this context, the religious values and ethical principles taught in Islamic Education go beyond theoretical understanding to include practical applications in everyday life, which have a direct impact on students' emotional responses when dealing with academic challenges (Junaidi et al., 2023). For example, in preparing for exams, students are encouraged to embrace the value of *Sabr* (patience) and *Tawakal* (trusting Allah after making best efforts). These concepts help students cope with anxiety and fear of failure by reinforcing the belief

that Allah ultimately decides the result once a sincere attempt is made. This religious perspective is closely related to the emotional regulation mechanisms outlined earlier in this study, indicating that students with stronger spiritual convictions have higher emotional resilience and lower academic stress levels.

The Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning also teaches students to respond to failure or unmet expectations with more knowledge and emotional maturity (Atiqoh, 2017). They are trained not to be unduly self-critical and to see failure as a necessary part of the learning process rather than a permanent setback. Social interactions with peers and teachers also help them develop deeper empathy and the ability to sustain healthier interpersonal relationships, which adds to a more positive and supportive learning environment. This empathetic attitude supports students' psychological well-being and helps them remain motivated in achieving their academic goals.

2. The Implementation of Mindful Self-Compassion in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Learning at Senior High School

Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) is a technique which integrates mindfulness and self-compassion, particularly when dealing with a challenge or failure. MSC implementation is important in educational contexts, particularly at SMA 1 Bae, in regulating students' academic emotions and increasing their general psychological well-being (Neff & Germer, 2013). Students who engage in mindful self-compassion perform better academically and show higher emotional stability and resilience. Furthermore, practicing self-compassion improves not only psychological balance but also character building and spiritual progress, both of which are essential components of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning (Sebayang, 2015).

One of the main aspects of mindful self-compassion is *self-kindness*, which refers to showing care and understanding toward oneself, particularly during failure or disappointment times. Students frequently suffer stress or dissatisfaction in academic settings when results do not meet their expectations. *Self-kindness*, on the other hand, helps those avoid excessive self-criticism or guilt. Instead, they respond to setbacks with compassion, favouring learning and self-improvement above self-punishment. Bluth and Blanton underlined that self-kindness is positively associated with teenagers' emotional well-being because it allows them to perceive failure as an opportunity for personal growth rather than a setback (Bluth & Blanton, 2015). For instance, in the context of Islamic Religious Education and

Character Education learning, where spirituality and gratitude are fundamental principles, students performing *self-kindness* are more likely to see adversities as meaningful trials that improve their personal resilience. As one student (P) stated, "I feel disappointed when I fail to achieve the results I want, but I try not to be too hard on myself. I prefer to look at it as an opportunity to learn and grow in the future." This statement reflects a deeper understanding, proving how self-compassion helps students in regulating negative emotions in a positive and constructive manner. Such a perspective is consistent with the objectives of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, which encourages students to treat themselves and others with dignity, empathy, and compassion, which are fundamental principles for fostering moral and emotional development. This is particularly relevant to the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, in which children are taught to treat themselves and others with respect and compassion, while also recognizing and developing their own individual potentials.

The second key concept in mindful self-compassion is *common humanity*, which refers to the understanding that failure is a universal human experience shared by everyone. Students who embrace this concept do not see themselves as isolated or alone when dealing with failure; rather, they know that all people, without exception, endure obstacles and setbacks as an unavoidable part of life's journey. Neff and McGehee discovered that teenagers who create a sense of *common humanity* are more resilient in dealing with academic and social stresses (Neff & McGehee, 2010). The adoption of *common humanity* in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning is very important, because Islam teaches that Allah will put every human being to numerous trials, and that failure should be accepted with sincerity and tolerance. Student B declared, "I understand that failure is a natural part of the process, and I try to learn from my mistakes. I also believe that others have similar experiences, so I don't have to feel alone." This statement symbolizes *common humanity*, in which students see their shortcomings as an important part of the overall learning process rather than isolating them.

The Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning helps students understand that failure is a normal human experience and that they are not alone in dealing with it. This insight allows them to be more accepting of themselves rather than getting stuck in feelings of shame or despair when they fail. The school counsellor at SMA 1 Bae also offers valuable advice: "When students feel anxious or disappointed as a result of failure, we encourage them to talk to us, either

individually or in group counselling sessions. We allow students to accept their failures and regard them as part of the learning process. We also tell them not to be too hard on themselves." This statement points out that teachers and school counsellors play a vital role in promoting common humanity by providing students with the emotional space to accept failure and change it into strength by consciously understanding the learning opportunities that result from the experience.

The last aspect of mindful self-compassion widely recognized in SMA 1 Bae's learning environment is *mindfulness*, which refers to the ability to stay aware and focused on present condition without getting stuck in excessive fear or worry. *Mindfulness* in education has been proven to reduce academic stress and improve student concentration (Allen & Leary, 2010). In the academic context, *mindfulness* allows students to remain calm and attentive even if facing challenging exams or tasks. Through *mindfulness*, students can manage stress in a healthy way and carry out their activities properly by practicing *mindfulness* rather than becoming overwhelmed by anxieties about the outcomes. For example, Student R added, "When I'm feeling pressured before an exam, I try to take a break and pray. It helps calm my heart and thoughts." This practice reflects how SMA 1 Bae students apply *mindfulness* into their daily life, relying on self-calming activities, like prayer or rest to reduce academic anxiety and handle both internal and external stresses. This is consistent with the findings of Bluth et al., who found that *mindfulness* significantly improves teenagers' emotional well-being (Bluth et al., 2017).

The school counsellor also encouraged this practice, asserting, "We support students by giving them extra time to rest before exams, such as enabling them to drink or use the restroom. We also encourage them to take a time to rest or pray to help them relax before the test begins. This allows students to be focused and available during the exam without being distracted by excessive anxiety or pressure." This technique reveals that mindful self-compassion not only helps students manage their emotions, but also improves their concentration and academic achievement.

The implementation of mindful self-compassion (MSC) at SMA 1 Bae shows how students who are able to regulate their emotions with kindness and self-awareness are more resilient when dealing with academic challenges. They not only treat themselves with compassion through *self-kindness*, but they also accept failure as a natural part of the human experience and employ *mindfulness* to be calm and focused when dealing with difficulties. This is in accordance with the goals of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning which emphasize not only on

cognitive development but also on character and spirituality. Thus, mindful self-compassion improves students' emotional well-being (Neff & Germer, 2013) and also helps them build their characters to be more patient, compassionate, and resilient when dealing with academic and everyday life problems.

In conclusion, the implementation of Mindful self-compassion not only improves students' emotional well-being, but it also helps them grow into individuals who are more patient, self-compassionate, and better prepared to face life's challenges, both in academic and social contexts.

3. Spiritual Mindfulness in Social Interactions Between Students and Teachers

Students' social interactions with peers and teachers play an important role in their emotional well-being and character building. In the context of Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning at the senior high school level, such interactions have a significant effect on building students' spiritual attitudes and ethical behavior (Nata & Soraya, 2025). Based on classroom observations and interviews, it was discovered that students engaged in supportive social interactions that benefitted their learning experiences. During the interview, Student P stated, "I feel more open and less afraid of talking about the difficulties I experience in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning. The teacher constantly reminds us to be patient and think positively. That makes me feel better and more prepared to keep trying."

A teacher's ability to build a close relationship with students is essential in fostering such openness. For instance, Teacher A often spends extra time after class speaking with students individually, offering a listening ear, and helping them navigate both academic and personal challenges. This personal attention allows students to feel heard and supported, which encourages them to express their concerns without fear of judgment. Teacher A mentioned, "I make it a point to connect with each student outside of class hours, whether it's during lunch or after school, to ensure they know they can talk to me about anything." This practice of building closeness not only helps students manage academic stress but also cultivates a sense of trust and emotional regulation.

Positive interactions with peers and teachers indicate that the implementation of *spiritual mindfulness* plays an essential role in learning religious and moral values. When students feel supported and appreciated, they find it easier to regulate their emotions during social interactions, both inside and outside the

classroom (Ratnasari et al., 2023). This is reinforced by the statement of an Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher, who explained: "We always try to listen to students attentively, give them space to talk about their problems, and remind them of the importance of patience and sincerity in facing life's challenges."

Positive social interactions with peers and teachers provide opportunities for students to nurture empathy, patience, and mutual respect. In Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, traits, such as patience and sincerity, are vigorously reinforced, and through spiritual mindfulness, students can more readily adopt these values in their daily life (Qurratina & Muhid, 2025). Mindful self-regulation not only helps students manage negative emotions, such as anxiety or disappointment, but also strengthens their social relationships in the school environment by fostering compassion among peers and respect toward teachers (Wiraja et al., 2025).

By fostering attentive and healthy interactions, teachers create a safe and supportive environment in which students feel appreciated and accepted through educative guidance. This condition allows students to internalize Islamic teachings more deeply, not merely as theoretical knowledge, but also as a living practice manifested in their social interactions and awareness of individual differences. Mindful awareness in interpersonal communication also allows students to express their problems without fear of judgment, thereby fostering open and constructive dialogue that facilitates timely and appropriate solutions (Fitriani et al., 2024, p. 156).

The next element of *spiritual mindfulness* is *awareness* of interpersonal relationships and their impacts on character building. Students with a high level of social awareness tend to perform positive and supportive interaction skills, both with their peers and teachers (Chems-Maarif et al., 2025). Based on the interview results, most students reported that they felt better when they supported each other in learning and shared personal challenges, creating a more conducive learning environment. Student B stated, "We often share our stories about the problems we face in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, and I feel relieved after hearing others' experiences. It makes me realize that I am not alone in my academic struggles." Similarly, Student R confirmed, "I can focus on studying from 3 p.m. until 2 a.m., and I try to stay calm by telling myself, 'Let it happen'".

Spiritual mindfulness encourages students to nurture empathy and mutual respect in their social interactions, both with their peers and teachers. When they learn that failure is a natural part of life's journey, they will find it easier to support one another and nurture empathy (Miller & Verhaeghen, 2022). The integration of religious and moral values into social interactions, such as sharing experiences and helping peers in need, strengthens social bonds among students and fosters their emotional and social growth, which in turn benefits their academic success (Edi Kuswanto et al., 2022, pp. 180–181).

On the other hand, *spiritual mindfulness* also helps students manage anxiety and stress that commonly arise in challenging academic situations. Through *mindfulness*, students remain calm and undisturbed by external pressures (Febrianti & Boediman, 2024). This not only affects their academic achievement, but also promotes healthy interpersonal relationships. Student P claimed, "After learning about religious values, I find it easier to forgive my friends when they unintentionally upset me. I try to be more patient." This shows how spiritual mindfulness fosters patience, emotional regulation, empathy among students, joyful learning and sense of academic purpose while strengthening *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) among all members involved in the learning process.

The Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher further stated, "We always remind students to practice religious values in their daily lives, one of which is patience in facing difficulties, whether during examinations or in social interactions." Besides interviews, classroom observations conducted by the researcher revealed that students' social interactions with teachers and peers showed positive communication and active participation in discussions, which strongly reflected the elements of mindfulness in a social context (Fadillah et al., 2025).

Students openly talked about the challenges they had in learning and honestly expressed their emotions. This was evident in an interview with Student P, who remarked, "I find it easier to discuss with my teacher about my problems because they listen carefully and give me very helpful advice. It makes me feel more open and unafraid to give it another try." Such an attitude reflects the implementation of full awareness in social contexts, allowing students to share and receive feedback without fear or anxiety. This shows how spiritual mindfulness in social interactions allows students to treat themselves with compassion and to extend empathetic support to their peers. The school counsellor also confirmed, "We

tried our best to create a safe space for students to share their problems. In this way, they can feel appreciated and supported throughout their learning journey.”

Positive social interactions between students, their peers, and teachers have a direct impact on the implementation of *spiritual mindfulness*, which plays a vital role in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning. The implementation of spiritual mindfulness in this learning context not only focuses on the regulation of individual emotions but also on the development of healthy and supportive relationships in the social environment (Wiraja et al., 2025). Such an environment provides students with opportunities to internalize religious and ethical values in a more practical and applicable manner in their daily lives. As stated by an Islamic Religious Education and Character Education teacher, “It is important for students to understand that religious and moral teachings are not merely to be learned theoretically, but should also be practiced in every aspect of their lives, including social interactions.”

Spiritual mindfulness in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning involves the implementation of full awareness toward one’s actions and attitudes in social relationships. Therefore, teachers can make use of these social interactions as a means to assess how students integrate religious and moral principles in their interactions with others. This implementation includes observing whether students are able to perform empathy, understanding, and openness in communication, as well as how they respond to feedback to improve themselves (Chems-Maarif et al., 2025).

The implementation of spiritual mindfulness can be evaluated using several instruments (Baer et al., 2006; Lengyel et al., 2021):

- a. Observation of Social Interactions: this instrument assesses how students interact with their peers and teachers during the learning process. The observed elements include empathy, open communication, collaboration, and emotional regulation in social interactions.
- b. Reflective Questionnaire: this instrument explores how students manage anxiety, failure, or challenges in learning, as well as how they treat themselves with self-kindness and compassion in overcoming difficulties and improving previous efforts.
- c. Interviews with Teachers and Students: interviews provide deeper insights into the implementation of spiritual mindfulness in students’ social interactions. They allow both teachers and students to reflect on observable changes in

students' attitudes and behaviours during the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, as well as in broader school interactions.

- d. Self-Report Journaling: this approach allows students to maintain personal journals documenting their experiences in managing emotions and academic challenges. Through journaling, students can reflect on how they apply religious and ethical values in their daily lives and articulate their academic aspirations and personal growth goals.

C. Conclusion

This study shows that the implementation of Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning at the senior high school level is an effective approach for helping students manage academic emotions, improve emotional awareness, and develop self-acceptance and resilience in facing academic challenges. Findings from interviews, observations, and thematic analyses revealed that students practicing MSC were better able to remain calm under pressure, regulate anxiety, and demonstrate positive spiritual qualities such as patience, empathy, and self-discipline. The study also confirms that MSC supports students' cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development in alignment with the goals of religious education. Furthermore, the research recommends expanding future studies to a broader educational context, incorporating quantitative methods, and developing a systematic MSC-based instructional model within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum to enhance students' well-being and academic performance.

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