Religiosity, Emotional Intelligence, and Self-Control: A Mediation Analysis in Islamic Higher Education Contexts

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between religiosity and self-control, with emotional intelligence examined as a mediating mechanism. Although prior research has identified associations among these variables, most studies have relied on bivariate analyses and have not sufficiently explored the psychological processes underlying these relationships. A quantitative research design was employed, involving first-year undergraduate students from the Faculty of Tarbiyah at IAIN Kediri. The population consisted of students enrolled in the 2024/2025 academic year, from which 272 participants were selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using validated self-report questionnaires measuring religiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-control. Path analysis was applied to test both direct and indirect relationships among the variables using SPSS. The findings indicate that religiosity had a strong direct effect on emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.829$) and a modest but statistically significant direct effect on self-control ($\beta = 0.191$). Emotional intelligence, in turn, emerged as a strong predictor of self-control ($\beta = 0.639$) and significantly mediated the relationship between religiosity and self-control, with an indirect effect of 0.5297. The indirect pathway through emotional intelligence exceeded the magnitude of the direct effect, underscoring the central role of emotional competencies in translating religious commitment into self-regulatory behavior. These results suggest that religiosity contributes to self-control primarily through its influence on emotional intelligence, highlighting emotional intelligence as a key psychological mechanism within Islamic educational contexts. The findings extend existing research by integrating religiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-control within a single mediation model and offer practical implications for character and student development in Islamic higher education. Educational initiatives that simultaneously strengthen religious values and emotional competencies may enhance students' capacity for adaptive self-regulation and disciplined behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Self-control is a foundational psychological construct that decisively shapes the quality of human life. It is commonly defined as the capacity to regulate one's behavior, thoughts, and emotions across diverse situations, providing the bedrock for becoming a purposeful, responsible, and meaningful person (Stavrova et al., 2020). Self-control operates as a key component of executive functions, which encompass higher-order cognitive and emotional processes that enable individuals to set goals, formulate plans, resist maladaptive impulses, and sustain attention despite distractions or fatigue (Baumeister, 2018; Koets, 2023). Accordingly, self-control extends beyond an individual virtue and functions as a pivotal determinant of social, academic, and spiritual flourishing.

Empirical evidence underscores this dual role. Among adolescents and emerging adults, deficient self-control is consistently associated with a range of maladaptive behaviors. Students with low dispositional self-control tend to postpone academic tasks, which ultimately undermines academic performance and self-efficacy (Mohan, 2023; Yue et al., 2024). They are also more susceptible to compulsive social-media use (Nugraha et al., 2023; Retno Arini et al., 2021), to engagement in risky sexual practices (Annisah et al., 2020; Gailliot & Baumeister, 2007; Thien et al., 2023), and heightened anxiety when confronting specific academic or social situations (He et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). Collectively, these findings indicate that inadequate self-regulation compromises emotional, cognitive, and behavioral adjustment.

Conversely, individuals who have cultivated robust self-control typically demonstrate higher academic achievement (Honken et al., 2016; Li et al., 2022), effective interpersonal communication (Yulikhah et al., 2019), consistent discipline in daily routines (Adlya et al., 2020), and more stable mental and physical health outcomes (Botha & Dahmann, 2024; Yang & Jiang, 2022). Strengthening self-control, therefore, emerges as a fundamental strategy for developing resilient learners who are both spiritually grounded and emotionally adaptive. From an Islamic educational perspective, self-control (often conceptualised as *mujāhadah al-nafs*) is not limited to the avoidance of reprehensible acts but represents an active manifestation of obedience (*ṭāʿah*), intellectual diligence, and the fulfilment of one's responsibilities as an *insān kāmil*, namely, a holistic and God-conscious human being.

The implementation of religious values and teachings plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's self-control (Marcus & McCullough, 2021; Thakre et al., 2023). In Islamic teachings, self-control is regarded as a fundamental concept (Harahap et al., 2024) clearly exemplified through the practice of fasting, which systematically trains individuals to restrain desires, cultivate patience, and exercise self-discipline (Fauziyah, 2021). Furthermore, religiosity is increasingly conceptualized not merely as spiritual capital but as a psychosocial resource that motivates prosocial behavior, fosters self-discipline, and orients individuals toward long-term goals align with moral values (Riza & Rafi, 2020).

Beyond religiosity, emotional intelligence occupies a central role in contemporary models of self-regulation. Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, and regulate one's own emotions and those of others' an adaptive manner. Maniza (2017) delineates five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to resist impulsive reactions, manage interpersonal conflicts constructively, and maintain emotional composure under stressful conditions. Empirical evidence provided by Siswati (2020) demonstrates a positive association between emotional intelligence and self-control, suggesting that affective awareness and regulation constitute essential psychological mechanisms supporting volitional control across contexts.

An emerging line of inquiry investigates whether religiosity indirectly strengthens self-control through its influence on emotional intelligence. Studies involving university students by Ismiradew (2019), Shata & Wilani (2018), and Muhibbin (2018) consistently report a positive relationship between religiosity and emotional intelligence. Voluntary engagement in religious practices—such as reflective worship, mindful recitation, and empathetic charitable acts—requires emotional awareness and regulation, which parallel core competencies of emotional intelligence. Accordingly, it is theoretically plausible to propose a mediation model in which internalized religious beliefs enhance emotion-regulation skills, which subsequently contribute to stronger self-control.

Based on a literature search conducted through the journal indexing platforms Sinta and Google Scholar over the last six years (2020–2025), existing studies examining the relationships among emotional intelligence, religiosity, and self-control remain largely confined to bivariate analyses. To date, no empirical research has examined these three variables simultaneously within a single analytical framework that positions emotional intelligence as a mediating variable between religiosity and self-control. Therefore, the present study offers novelty by addressing this empirical and theoretical gap.

Despite growing scholarly interest in religiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-control, the existing literature remains limited in several important respects. Most empirical studies have examined the relationships among these variables in isolation, relying predominantly on bivariate correlations or direct-effect models. While such findings provide valuable preliminary insights, they offer only a partial understanding of the psychological mechanisms through which religiosity may influence self-regulatory behavior. In particular, the potential mediating role of emotional intelligence—conceptualized as a set of emotion-related competencies that facilitate adaptive self-regulation—has received limited systematic investigation within a unified analytical framework.

Moreover, although prior studies have documented positive associations between religiosity and emotional intelligence, as well as between emotional intelligence and self-control, these relationships have rarely been examined simultaneously using mediation

analysis. As a result, it remains unclear whether religiosity contributes directly to self-control, or whether its influence operates indirectly through the development of emotional intelligence. This limitation is especially salient in the context of Islamic higher education, where religiosity is not merely a personal attribute but an integral component of institutional culture, character education, and identity formation during early adulthood.

Addressing this gap is both theoretically and practically important. From a theoretical standpoint, examining emotional intelligence as a mediating variable allows for a more nuanced understanding of how spiritual values are translated into disciplined behavior through emotional processes. From a practical perspective, such an approach can inform educational interventions that integrate religious development with emotional skills training. Therefore, the present study seeks to extend existing research by empirically testing a mediation model that positions emotional intelligence as a psychological mechanism linking religiosity to self-control among first-year students in an Islamic higher education context.

This study focuses on first-year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Tarbiyah at IAIN Kediri, Indonesia, who are entering early adulthood—a developmental phase characterized by identity exploration, emotional instability, and the search for personal and vocational direction (Ningsih, 2018). Inadequate self-control during this critical stage may increase vulnerability to deviant behaviors, interpersonal difficulties, and declining academic motivation (Sriwahyuni, 2017).

The selection of the Faculty of Tarbiyah as the research context is grounded in the faculty's mandate to prepare prospective educators who are not only academically competent but also emotionally mature and religiously grounded. First-year students in this faculty are undergoing a transitional period marked by identity formation, social adjustment, and heightened academic demands. These characteristics make them a particularly relevant population for examining religiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-control, which constitute essential competencies for future educators and educational professionals.

Guided by the foregoing review, this study poses the central research question: To what extent does religiosity predict self-control through the mediating role of emotional intelligence? By empirically addressing this question, the study seeks to advance a more nuanced understanding of how spiritual commitment may be translated into disciplined behavior through emotional processes.

From a practical perspective, the anticipated findings carry important implications for educational psychology and Islamic higher education. Academic advisors may utilize religious and emotional profiles to tailor student guidance, while institutional leaders can foster learning environments that support both spiritual development and emotional well-being. Moreover, enhancing religiosity and emotional intelligence may serve as

preventive strategies against academic procrastination, digital addiction, and other risk behaviors commonly observed among university students

In summary, this study examines the intersection of self-control, religiosity, and emotional intelligence to integrate previously fragmented findings, address existing theoretical gaps, and generate actionable insights for educators. Ultimately, the study aims to support a more humanistic and integrative educational approach that harmonizes spiritual values, emotional awareness, and disciplined behavior in nurturing balanced, resilient, and morally grounded university graduates.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative approach using an ex post facto design, aiming to examine the directional relationships among variables specified in a conceptual mediation model. The model delineates the relationships between religiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-control, with emotional intelligence positioned as a mediating variable.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the hypothesized influence of religiosity on self-control, both directly and indirectly through emotional intelligence. This model assumes a recursive structure in which religiosity functions as an exogenous variable, emotional intelligence as a mediating variable, and self-control as the endogenous outcome variable

Figure 1

Conceptual Model: The Influence of Religiosity on Self-Control through Emotional Intelligence
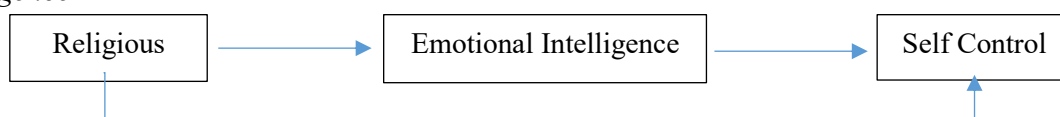
Based on this model, three primary hypotheses were formulated:

H_{01} : There is no direct effect of religiosity on the emotional intelligence of students in the Faculty of Tarbiyah at IAIN Kediri.

H_{11} : There is a direct effect of religiosity on the emotional intelligence of students in the Faculty of Tarbiyah at IAIN Kediri.

H_{02} : There is no direct effect of religiosity on students' self-control.
H_{12}: There is a direct effect of religiosity on students' self-control.

H_{03} : There is no direct effect of emotional intelligence on students' self-control.
H_{13}: There is a direct effect of emotional intelligence on students' self-control.

All three variables were measured using self-report questionnaires employing a four-point Likert scale (1–4). The religiosity instrument was developed based on the multidimensional model of religiosity proposed by Huber & Huber, (2012), which

encompasses five dimensions: religious knowledge (intellectual), belief (ideological), public religious practice, private religious practice, and religious experience.

The emotional intelligence instrument was constructed based on Goleman's (2015) theoretical framework, comprising five dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Meanwhile, the self-control instrument was grounded in Averill's theory, as cited in Saskara Putra & Tobing (2023), which includes three dimensions: behavioral control, cognitive control, and decisional control.

Based on the theoretical frameworks proposed by previous scholars, the researchers developed instruments to operationalize the three study variables. The religiosity scale consisted of 35 items, all of which were found to be valid and reliable, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .90$, indicating excellent internal consistency. The emotional intelligence scale comprised 29 items, all of which demonstrated acceptable validity, with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .91$. The self-control scale included 14 items, all of which were valid, with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .73$, reflecting satisfactory reliability. Overall, these psychometric properties indicate that the instruments were appropriate for use in the present study.

The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Tarbiyah at IAIN Kediri, representing five academic departments: Islamic Education (PAI), English Education, Arabic Education, Mathematics Education, and Islamic Education Management. A total of 272 students were selected using a simple random sampling technique, ensuring that each member of the population had an equal probability of selection.

Data were analyzed using path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects among variables within the recursive conceptual model (Streiner, 2005). Path analysis, as an extension of multiple linear regression, requires the fulfillment of several statistical assumptions, which were systematically tested prior to hypothesis testing.

The analytical procedures included the following assumption tests:

1. Model Fit Testing. The overall fit of the regression model was evaluated using analysis of variance (ANOVA). A model was considered acceptable if the significance value (p-value) was less than .05.

2. Predictor Feasibility Testing. Independent variables were considered feasible predictors if the Standard Error of Estimate (SEE) was smaller than the standard deviation (SD) of the dependent variable.

3. Significance Testing of Regression Coefficients. Regression coefficients were deemed statistically significant if the calculated t-value exceeded the critical t-value or if $p < .05$.

4. Multicollinearity Testing. Multicollinearity among independent variables was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values. Independent variables were considered free from multicollinearity if VIF < 10 and tolerance > .01.

5. Autocorrelation Testing. Autocorrelation of residuals was examined using the Durbin–Watson test, with values between –2 and +2 indicating the absence of autocorrelation (Sarwono, 2022)

RESULTS

Before examining the effect of religiosity on self-control with emotional intelligence as a mediating variable among students of the Faculty of Tarbiyah at IAIN Kediri, a series of preliminary analyses were conducted. These analyses aimed to verify the fulfillment of regression assumptions, given that path analysis constitutes an extension of multiple linear regression. Accordingly, each hypothesized relationship among variables was tested sequentially to ensure the adequacy and validity of the proposed model.

Effect of Religiosity on Emotional Intelligence

The first analysis examined the effect of religiosity on emotional intelligence among students of the Faculty of Tarbiyah at IAIN Kediri. The assumption testing for the regression model is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Assumption Testing of the Regression Model for the Effect of Religiosity on Emotional Intelligence

Assumption	Criteria	Conclusion
Overall Model Fit	p-value = 0.000 < 0.05	Assumption met. The regression model between religiosity and emotional intelligence is suitable for predictive use.
Predictor Feasibility	SEE = 6.07 < SD = 10.836	Assumption met. The independent variable is a feasible predictor.
Significance of Regression Coefficient	p-value = 0 < 0.05	Assumption met. Religiosity significantly affects emotional intelligence.
Multicollinearity Testing	VIF = 1 < 10	Assumption met. No multicollinearity detected.
Autocorrelation of Residuals	Durbin-Watson = 1.899	Assumption met. No autocorrelation present in the regression model.

The results indicate that all statistical assumptions were satisfied. The regression model demonstrated adequate overall fit ($p < .05$), the independent variable was a feasible predictor as indicated by the Standard Error of Estimate being smaller than the standard deviation of the dependent variable, and the regression coefficient for religiosity was statistically significant. No multicollinearity or autocorrelation was detected, confirming the suitability of the model for further analysis.

Effect of Religiosity on Self-Control

The second analysis tested the direct effect of religiosity on students' self-control. Assumption testing for this regression model is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Assumption Testing of the Regression Model for the Effect of Religiosity on Self-Control

Assumption	Criteria	Conclusion
Overall Model Fit	p-value = 0.000 < 0.05	Assumption met. The regression model between religiosity and self-control is suitable for predictive analysis.
Predictor Feasibility	SEE = 5.131 < SD = 5.442	Assumption met. The independent variable is a feasible predictor.
Significance of Regression Coefficient	p-value = 0.000 < 0.05	Assumption met. Religiosity significantly affects self-control.
Multicollinearity Testing	VIF = 1 < 10	Assumption met. No multicollinearity detected.
Residual Autocorrelation Test	1 < DW = 2.018 < 3	Assumption met. No autocorrelation is present in the regression model.

The findings reveal that the regression model met all required assumptions. Religiosity emerged as a statistically significant predictor of self-control ($p < .05$), with acceptable model fit and no evidence of multicollinearity or residual autocorrelation. These results indicate that religiosity exerts a direct, albeit modest, influence on students' self-control.

Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Self-Control

The third analysis examined the effect of emotional intelligence on self-control. The results of the assumption testing for this model are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Assumption Testing of the Regression Model for the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Self-Control

Assumption	Criteria	Conclusion
Overall Model Fit	p-value = 0.000 < 0.05	Assumption met. The regression model between emotional intelligence and self-control is appropriate for prediction.
Predictor Feasibility	SEE = 4.783 < SD = 5.442	Assumption met. The independent variable is a feasible predictor.
Significance of Regression Coefficient	p-value = 0.000 < 0.05	Assumption met. Emotional intelligence significantly affects self-control.
Multicollinearity Testing	VIF = 1 < 10	Assumption met. No multicollinearity detected.
Residual Autocorrelation Test	1 < DW = 1.9 < 3	Assumption met. No autocorrelation is present in the regression model.

All statistical assumptions were satisfied. Emotional intelligence significantly predicted self-control ($p < .05$), and the regression model demonstrated adequate fit. These findings confirm that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of students' capacity for self-regulation.

Path Analysis Results

Having confirmed that all regression assumptions were met, path analysis was conducted to estimate the magnitude of direct and indirect effects among variables. The results are presented in Tables 4 through 7.

Table 4

R and R Square Values for the Effect of Religiosity on Emotional Intelligence

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.829	0.687	0.686	0.070

Table 5

Regression Coefficients for the Effect of Religiosity on Emotional Intelligence

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	*t*	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	0.143	3.589		0.040
Religiosity	0.744	0.031	0.829	24.361

The results show that religiosity accounted for 68.7% of the variance in emotional intelligence (R^2 = .687). Religiosity had a strong and statistically significant direct effect on emotional intelligence (β = .829).

Table 6

R and R Square Values for the Effect of Religiosity and Emotional Intelligence on Self-Control

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.492	0.242	0.236	4.756

Table 7

Regression Coefficients for the Effect of Religiosity and Emotional Intelligence on Self-Control

|	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	*t*	Sig.
(Constant)	29.816	2.812		10.604	0.000
Religiosity	0.086	0.043	0.191	2.015	0.045
Emotional Intelligence	0.321	0.048	0.639	6.727	0.000

When religiosity and emotional intelligence were entered simultaneously into the model, the two predictors jointly explained 24.2% of the variance in self-control (R^2 = .242). Emotional intelligence demonstrated a substantial direct effect on self-control (β = .639), whereas religiosity exhibited a smaller but statistically significant direct effect (β = .191).

The standardized path coefficients are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Path Analysis of the Effect of Religiosity on Self-Control Mediated by Emotional Intelligence
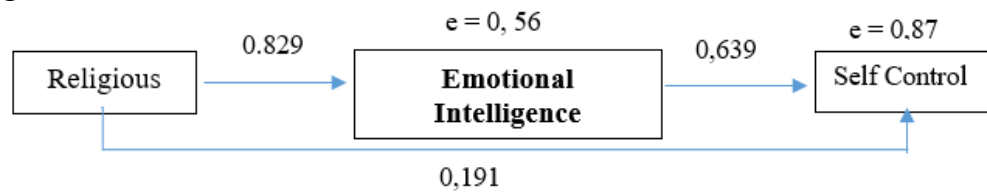
Based on the path model, the indirect effect of religiosity on self-control through emotional intelligence was calculated as .5297, obtained by multiplying the standardized path coefficient from religiosity to emotional intelligence ($\beta = .829$) by that from emotional intelligence to self-control ($\beta = .639$). This indirect effect exceeds the magnitude of the direct effect of religiosity on self-control, indicating that emotional intelligence plays a substantial mediating role.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that religiosity influences self-control both directly and indirectly, with the indirect pathway through emotional intelligence constituting the dominant mechanism. This pattern of results provides empirical support for the proposed mediation model and underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in translating religious commitment into effective self-regulatory behavior.

DISCUSSION

Self-control is a crucial psychological attribute that warrants sustained scholarly attention, as it substantially determines an individual's capacity to behave in adaptive, responsible, and goal-directed ways. Individuals with high levels of self-control tend to demonstrate constructive behaviors toward both themselves and their social environments. However, self-control does not emerge in isolation; rather, it is shaped through dynamic interactions among personal, social, and psychological factors. One influential construct underlying self-control is self-concept, which is not innate but develops through continuous interaction from childhood to adulthood, largely influenced by parenting practices and the broader social environment (Saikia, 2020). Consequently, fostering a healthy self-concept is essential, as it exerts a profound influence on quality of life, self-confidence, and social adaptability. Interventions that target these formative influences may therefore contribute meaningfully to the development of both self-concept and self-regulatory capacity.

The findings of this study indicate that students' self-control is significantly associated with both religiosity and emotional intelligence. From a psychological perspective, religiosity functions as an internal regulatory system that provides individuals with a coherent value framework, long-term life orientation, and spiritual motivation, all of which facilitate impulse control and guide behavior in accordance with moral standards. Religious practices—such as prayer, worship, and fasting—also operate as cognitive and emotional exercises that strengthen emotion regulation, delay

gratification, and reflective decision-making (Marcus & McCullough, 2021). Thus, religiosity extends beyond ritual observance and assumes a deeper psychological function in shaping disciplined and purposeful behavior.

The cultivation of religious values is most effective when initiated early in life. Suyanto, as cited in Wati & Arif (2017), emphasizes that character education should begin in early childhood and elementary schooling. The internalization of religious character may be implemented through three complementary approaches: integration within academic subjects, reinforcement through school culture, and engagement via extracurricular activities. Among curricular subjects, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a particularly central role in fostering religious character. PAI educators are therefore expected not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to model moral conduct and spiritual integrity. Schools may reinforce religious values by cultivating positive routines, such as performing duha prayers, reading the Qur'an prior to lessons, practicing regular charity (*infaq*), reciting prayers before and after class, participating in spiritual reflections (*tausiyah*), engaging in community service, and promoting environmental stewardship (Kuliyatun, 2020). In addition, religiously oriented extracurricular activities serve as effective platforms for sustained character development.

Empirical evidence further suggests that Islamic religious extracurricular programs promote key virtues, including obedience in worship, honesty, responsibility, discipline, enthusiasm for learning, independence, critical thinking, creativity, compassion, sincerity, and justice (Resmi, 2020). One prominent example is the role of Islamic Spirituality Groups (Rohis), which cultivate religious values through structured programs such as mentoring, regular Qur'anic study sessions, congregational prayers—including *duha* and *tahajjud*—Qur'an memorization, daily *dhikr*, voluntary fasting, and the modeling of virtuous conduct (Asvia, 2023). Through these practices, students are encouraged not only to comply with religious rituals but also to internalize moral principles that support emotional maturity and behavioral regulation.

Emotional intelligence also emerged as a significant predictor of self-control among students of IAIN Kediri. This finding corroborates prior research (Siswati et al.), which demonstrates that individuals with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to recognize, evaluate, and regulate their own emotions as well as those of others. Such competencies enable individuals to respond to emotionally charged situations in adaptive and goal-consistent ways. Emotional intelligence thereby enhances one's capacity to utilize emotional information constructively in decision-making, social interaction, and the pursuit of personal goals (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). In this sense, emotional intelligence functions as a psychological resource that supports sustained self-regulation.

Given its significance, emotional intelligence should be intentionally cultivated and systematically managed. Emotional intelligence is not a fixed trait; rather, it develops through learning experiences and social interaction. Its growth is shaped by multiple environmental contexts, including family, educational institutions, and the wider

community. Schools, in particular, bear substantial responsibility for nurturing students' emotional intelligence through supportive classroom climates, reflective learning practices, and emotionally responsive pedagogical approaches (Utaminingsih & Puspita, 2023). Learning environments that provide meaningful emotional experiences enable students to practice emotional awareness, empathy, and self-regulation. Complementary strategies include content mastery services (Susilo, 2018), which offer personal and social insights beyond formal curricula, as well as exposure to relaxation music from an early age, which has been shown to enhance emotional regulation (Ulfah et al., 2021).

A central contribution of this study lies in its examination of emotional intelligence as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between religiosity and self-control. The findings indicate that religiosity does not influence self-control solely through direct pathways; rather, its effect is largely transmitted through the enhancement of emotional intelligence. This result extends previous research by Shata & Wilani (2018) and Shodiq (2024), which reported associations between religiosity and emotional intelligence but did not formally test mediation models. By modeling these variables simultaneously, the present study provides empirical evidence that emotional intelligence functions as a psychological bridge through which religious values are translated into effective self-regulatory behavior.

Consistent engagement with religious teachings fosters values such as patience, sincerity, and empathy, which are foundational to emotional intelligence. These values are not merely ritualistic but serve as behavioral and emotional resources for navigating complex life challenges. Individuals with strong religious orientations tend to manage stress more effectively, demonstrate greater empathy, and maintain a healthier balance between emotional impulses and moral judgment (Miftahudin, 2023). In this way, religiosity contributes indirectly to self-control by nurturing emotional competencies that support disciplined behavior.

Educational environments at all levels play a critical role in supporting students' self-understanding and personal development. Learning experiences that integrate academic content with religious values and character education facilitate the gradual development of self-awareness. When religious teachings are enacted through practical routines—such as worship practices, ethical modeling, and the cultivation of inner virtues—values including patience, honesty, and sincerity become internalized components of students' identities. Simultaneously, emotional intelligence develops through repeated exposure to situations that demand emotional regulation, empathy, and measured responses. The convergence of religiosity and emotional intelligence thus forms a foundational basis for balanced self-concept and sustained self-control.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that merit consideration. The sample was restricted to students from IAIN Kediri, who share relatively homogeneous religious and cultural backgrounds. This homogeneity may limit the generalizability of the findings to more diverse educational settings, such as public

universities or multi-religious contexts. Additionally, the cross-sectional design and reliance on self-report questionnaires constrain the interpretation of findings to associative relationships rather than causal inferences. Response biases, including social desirability effects—particularly salient in measures of religiosity and self-control—may also have influenced participants' responses. Future research employing longitudinal designs, mixed-method approaches, or multi-institutional samples would help address these limitations and deepen understanding of the mechanisms identified in this study.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the path analysis, this study demonstrates that religiosity exerts both direct and indirect influences on students' self-control through emotional intelligence. The direct effect of religiosity on emotional intelligence reached 82.9%, while emotional intelligence accounted for 63.9% of the variance in self-control. In addition, religiosity exerted a substantial indirect effect on self-control (52.97%), indicating that emotional intelligence functions as a significant mediating mechanism rather than a peripheral variable.

These findings underscore that students' self-control is shaped not only by religious commitment but also by the emotional competencies cultivated through that commitment. Accordingly, strengthening religiosity alone may be insufficient to foster effective self-regulation unless it is accompanied by the development of emotional intelligence. From an educational perspective, the integration of religious values with emotional skills training emerges as a critical strategy. Such integration may be achieved through formal instruction, including Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the cultivation of supportive institutional culture, and the implementation of religiously oriented extracurricular activities that promote emotional awareness, empathy, and self-regulation.

This study contributes to the existing literature by advancing a more integrative understanding of self-control within Islamic educational contexts, particularly by empirically demonstrating the mediating role of emotional intelligence. However, the scope of the findings is subject to certain limitations. Future research is encouraged to extend this investigation to diverse higher education institutions with varying cultural and religious characteristics, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the results. In addition, the use of longitudinal or mixed-methods designs would allow for deeper exploration of developmental processes and contextual dynamics underlying the relationships among religiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-control.

From a practical standpoint, universities are encouraged to design structured and sustainable intervention programs that simultaneously nurture students' religiosity and emotional intelligence. Such programs may serve as preventive efforts against maladaptive behaviors associated with poor self-control, including academic procrastination, excessive digital media use, and emotional dysregulation. By adopting a holistic educational approach that integrates spiritual values, emotional competence, and

behavioral discipline, higher education institutions can contribute meaningfully to the development of balanced, resilient, and morally grounded graduates.

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