

Conceptual Reconstruction of Spiritual Intelligence as a Holistic Foundation for Student Character Development

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Abstract

Student character development continues to face challenges due to the persistent dominance of cognitively oriented learning practices, highlighting the need for a holistic approach that incorporates moral, affective, and spiritual dimensions. This study aimed to reconstruct the concept of spiritual intelligence as a holistic foundation for student character development by integrating perspectives from educational psychology and Islamic religious education. A qualitative library research method was employed. Data were obtained from scholarly articles published between 2018 and 2026 and selected based on predetermined inclusion criteria, resulting in 20 relevant articles. Qualitative content analysis was conducted through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and thematic synthesis. The findings indicate that spiritual intelligence functions as an internal mechanism for character development through self-awareness, reflection, self-regulation, value internalization, and the formation of meaningful learning experiences. The integration of spiritual intelligence with educational psychology and Islamic religious education supports holistic character development by connecting cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This study proposes a conceptual reconstruction that positions spiritual intelligence as a fundamental holistic foundation for character development, extending previous studies that have generally considered it a supporting factor. The findings provide theoretical contributions to character education and practical implications for developing educational policies and learning practices that systematically strengthen students' spiritual intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in developing students who achieve academic excellence while possessing strong character, which serves as a foundation for responsible participation in society. Character development is a fundamental objective of education because character influences individuals' thoughts, behaviors, and actions in accordance with moral values. However, evidence from educational contexts indicates that character education has not yet fully achieved its intended outcomes. Instances of behavioral misconduct, declining discipline, reduced responsibility, and weakening social ethics suggest that educational practices remain predominantly focused on cognitive achievement rather than on strengthening affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This condition highlights the need for educational approaches that promote deeper and more sustainable value internalization.

The development of spiritual intelligence (SQ) has been recognized as a potential approach to addressing these challenges. Spiritual intelligence refers to an individual's capacity

to construct meaning in life, develop self-awareness, internalize moral values, and establish harmonious relationships with God, others, and the environment. Unlike intellectual intelligence, which emphasizes cognitive reasoning, and emotional intelligence, which focuses on emotional regulation, spiritual intelligence enables individuals to understand life purposes, develop value-based perspectives, and interpret experiences more profoundly. From an educational psychology perspective, spiritual intelligence functions as an internal mechanism that influences emotional regulation, decision-making, learning motivation, and behaviors aligned with personal value systems.

Recent developments in educational psychology indicate that character development is understood as a process integrating cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions rather than merely transmitting moral knowledge. Students need to develop the ability to reflect on themselves, distinguish ethical principles, and internalize values so that these values can be consistently reflected in their actions. Within this framework, spiritual intelligence plays an important role by supporting students' self-awareness, emotional regulation, meaning-making processes, and sense of purpose, which are essential elements of character development.

Recent educational trends have increasingly emphasized the integration of spiritual dimensions into learning processes to promote holistic character development. Research indicates that educational practices focused solely on academic achievement are insufficient for fostering comprehensive personal development, particularly in moral growth, meaning-making, and social responsibility. Spiritual intelligence is increasingly recognized as a fundamental capacity that enables students to develop self-awareness, clarify life goals, internalize moral values, and demonstrate behaviors oriented toward the common good. Therefore, spiritual intelligence is not merely a complementary element of education but a foundational dimension that integrates intellectual, emotional, moral, and social development (Mulawarman et al., 2024; Diwu et al., 2024).

Furthermore, strengthening spiritual intelligence has become increasingly relevant in addressing the challenges of twenty-first-century education, which is characterized by increasing social complexity, rapid technological advancement, and emerging psychological and moral challenges among students. Recent studies demonstrate that spiritual competencies contribute to psychological well-being, self-regulation, resilience, and character development. These findings indicate that spiritual intelligence influences not only character formation but also the creation of meaningful and sustainable learning experiences. Therefore, spiritual intelligence should be positioned as an integral component of an educational paradigm that supports holistic human development (Nurislamiah et al., 2025; Budiyantri & Parhan, 2024).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated a relationship between spiritual intelligence, character development, and students' psychological growth. Liswandari (2022) found that spiritual intelligence contributes to students' compliance with Islamic Religious Education learning by strengthening value awareness. Herlena and Seftiani (2018) reported that individuals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate greater psychological well-being, stronger emotional regulation, and better adaptive capacity. Similarly, Muttaqin et al. (2025) showed that spiritual intelligence enhances intrinsic learning motivation by enabling students to construct meaning from the learning process. These findings

suggest that spiritual intelligence contributes not only to students' moral development but also to their psychological and academic growth.

Within the context of Islamic Religious Education, spiritual intelligence is closely associated with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Values such as faith (iman), piety (taqwa), honesty, responsibility, trustworthiness (amanah), and social responsibility represent important components of spiritual intelligence development. Nur'aini and Hamzah (2023) explained that spiritual intelligence from a Qur'anic perspective involves both a vertical relationship with Allah SWT and horizontal relationships with fellow human beings and the environment. Similarly, Kartika et al. (2024) emphasized that Hadith-based teachings highlight sincerity, purity of heart, and self-control as essential principles in developing religious character.

Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between spiritual intelligence and character development, most have positioned spiritual intelligence as one of several contributing factors. Furthermore, previous research has generally explored spiritual intelligence from either educational psychology or Islamic Religious Education perspectives separately. Studies that position spiritual intelligence as the primary foundation of character development through an integrated educational psychology and Islamic Religious Education framework remain limited. This gap indicates the need for a more comprehensive conceptual framework that explains the mechanisms through which spiritual intelligence contributes to holistic character development.

The novelty of this study lies in its conceptual reconstruction of spiritual intelligence as the holistic foundation of student character development rather than merely a supporting factor. By integrating perspectives from educational psychology and Islamic Religious Education, this study explains character development mechanisms through self-awareness, reflection, self-regulation, value internalization, and meaningful learning experiences. Unlike previous studies that have treated spiritual intelligence as a secondary variable, this study positions it as a central element within the character education process, offering a broader perspective on how character develops through conscious, reflective, and continuous value internalization.

To address this research gap, this study aimed to analyze spiritual intelligence as a holistic foundation for student character development and examine its relevance from both educational psychology and Islamic Religious Education perspectives. The findings are expected to contribute to the theoretical development of character education and provide a conceptual basis for formulating educational policies and practices that systematically strengthen students' character through spiritual intelligence.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative library research approach to reconstruct the concept of spiritual intelligence as a holistic foundation for student character development through a systematic synthesis of relevant literature. A library research design was selected to enable comprehensive exploration, critical analysis, and conceptual integration of previous theoretical and empirical studies related to spiritual intelligence, educational psychology, and Islamic Religious Education.

The literature search was conducted systematically using Google Scholar as the primary database. The search was conducted from March to May 2026 using combinations of keywords and Boolean operators (AND, OR). The search strategy included the following terms: ("spiritual intelligence" OR "spiritual quotient") AND ("character education" OR "student character development") AND ("educational psychology" OR "Islamic education" OR "Islamic Religious Education"). This strategy was applied to identify literature relevant to the research objectives.

The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) peer-reviewed scholarly articles published between 2018 and 2026; (2) studies addressing spiritual intelligence, character development, educational psychology, or Islamic Religious Education; (3) articles available in full text; and (4) publications directly relevant to the conceptual framework of the study. The exclusion criteria included duplicate publications, articles with insufficient theoretical or methodological information, conference abstracts, and studies unrelated to spiritual intelligence and character development.

The literature selection process was conducted in four stages. First, the identification stage yielded 174 potentially relevant articles from the database search. Second, title and abstract screening reduced the number of articles to 35 studies based on their relevance to the research objectives. Third, full-text assessment was conducted to evaluate conceptual relevance, methodological quality, and contribution to the study. Finally, 20 articles met all inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis.

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the studies included in the literature review and their contributions to the conceptual reconstruction developed in this study.

No.	Author(s) & Year	Research Focus	Method	Main Findings	Contribution to This Study
1	Herlena & Seftiani (2018)	Spiritual intelligence and subjective well-being	Quantitative	Spiritual intelligence positively influences psychological well-being and emotional regulation	Supports psychological dimensions of character development
2	Suraji & Sastrodiharjo (2021)	Spirituality and character education	Literature review	Spirituality strengthens moral awareness and character formation	Supports spirituality as the foundation of character
3	Suryati & Salehudin (2021)	Guidance and counseling and spiritual development	Qualitative	Counseling programs improve spiritual and emotional intelligence	Supports educational intervention strategies
4	Liswandari (2022)	Spiritual intelligence and learning compliance	Phenomenological study	Spiritual intelligence increases value awareness and discipline	Supports value internalization mechanisms

5	Nur'aini & Hamzah (2023)	Spiritual intelligence from the Qur'anic perspective	Conceptual study	Spiritual intelligence integrates relationships with God, humans, and environment	Supports Islamic educational perspective
6	Abidin & Sirojuddin (2024)	Internalization of Sufistic values	Qualitative	Spiritual values strengthen personality and character development	Supports value internalization process
7	Budiyanti & Parhan (2024)	Holistic Islamic pedagogy	Qualitative	Holistic education enhances spiritual and moral character	Supports holistic educational framework
8	Haryanto et al. (2024)	Islamic counseling and learning motivation	Quantitative	Spiritual dimensions strengthen learning motivation	Supports motivational outcomes
9	Kartika et al. (2024)	Spiritual intelligence from Hadith perspective	Literature review	Hadith emphasizes sincerity and self-control	Supports normative foundation
10	Mulawarman et al. (2024)	Character education management	Qualitative	School management contributes to spiritual intelligence development	Supports institutional dimensions
11	Aldi & Khairanis (2025)	Integration of educational psychology and Islamic education	Literature review	Integration promotes holistic student development	Supports theoretical integration
12	Asra & Akbar (2025)	SPIRIT model for character development	Conceptual study	Spiritual reflection and self-purification strengthen character	Supports character development strategies
13	Hasrul (2025)	Religious character through counseling services	Qualitative	Counseling services enhance moral awareness	Supports guidance and counseling services
14	Lubis (2025)	Islamic educational psychology and emotional intelligence	Literature review	Spiritual awareness improves emotional maturity	Supports psychological mechanisms
15	Muttaqin et al. (2025)	Spiritual intelligence in learning process	Literature review	Spiritual intelligence enhances intrinsic motivation	Supports educational psychology perspective
16	Nurislamiah et al. (2025)	Spiritual intelligence in Islamic	Literature review	Spiritual intelligence develops	Supports psychological and

17	Samsudin et al. (2025)	educational psychology Internalization of Islamic spiritual values	Qualitative	empathy and self-regulation School culture strengthens spiritual value internalization	spiritual mechanisms Supports school culture dimension
18	Suprpto (2025)	IQ, EQ, SQ, and moral strengthening	Mixed methods	Spiritual intelligence influences moral development	Supports multidimensional character development
19	Syahroni & Sunardi (2025)	Character and spiritual intelligence curriculum	Conceptual study	Curriculum integration strengthens character education	Supports conceptual reconstruction
20	Mualif & Amril (2026)	Spiritual-social intelligence strengthening model	Development research	Spiritual and social intelligence strengthen empathy, responsibility, and self-control	Supports multidimensional character development

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics, methodological approaches, and main contributions of the studies included in the review. The selected literature represented diverse perspectives on spiritual intelligence, educational psychology, character education, and Islamic Religious Education. The inclusion of studies with varied methodological and conceptual approaches supported a comprehensive synthesis and the development of a holistic conceptual reconstruction of spiritual intelligence as a foundation for student character development.

The selected literature was analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic synthesis. The analytical process consisted of four stages: data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conceptual synthesis. During data reduction, irrelevant information was excluded to focus on concepts related to spiritual intelligence and character development. In the categorization stage, findings, concepts, and theoretical perspectives were grouped into themes based on conceptual similarities. The interpretation stage examined relationships among themes from the perspectives of educational psychology and Islamic Religious Education. Finally, thematic synthesis was conducted to develop a conceptual reconstruction that positioned spiritual intelligence as the primary holistic foundation for student character development.

The credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were maintained through continuous comparison and cross-validation among studies with related themes and conceptual frameworks. This process supported the development of a comprehensive, coherent, and theoretically grounded conceptual model. The overall analysis emphasized consistency, transparency, and alignment with the objective of reconstructing spiritual intelligence as a holistic foundation for student character development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Spiritual Intelligence as the Foundation of Student Character Development

The findings indicate that spiritual intelligence (SQ) occupies a fundamental position in student character development. Unlike educational approaches that primarily emphasize cognitive achievement, spiritual intelligence functions as an internal mechanism that enables students to understand, internalize, and actualize moral values in their daily lives. Character developed through the internalization of values tends to be more stable because it is grounded in self-awareness and internal conviction rather than mere compliance with external rules. From the perspective of educational psychology, this finding suggests that character development cannot be separated from spiritual development, which plays a vital role in shaping value orientation, personal integrity, and students' social responsibility (Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021; Liswandari, 2022).

The findings further reveal that students with well-developed spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate greater discipline, responsibility, and self-control in various learning situations. Spiritual intelligence enables individuals to understand the moral reasoning underlying their actions, so that their behavior is not solely driven by external supervision or punishment. Consequently, spiritual intelligence serves as an internal foundation that guides individuals in making decisions and developing behaviors consistent with their personal value systems. These findings indicate that spiritual intelligence should be regarded not merely as a supporting factor but as the primary foundation of student character development (Liswandari, 2022; Mulawarman et al., 2024).

These findings are supported by Suprpto (2025), who reported that the moral development of students in integrated Islamic schools is influenced not only by intellectual and emotional intelligence but also by the development of spiritual and social intelligence. The study explains that spiritual intelligence provides a value-oriented framework that enables students to develop integrity, responsibility, discipline, and conscious moral decision-making. This evidence further reinforces the argument that spiritual intelligence occupies a fundamental position in character development because it facilitates the internalization of moral values into students' personality structures (Suprpto, 2025).

From the perspective of educational psychology, character development is understood as a developmental process involving the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. Spiritual intelligence contributes significantly by enabling students to cultivate self-awareness, engage in reflective thinking, and construct meaningful interpretations of both learning experiences and everyday life. These capacities provide the basis for developing consistent, responsible, and value-oriented behavior. Therefore, spiritual intelligence holds a strategic role in fostering character that is not merely normative but deeply embedded within students' personality structures (Herlena & Seftiani, 2018; Nurislamiah et al., 2025).

The findings also demonstrate that spiritual intelligence is closely associated with psychological well-being and individuals' capacity to cope with life's challenges. Students with well-developed spiritual intelligence generally exhibit stronger emotional regulation, greater psychological resilience, and higher adaptability. These competencies contribute to the development of character traits such as patience, responsibility, empathy, and integrity. Therefore, character development through spiritual intelligence not only strengthens students'

moral development but also supports their overall psychological growth (Herlena & Seftiani, 2018; Muttaqin et al., 2025).

The present study further indicates that the systematic development of spiritual intelligence through character education enhances students' integrity, discipline, responsibility, and social concern. These findings suggest that spiritual intelligence operates not only at the individual level but also contributes to creating a school culture that continuously supports character development. Educational environments that provide opportunities for reflection, value habituation, and meaningful spiritual experiences strengthen the process of value internalization in students' daily lives (Mulawarman et al., 2024; Samsudin et al., 2025).

Recent research by Mualif and Amril (2026) demonstrates that strengthening spiritual intelligence in conjunction with social intelligence significantly contributes to student character development, particularly in the areas of responsibility, empathy, social awareness, and self-control. The model proposed in their study confirms that spiritual intelligence functions not only as a source of individual awareness but also as the foundation for constructive, value-oriented social behavior. These findings further reinforce the position of spiritual intelligence as a multidimensional foundation for student character development (Mualif & Amril, 2026).

Based on the synthesis of previous studies, spiritual intelligence can be positioned as the primary foundation of student character development. It enables students not only to understand moral concepts cognitively but also to develop the awareness, commitment, and responsibility required to implement these values consistently in everyday life. Character development grounded in spiritual intelligence, therefore, integrates cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions, producing students who are not only academically competent but also possess moral integrity, psychological maturity, and strong spiritual awareness (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024) and (Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021).

Spiritual Intelligence as a Mechanism for Value Internalization from the Perspective of Educational Psychology

From the perspective of educational psychology, character development is understood as a psychological developmental process that occurs through value internalization, the development of self-awareness, and individuals' capacity to derive meaning from life experiences. The findings indicate that spiritual intelligence functions as an internal mechanism that enables students to integrate knowledge, personal experiences, and their value systems, resulting in behavior that is consistent with moral principles. Unlike learning approaches that merely emphasize knowledge transmission, the development of spiritual intelligence encourages students to engage in reflection, interpret the meaning of their experiences, and cultivate an internal commitment to the values they acquire. Consequently, character development extends beyond cognitive achievement and becomes embedded within students' personality structures (Nurislamiah et al., 2025; Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021).

The synthesis further reveals that value internalization through spiritual intelligence occurs through several interconnected psychological stages, namely self-awareness, self-reflection, self-regulation, and meaning-making. Self-awareness enables students to recognize their values, beliefs, and life purposes. Through self-reflection, students evaluate their experiences and behaviors based on their internalized value systems. This process develops into self-regulation, allowing individuals to manage emotions, adjust their behavior, and make

responsible decisions. At the final stage, students construct meaning from their learning experiences so that acquired values are not merely understood conceptually but are internalized as integral components of their personal identity (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024).

The findings demonstrate that spiritual intelligence makes a substantial contribution to students' personality development by strengthening reflective capacity, emotional regulation, and the formation of enduring value orientations. Students with higher levels of spiritual intelligence are generally more capable of understanding the relationship between their actions and their moral consequences, resulting in more consistent and responsible behavior. From the perspective of educational psychology, this capacity represents an important indicator of successful value internalization because character develops from internal awareness rather than external supervision alone. Therefore, spiritual intelligence functions as a psychological mechanism that reinforces both personality development and student character formation (Herlena & Seftiani, 2018; Nurislamiah et al., 2025).

These findings are further supported by Lubis (2025), who argued that Islamic educational psychology plays a significant role in fostering emotional intelligence and personality development through the concept of *educating the heart*. The study emphasizes that educational processes oriented toward strengthening spiritual awareness, emotional regulation, and self-reflection contribute to the development of more mature, empathetic, and responsible character. This evidence demonstrates that spiritual intelligence and psychological development are closely interconnected dimensions in the process of value internalization and student character development (Lubis, 2025).

The present findings are also consistent with those of Herlena and Seftiani (2018), who reported that spiritual intelligence is positively associated with psychological well-being, emotional stability, and individuals' ability to cope adaptively with life's challenges. Psychological well-being fostered through spiritual intelligence enables students to develop resilience, manage internal conflicts effectively, and make wiser and more meaningful decisions. Within educational settings, these capacities contribute to more mature character development by enabling students to respond constructively to both academic and social challenges (Herlena & Seftiani, 2018).

In addition, the findings indicate that spiritual intelligence contributes to the development of intrinsic learning motivation by enabling students to discover meaning and purpose in the learning process. Students who perceive learning as part of personal growth and moral responsibility tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement, perseverance, and commitment to learning. These findings suggest that spiritual intelligence not only supports moral character development but also enhances the quality of learning by strengthening students' intrinsic motivation (Muttaqin et al., 2025; Haryanto et al., 2024).

From the perspective of educational psychology, the mechanism of value internalization established through spiritual intelligence demonstrates that character development is a gradual and continuous process. Values initially acquired through learning are subsequently understood, reflected upon, internalized, and ultimately translated into everyday behavior. This process positions spiritual intelligence as the connecting link between cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions in student development. Therefore, spiritual intelligence should not be regarded merely as one dimension of individual development but as the primary psychological

mechanism underlying holistic character development (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025; Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024).

Based on the synthesis of previous studies, spiritual intelligence functions as a mechanism of value internalization that bridges the learning process and character development. Through self-awareness, self-reflection, self-regulation, and meaning-making, students develop intrinsic and sustainable moral commitment. These findings further reinforce the novelty of the present study by demonstrating that spiritual intelligence should be positioned as the primary foundation of character development because it integrates psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions within the educational process (Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021; Aldi & Khairanis, 2025).

Integration of Spiritual Intelligence in Islamic Religious Education as a Foundation for Character Development

The findings indicate that spiritual intelligence occupies a strategic position in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) as a foundation for student character development. Islamic Religious Education is intended not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to cultivate students' personalities based on faith (*iman*), piety (*taqwa*), and noble character (*akhlaq*). Within this context, spiritual intelligence functions as an internal mechanism that enables students to understand, internalize, and actualize religious values in their daily lives. Learning processes that integrate the development of spiritual intelligence, therefore, extend beyond cognitive understanding of religious concepts and promote deeper moral and spiritual awareness (Nur'aini & Hamzah, 2023).

The synthesis further demonstrates that the core values of Islamic Religious Education, including faith, piety, honesty, responsibility, trustworthiness (*amanah*), and social responsibility, are closely associated with the indicators of spiritual intelligence. Students with well-developed spiritual intelligence are more capable of connecting religious teachings with their personal life experiences. Consequently, these values are not merely understood as normative concepts but become guiding principles that shape students' ways of thinking, attitudes, and behavior. In this regard, spiritual intelligence serves as a bridge linking religious knowledge with the practical manifestation of character in everyday life (Kartika et al., 2024).

The findings support the view that spiritual intelligence from the perspective of the Qur'an extends beyond the vertical relationship between human beings and Allah SWT to encompass horizontal relationships with other people and the broader social environment. This perspective suggests that the development of spiritual intelligence within Islamic Religious Education is inherently comprehensive because it promotes religious consciousness, strengthens social responsibility, and encourages behaviors that reflect noble character. Therefore, character development in Islamic Religious Education cannot be separated from systematic and continuous efforts to cultivate spiritual intelligence (Nur'aini & Hamzah, 2023; Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021).

The findings also reveal that the Hadith emphasizes the importance of purity of heart, sincerity of intention, and self-control as fundamental principles for developing spiritual behavior. From the perspective of educational psychology, purity of heart and sincerity of intention can be understood as forms of internal awareness that motivate individuals to act according to deeply held values rather than external pressures. This perspective indicates that

spiritual intelligence contributes to authentic character development because individuals' behavior emerges from profound internalization of moral and religious values (Kartika et al., 2024; Herlena & Seftiani, 2018).

The study further demonstrates that integrating spiritual intelligence into Islamic Religious Education results in a more holistic learning process. These findings are consistent with those of Aldi and Khairanis (2025), who argued that integrating educational psychology with Islamic Religious Education promotes balanced intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual development among students. Learning environments that incorporate spiritual dimensions enable students not only to understand religious concepts theoretically but also to develop reflective thinking, self-control, empathy, and social responsibility as essential components of character development (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025).

Similarly, Nurislamiah et al. (2025) explained that, from the perspective of Islamic educational psychology, spiritual intelligence serves as the foundation for the development of religious awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and students' social responsibility. These competencies are essential to the character development process because they enable students to establish harmonious relationships with God, fellow human beings, and the environment. Accordingly, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education should provide greater opportunities for reflection, value habituation, value internalization, and meaningful learning experiences to ensure that spiritual values become deeply embedded in students' lives (Nurislamiah et al., 2025).

Based on the synthesis of previous studies, spiritual intelligence can be understood as both a normative and psychological foundation for student character development through Islamic Religious Education. The integration of spiritual intelligence enables religious education to move beyond the transmission of knowledge toward a process of personal transformation that integrates cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education grounded in the development of spiritual intelligence has the potential to produce students who possess not only strong religious competence but also moral integrity, social responsibility, and profound spiritual awareness (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025; Nurislamiah et al., 2025).

Strategies for Developing Spiritual Intelligence in Learning and Educational Services

The findings indicate that the development of students' spiritual intelligence requires educational strategies that are systematic, integrated, and sustainable. Strengthening spiritual intelligence cannot be achieved through incidental learning activities or solely by delivering theoretical religious instruction. Instead, it requires educational processes that facilitate students in developing self-awareness, engaging in reflection, and internalizing spiritual values in their daily lives. From the perspective of educational psychology, character development through spiritual intelligence is understood as a learning process involving experience, habituation, value internalization, and gradual personal transformation, ultimately leading to consistent and sustainable behavior (Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021).

The findings are also consistent with the SPIRIT model proposed by Asra and Akbar (2025), which identifies spiritual growth and the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (self-purification) as key strategies for character development in the Society 5.0 era. The model emphasizes the importance of cultivating self-awareness, spiritual reflection, self-control, value habituation,

and meaningful learning experiences as mechanisms for sustainable character development. These findings reinforce the view that fostering spiritual intelligence requires a holistic and integrative educational approach that promotes students' internal transformation (Asra & Akbar, 2025).

One of the primary strategies for developing spiritual intelligence is the integration of spiritual values throughout the learning process. Such integration should not be limited to Islamic Religious Education but should also be implemented across different subjects by reinforcing values such as responsibility, honesty, discipline, empathy, and social responsibility. Learning experiences that encourage students to reflect, discover the meaning of what they learn, and connect academic content with real-life situations help foster deeper spiritual awareness. Consequently, learning functions not only as a means of knowledge acquisition but also as a medium for character development through continuous value internalization (Muttaqin et al., 2025).

In addition to curriculum integration, teachers' role modeling plays a crucial role in the development of students' spiritual intelligence. From the perspective of educational psychology, students acquire values and behaviors not only through verbal instruction but also through observation and imitation of individuals perceived as authoritative and credible. Teachers who consistently demonstrate integrity, responsibility, honesty, empathy, and spiritual awareness in their daily professional practice become effective role models for character development. Therefore, the success of spiritual intelligence development depends largely on teachers' consistency in embodying the values they seek to instill in their students (Mulawarman et al., 2024).

Another important strategy is the habituation of spiritual behaviors through continuous educational activities. Such habituation may include reflective practices, collective worship, prayer, community service, the reinforcement of discipline, and various activities that provide students with opportunities to practice spiritual values in real-life contexts. Through repeated practice, values that are initially learned cognitively gradually become embedded attitudes and behaviors within students' personalities. Accordingly, character development through spiritual intelligence occurs as a continuous process of value transformation rather than merely through conceptual understanding (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024).

The findings also demonstrate that guidance and counseling services play a strategic role in supporting the development of students' spiritual intelligence. These services provide students with opportunities to develop self-understanding, manage internal conflicts, strengthen emotional regulation, and deepen their awareness of personal values. Suryati and Salehudin (2021) found that systematically designed guidance and counseling programs effectively enhance both students' spiritual and emotional intelligence. Through these services, students are not only assisted in addressing psychological challenges but are also encouraged to develop reflective capacities and moral awareness that serve as the foundation for character development.

These findings are further supported by Hasrul (2025), who reported that guidance and counseling services integrated with religious character education effectively enhance moral awareness, promote positive behavioral habits, and facilitate the internalization of spiritual values. Guidance approaches that emphasize spiritual development enable students to derive

meaning from their life experiences, strengthen psychological resilience, and develop responsibility toward themselves, society, and God. This evidence suggests that guidance and counseling should be viewed not merely as problem-solving services but also as an essential component of character development through the cultivation of spiritual intelligence.

Beyond the roles of teachers and educational services, school culture also exerts a substantial influence on the successful development of spiritual intelligence. A school environment that consistently internalizes spiritual values through habituation, positive role modeling, social interaction, and religious activities creates meaningful learning experiences that support character development. Such a supportive school culture provides students with authentic opportunities to practice moral and spiritual values, thereby facilitating a deeper and more sustainable process of value internalization (Mulawarman et al., 2024).

Based on the synthesis of previous studies, effective strategies for developing spiritual intelligence require a holistic approach that integrates classroom learning, teacher role modeling, value habituation, guidance and counseling services, and a supportive school culture. The synergy among these educational components enables a deeper process of value internalization, allowing students not only to understand values cognitively but also to internalize and apply them consistently in their daily lives. Therefore, the development of spiritual intelligence should be regarded as an integral component of the educational system to promote sustainable student character development.

The Contribution of Spiritual Intelligence to Learning Motivation and Psychological Well-Being

The findings indicate that spiritual intelligence contributes not only to student character development but also significantly influences the quality of the learning process and students' psychological development. From the perspective of educational psychology, spiritual intelligence enables students to develop a clear sense of purpose in learning, discover meaning in their academic experiences, and cultivate a more intrinsic learning orientation. These capacities allow students to perceive learning not merely as an academic obligation but as a process of personal growth with personal, moral, and spiritual significance. Consequently, the development of spiritual intelligence contributes to the creation of more meaningful and sustainable learning experiences (Muttaqin et al., 2025).

The synthesis further reveals that students with well-developed spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate stronger intrinsic learning motivation than those whose motivation is primarily driven by external factors. This intrinsic motivation develops because students are able to connect their learning goals with their personal values, beliefs, and life purposes. As a result, they exhibit stronger commitment to learning, greater perseverance when facing challenges, and a sustained willingness to engage in learning under various circumstances. Accordingly, spiritual intelligence functions as an internal factor that enhances students' engagement in the learning process and supports more optimal academic development (Muttaqin et al., 2025).

In addition to influencing learning motivation, spiritual intelligence is closely associated with students' psychological well-being. The findings indicate that individuals' ability to discover meaning in life, understand their purpose of existence, and establish harmonious relationships with themselves, others, and God contributes significantly to psychological health. Students with higher levels of spiritual intelligence are generally better able to manage

stress, cope with failure, and develop optimism and resilience when facing academic and social challenges. Thus, spiritual intelligence serves as a source of psychological strength that helps students maintain emotional and mental well-being (Herlena & Seftiani, 2018).

These findings are consistent with those of Herlena and Seftiani (2018), who reported a positive relationship between spiritual intelligence, subjective well-being, and individuals' psychological adaptability. Individuals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate greater emotional stability, stronger self-regulation, and a greater capacity to cope with stress and life conflicts. Within educational settings, these competencies are particularly important because students are frequently required to address academic, social, and emotional challenges that demand adequate psychological preparedness.

The findings also indicate that spiritual intelligence contributes to the development of emotional regulation and self-control. Students with strong spiritual awareness are generally more capable of managing anxiety, controlling impulses, and making decisions based on moral considerations and their internalized values. These self-regulatory abilities not only support academic success but also reinforce character development by promoting responsibility, discipline, and resilience. From the perspective of educational psychology, the ability to regulate emotions and behavior constitutes a fundamental component of healthy and sustainable personality development (Nurislamiah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, spiritual intelligence contributes to the enhancement of empathy and the ability to establish positive social relationships. Students who understand the meaning of life and cultivate spiritual awareness tend to demonstrate greater social concern, stronger collaborative skills, and higher levels of tolerance toward others. These qualities contribute to a more supportive learning environment while promoting students' social and emotional development. Therefore, the development of spiritual intelligence benefits not only individual growth but also fosters a more humane educational climate grounded in shared human values (Nur'aini & Hamzah, 2023).

The findings further demonstrate that integrating spiritual intelligence into educational processes enhances students' engagement in learning. Students with a strong spiritual orientation tend to participate more actively in classroom activities, derive greater meaning from their learning experiences, and demonstrate stronger responsibility for their own personal development. These findings suggest that strengthening spiritual intelligence contributes not only to character development and psychological well-being but also to improving the overall effectiveness of educational processes (Haryanto et al., 2024).

Based on the synthesis of previous studies, spiritual intelligence makes multidimensional contributions to students' development across academic, psychological, social, and moral domains. It enables students to cultivate intrinsic motivation, enhance psychological well-being, strengthen self-regulation, and improve their capacity to adapt to various life challenges. Therefore, the development of spiritual intelligence should be regarded as an integral component of education aimed at nurturing students who are not only academically competent but also possess psychological well-being, moral integrity, and strong spiritual awareness.

Conceptual Reconstruction of Spiritual Intelligence as a Holistic Foundation for Character Development

Based on the synthesis of previous studies, student character development can be understood as a multidimensional process involving the integration of cognitive, affective, moral, social, and spiritual dimensions. Character education approaches that focus solely on the transmission of moral norms and knowledge tend to produce only temporary behavioral changes because they do not sufficiently address students' internal awareness. In contrast, spiritual intelligence enables individuals to develop understanding, internalization, and commitment to their core values, resulting in more consistent and sustainable behavior. These findings reinforce the view that spirituality constitutes a fundamental basis for students' moral and ethical development, as it serves as the source of responsible, honest, and integrity-driven behavior (Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021; Mulawarman et al., 2024).

The findings further indicate that spiritual intelligence functions as an internal mechanism linking the learning process with students' personality development. Through self-awareness, self-reflection, self-regulation, and meaning-making, students internalize the values acquired throughout the educational process until these values become integral components of their personal identity and character. From the perspective of educational psychology, this process demonstrates that character development is not merely the result of knowledge transmission but rather a gradual and continuous process of psychological development fostered through meaningful learning experiences (Herlena & Seftiani, 2018; Muttaqin et al., 2025).

This study reconstructs the position of spiritual intelligence not merely as one of several factors influencing character development but as the primary foundation that integrates all dimensions of student development. Within the conceptual framework proposed in this study, spiritual intelligence functions as the connecting link among the cognitive dimension associated with knowledge, the affective dimension related to emotions and attitudes, the moral dimension concerning value-based judgment, and the spiritual dimension involving meaning, life purpose, and transcendental relationships. This integration enables educational processes to promote more holistic and sustainable character development (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025; Nurislamiah et al., 2025).

The conceptual reconstruction developed in this study is consistent with the Islamic education curriculum model based on character education and spiritual intelligence proposed by Syahroni and Sunardi (2025). Their study emphasizes that character development among Generation Z requires the systematic integration of spiritual intelligence, character education, and meaningful learning experiences. A curriculum grounded in spiritual intelligence enables students to cultivate self-awareness, value orientation, reflective capacity, and sustained moral and social responsibility. These findings further support the argument that spiritual intelligence should be positioned as the primary foundation in designing holistic and adaptive character education for contemporary educational contexts (Syahroni & Sunardi, 2025).

The proposed conceptual reconstruction also demonstrates that character development occurs through a process of value transformation encompassing value acceptance, reflection, internalization, and eventual manifestation in everyday behavior. Throughout this process, students not only understand values conceptually but also develop the awareness to adopt these

values as guiding principles for thinking, attitudes, and actions. Accordingly, the success of character education depends largely on students' ability to derive meaning from their experiences and integrate these values into their personality structures (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024; Nur'aini & Hamzah, 2023).

From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, spiritual intelligence possesses a strong normative foundation because it integrates individuals' relationships with Allah SWT, fellow human beings, and the environment. The integration of educational psychology and Islamic Religious Education provides a more comprehensive framework for explaining how character develops through conscious, reflective, and continuous value internalization. Therefore, character development should not be understood merely as a process of moral education but rather as a comprehensive process of human development encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual dimensions (Kartika et al., 2024; Nur'aini & Hamzah, 2023).

Theoretically, this study contributes to the advancement of character education scholarship by proposing a new paradigm that positions spiritual intelligence as the holistic foundation of student character development. The novelty of this framework lies in integrating the perspectives of educational psychology and Islamic Religious Education to explain the mechanisms of character development through self-awareness, self-reflection, self-regulation, value internalization, and meaning-making derived from learning experiences. This paradigm extends previous studies, which generally viewed spiritual intelligence as a supporting variable, by establishing a conceptual framework that places spiritual intelligence at the center of the entire character education process (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025; Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024).

The practical implications of this conceptual reconstruction suggest that educational institutions should develop policies and instructional practices that systematically integrate the cultivation of spiritual intelligence into all aspects of education. Such efforts may include reflection-based learning, teacher role modeling, value habituation, guidance and counseling services, and the development of a school culture that continuously promotes value internalization. Through this comprehensive approach, education is expected to produce students who are not only academically competent but also demonstrate moral integrity, psychological maturity, social responsibility, and strong spiritual awareness as essential competencies for addressing the challenges of contemporary life (Samsudin et al., 2025; Haryanto et al., 2024).

This study has several limitations. First, the conceptual reconstruction was developed based on literature synthesis and has not yet been empirically validated through quantitative or mixed-method approaches. Second, the reviewed studies were limited to publications discussing spiritual intelligence within educational psychology and Islamic educational contexts. Future studies are therefore recommended to empirically test and validate the proposed conceptual model across different educational levels, cultural settings, and disciplinary contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that spiritual intelligence (SQ) should be positioned as a fundamental foundation for student character development because it functions as an internal

mechanism that integrates the cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions of the educational process. From an educational psychology perspective, spiritual intelligence supports self-awareness, self-reflection, self-regulation, and meaning-making in learning experiences, thereby encouraging intrinsically motivated and sustainable moral behavior. From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, spiritual intelligence provides a normative foundation for character development based on faith (iman), noble character (akhlaq), responsibility, and social concern.

The synthesis further indicates that the development of spiritual intelligence contributes to stronger intrinsic learning motivation, enhanced psychological well-being, improved adaptability, and greater moral integrity among students. These outcomes can be strengthened when spiritual intelligence is cultivated systematically through the integration of spiritual values into learning activities, teacher role modeling, value habituation, guidance and counseling services, and a school culture that consistently supports value internalization.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by proposing a conceptual reconstruction that positions spiritual intelligence not merely as a supporting variable but as a holistic foundation for student character development through the integration of educational psychology and Islamic Religious Education perspectives. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening educational policies and instructional practices that promote spiritual intelligence as an integral component of character education. Future research should empirically validate the proposed conceptual model across different educational levels and contexts to further establish its validity and practical applicability.

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