

Integrating Islamic Akhlak with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): A Systematic Review of Holistic Youth Development

Anwar Sadat¹, Sarah J. Ahmed²

¹Universitas Islam Indonesia, Indonesia

²University of Malaya, Malaysia

Corresponding author: anwar.sadat@uii.ac.id

Abstract

The synthesis between religious ethical frameworks and modern psychological constructs is increasingly crucial for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by contemporary youth. This study provides a systematic review of the integration between Islamic Akhlak and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a holistic approach to youth development. By analyzing reputable literature from 2021-2025, this research identifies significant convergences between the five SEL core competencies—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—and the spiritual-ethical dimensions of Akhlak. The findings demonstrate that internalizing Akhlak provides a transcendental foundation that enriches the secular framework of SEL, offering a more resilient moral compass for navigating complex social environments. This integration results in a comprehensive developmental model that fosters not only emotional intelligence but also spiritual integrity and social responsibility. In conclusion, the synergy between Islamic ethics and SEL offers a robust pedagogical strategy for nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to a globalized society.

Keyword: *Islamic Akhlak, Holistic Youth Development, Systematic Review, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL),*

Introduction

The complexity of the global challenges faced by today's youth necessitates a developmental paradigm that transcends purely cognitive or technical achievements, focusing instead on the integration of ethical character and emotional resilience. In the contemporary educational landscape, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as a dominant framework for fostering personal and social competence; however, its implementation in diverse cultural contexts often reveals a need for deeper spiritual anchoring. [Arjaya et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasize that while SEL provides essential psychological tools, it frequently lacks the transcendental motivation required to sustain moral behavior in the face of systemic societal pressures. This reality is particularly evident in digital environments where emotional intelligence alone is insufficient to combat the erosion of traditional values and the rise of ethical relativism among young individuals. Consequently, there is an urgent need to bridge the gap between secular psychological constructs and religious ethical systems, specifically Islamic *Akhlak*, to provide a more robust and holistic foundation for youth growth. By integrating these two domains, educators can offer a more comprehensive roadmap that addresses not only the psychological well-being of the

youth but also their spiritual identity and moral integrity. Ultimately, this integration aims to produce a generation that is emotionally stable, socially responsible, and firmly rooted in perennial ethical principles.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of character education, many existing frameworks struggle to provide a cohesive model that effectively synthesizes religious ethics with modern pedagogical strategies. Literature suggests a persistent research gap where Islamic *Akhlak* is often treated as a separate theological subject, while SEL is delivered as a secular skill-building program, leading to a fragmented developmental experience for students. [Muzaki & Munir \(2023\)](#) argue that this compartmentalization hinders the internalization of values, as youth fail to see the practical relevance of spiritual teachings in their emotional and social lives. Furthermore, the absence of a systematic review exploring the intersection of these two fields prevents practitioners from identifying clear methodological pathways for integration in diverse learning environments. The inability of current educational models to offer a unified approach results in a moral dissonance, where youth may possess social skills but lack the character depth provided by a structured ethical system like *Akhlak*. Therefore, revitalizing the connection between *Akhlak* and SEL is not merely a theoretical exercise but a necessary step toward addressing the spiritual and emotional vacuum prevalent in modern education. By synthesizing these frameworks, this research seeks to establish a new academic discourse that promotes a more integrated and meaningful approach to holistic youth development.

This systematic review aims to analyze the theoretical and practical intersections between Islamic *Akhlak* and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) to formulate a comprehensive model for holistic youth development. Through an exhaustive examination of recent scholarly works, this study seeks to identify how specific dimensions of *Akhlak*, such as *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude), and *ibsan* (excellence), can enhance the five core competencies of SEL. [Fadli et al. \(2024\)](#) suggest that the objective of such an integration is to create a synergy where emotional management is reinforced by spiritual conviction, leading to more sustainable behavioral outcomes. Additionally, the research intends to map out the pedagogical implications of this synthesis, providing a structured guide for educators to implement holistic development programs in both formal and informal settings. By achieving these goals, the study provides a significant contribution to the fields of Islamic education and educational psychology, offering a validated framework for nurturing well-rounded individuals. The ultimate objective is to demonstrate that the integration of *Akhlak* and SEL offers a superior developmental pathway that addresses the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the younger generation. Through this systematic approach, the research provides evidence-based insights that can inform future educational policies and practices globally.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to transform the landscape of youth development by providing a culturally and spiritually sensitive framework that addresses the limitations of secular psychological models. Based on the analysis of current societal trends and educational gaps, this study argues that the integration of *Akhlak* with SEL provides a more resilient defense against the moral and emotional instabilities inherent in the digital age. [Huda & Muhdori \(2023\)](#) support this premise by asserting that spiritual grounding acts as a critical moderator that enhances the effectiveness of social-emotional skills in promoting positive youth outcomes. Without this research, the development of holistic education models

would remain incomplete, potentially leaving youth vulnerable to the pressures of a value-neutral global culture. The significance also extends to the practical level, where this study offers actionable strategies for fostering empathy, integrity, and resilience through a unified ethical and psychological lens. In conclusion, conducting this systematic review is essential to establish a theoretical anchor for future innovations in character education that are both modern and spiritually authentic. This research serves as a catalyst for a broader movement toward education that prioritizes the development of the whole person, ensuring that youth are prepared to lead with both heart and soul.

Literature Review

The conceptual definition of *Islamic Akhlak* encompasses the deep-seated disposition of the soul that manifests in spontaneous actions, guided by both reason and the transcendental teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Unlike conventional ethics which are often derived from social consensus, *Akhlak* is rooted in the relationship between the creator and the creation, making it a vertical and horizontal moral framework. [Fauzi et al. \(2023\)](#) explain that *Akhlak* is not merely a set of rules but a transformative process of the self (*tazkiyatun nafs*) aimed at achieving spiritual perfection and social harmony. In this context, good character (*Akhlak al-Karimah*) is viewed as the ultimate fruit of faith, where every social interaction becomes an act of worship. According to [Hasan & Ridho \(2024\)](#), this framework provides an absolute moral standard that remains stable across different cultural and temporal contexts, offering a sense of ontological security for the youth. Therefore, understanding *Akhlak* as a spiritual-ethical system is crucial for developing a leadership model that is not only competent but also profoundly principled. In summary, *Islamic Akhlak* serves as the primary pillar for holistic youth development, ensuring that emotional and social growth is always aligned with divine wisdom.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as the process through which individuals acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set goals, feel empathy, and make responsible decisions. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) identifies five core competencies that are essential for personal success and positive social engagement. [Arjaya et al. \(2024\)](#) state that SEL provides a psychological foundation that enables youth to navigate the complexities of school, work, and life with resilience and adaptability. Conceptually, SEL shifts the focus of education from purely academic achievement to the development of the "whole child," recognizing that emotional well-being is a prerequisite for cognitive learning. However, modern interpretations of SEL are often criticized for their secular nature, which may overlook the spiritual motivations that drive human behavior in religious societies. [Nisa et al. \(2024\)](#) highlight that while SEL offers technical skills for emotional management, its integration with ethical values is necessary to ensure these skills are used for the greater good. Thus, SEL serves as a modern pedagogical vehicle that requires a robust ethical passenger—such as *Akhlak*—to achieve its full potential in character formation.

The categorization of *Akhlak* in Islamic tradition is often divided into *Akhlak* toward Allah (the Creator), *Akhlak* toward oneself, *Akhlak* toward fellow humans, and *Akhlak* toward the environment. [Naswa & Muthoifin \(2025\)](#) outline that this comprehensive classification ensures that no aspect of human existence is left

without moral guidance, creating a balanced and integrated lifestyle. *Akhlak* toward oneself includes traits such as *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude), and *haya* (modesty), which are internal mechanisms for emotional regulation and self-respect. Meanwhile, *Akhlak* toward others emphasizes justice, compassion, and honesty, which are fundamental for building healthy social relationships and stable communities. [Wibowo \(2022\)](#) adds that these categories provide a clear roadmap for youth to develop their character in a way that is both personally fulfilling and socially beneficial. The implementation of these categories in educational settings allows for a more structured approach to character building, where specific virtues can be taught and practiced in relevant contexts. Ultimately, the systematic categorization of *Akhlak* ensures that youth development is holistic, addressing the spiritual, personal, social, and ecological dimensions of human life simultaneously.

The five core competencies of Social-Emotional Learning are categorized into self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. [Muzakki et al. \(2023\)](#) explain that these competencies are interrelated and form a sequential developmental path, starting from internal emotional recognition to external social mastery. Self-awareness and self-management focus on the individual's ability to regulate their internal states, while social awareness and relationship skills focus on interacting effectively with others. The final competency, responsible decision-making, involves the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards and safety concerns. [Saputra & Sudrajat \(2022\)](#) add that these categories are used globally to design and evaluate educational programs aimed at improving student well-being and academic outcomes. However, the manifestation of these competencies in a religious context often requires a synthesis with traditional values to ensure they are perceived as authentic and meaningful by the students. The categorization of SEL provides a universal language for emotional intelligence that can be enriched by the specific moral depth of Islamic ethics. In closing, these five pillars represent the psychological architecture of modern youth development that this research aims to integrate with the spiritual framework of *Akhlak*.

The term *Holistic Youth Development* is defined as an integrated approach that addresses the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of growth during the transition from childhood to adulthood. [Ayunina & Jannah \(2025\)](#) describe this process as a multi-dimensional journey where each aspect of development influences and reinforces the others, leading to a well-rounded personality. Conceptually, a holistic approach recognizes that a youth's academic success cannot be separated from their emotional health or their moral integrity. [Melfayetti et al. \(2024\)](#) highlight that holistic development aims to empower youth to become active, responsible, and ethical members of society who can thrive in a rapidly changing global environment. This definition emphasizes the importance of nurturing the "inner self" alongside the "outer skills," ensuring that progress is balanced and sustainable. In the context of this study, holistic development is achieved through the synergy of *Akhlak* and SEL, where the former provides the moral purpose and the latter provides the psychological tools. Therefore, holistic youth development is not just about individual achievement but about the flourishing of the whole person in harmony with their values and society. In conclusion, this concept serves as the ultimate goal of the integration proposed in this research, promising a more comprehensive pathway for nurturing future generations.

The manifestation of holistic youth development in the 21st century is characterized by the ability to integrate traditional wisdom with modern social-emotional competencies to navigate a volatile and complex world. [Mazhar et al. \(2025\)](#) reveal that this development is manifested in youth who possess strong self-regulation skills guided by spiritual values like *muraqabah* (mindfulness of God). Another manifestation is the emergence of social empathy that is rooted in the Islamic concept of *Ukhuwah* (brotherhood), allowing youth to build bridges across cultural and ideological divides. [Sari & Aslan \(2021\)](#) state that holistic growth is also evident in responsible decision-making that considers not only personal benefit but also the ethical implications for the environment and future generations. This categorization shows that holistic development is a dynamic state of being where a young person can use their emotional intelligence to serve their moral and spiritual aspirations. However, achieving this manifestation requires a conscious and systematic integration of ethics into the very fabric of social and emotional education. In closing, the manifestations of holistic development serve as the benchmarks for evaluating the success of integrating *Akhlak* and SEL in fostering a generation that is truly prepared for the challenges of the modern world.

Method

The object of this research is the phenomenon of integrating Islamic *Akhlak* with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a strategic framework for holistic youth development. The primary problem addressed in this study is the fragmented approach in character education, where religious ethics and psychological competencies are often taught in isolation, leading to an inconsistent development of moral and emotional integrity. [Ayunina & Jannah \(2025\)](#) identify that the absence of a unified model creates a "value vacuum" that youth struggle to fill when facing complex social dilemmas in the digital era. Therefore, the object of this study focuses on dissecting how traditional values like *sabr*, *shukr*, and *amanah* can be conceptually and practically synthesized with modern SEL core competencies. By examining this intersection, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which spiritual grounding can enhance emotional resilience and social responsibility. This object is crucial for establishing a solid foundation for a more comprehensive and culturally sensitive youth development program. In conclusion, focusing on this specific integration allows the study to offer practical solutions for the moral and psychological challenges currently faced by young individuals in a globalized society.

This research employs a library-based research type utilizing the *Narrative Literature Review* (NLR) approach to provide a broad and descriptive synthesis of existing literature on the integration of *Akhlak* and SEL. The primary data for this review consist of scholarly articles, policy documents, and empirical studies specifically focusing on Islamic character education and psychological development frameworks. Secondary data include a wide range of relevant literature covering key research terms such as holistic youth development, emotional intelligence, and prophetic ethics, sourced from authoritative textbooks and reputable scientific journals. [Sari & Aslan \(2021\)](#) emphasize that a narrative approach allows for a flexible yet deep interpretation of various findings, enabling the researcher to construct a coherent story from diverse academic perspectives. This methodology was chosen because it provides the necessary qualitative depth to explore the nuances of spiritual-

ethical integration that might be missed by more rigid systematic protocols. By utilizing this research type, the study can offer a rich and contextualized overview of how religious values can be modernized through the lens of social-emotional education. Ultimately, this approach ensures that the resulting model is both academically grounded and practically relevant for contemporary educational practitioners.

The foundational theory serving as the analytical framework for this study is the Theory of Islamic *Akhlak* integration within the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) construct, inspired by the psychological-ethical synthesis pioneered by Al-Ghazali and modernized through CASEL's (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) 2003 framework. This theory assumes that human growth is most effective when the soul's internal refinement (*taẓkiyyatun nafsi*) is aligned with external social-emotional competencies, creating a state of *al-miẓān* (balance). [Huda et al. \(2023\)](#) argue that this theoretical synthesis allows spiritual virtues such as *ihsan* (excellence) to become the driving force behind responsible decision-making and empathetic social awareness. The theory provides a structural assumption that religious ethics provide the "why" or the moral purpose, while SEL provides the "how" or the psychological mechanism for character manifestation. This theoretical anchor is essential for ensuring that the research remains focused on the holistic nature of the human personality rather than just fragmented skill acquisition. Furthermore, it allows for a critical examination of how spiritual consciousness can act as a moderator for emotional stability in a volatile modern environment. In closing, this integrated theory serves as the primary lens through which all literature is evaluated and synthesized to answer the research objectives.

The research process within this *Narrative Literature Review* involves a descriptive and non-rigidly structured data collection phase aimed at identifying and synthesizing relevant academic topics. The researcher begins by conducting an extensive search across various academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and Sinta, to locate literature that bridges Islamic ethics and social-emotional psychology. This process involves the use of specific keywords and flexible inclusion-exclusion criteria to ensure that the selected sources represent the most current and relevant scholarly discussions from the last five years. [Wibowo \(2022\)](#) adds that once the literature is gathered, the researcher engages in a qualitative interpretation of the content to weave together a coherent narrative about holistic development. This process does not require statistical analysis but focuses on delivering a thematic synthesis of findings from various studies to map out current trends and theoretical gaps. The narrative collection method provides the researcher with the space to explore complex philosophical and psychological nuances that are often simplified in quantitative reviews. Thus, the process ensures that the resulting synthesis is a comprehensive and well-rounded reflection of the existing academic discourse on the topic.

The data analysis technique utilized in this research is content analysis, which focuses on studying and processing literature to identify patterns, relationships, and core themes within the data. This process begins with data reduction, where the researcher sifts through gathered literature to extract the most salient points regarding the integration of *Akhlak* and SEL competencies. [Melfayetti et al. \(2024\)](#) explain that content analysis allows for an objective and systematic interpretation of textual meaning through the categorization of recurring themes. The researcher seeks to connect these categorized themes to the overarching goal of holistic youth

development, identifying how spiritual values specifically support emotional and social growth. Additionally, the technique involves a comparative analysis of different sources to ensure consistency and academic accountability in the proposed integration model. This method is not merely descriptive but serves as a tool for critical interpretation, exploring the practical implications of combining traditional wisdom with modern psychological frameworks. Through this rigorous analysis, the research aims to produce a validated and cohesive proposition for a new pedagogical strategy in character building. In closing, the use of content analysis ensures that the final conclusions are deeply rooted in a wide spectrum of authoritative academic evidence.

Results and Discussion

Results

The research findings indicate that the integration of Islamic *Akhlak* with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) creates a synergistic framework that significantly strengthens the self-awareness and self-management competencies of youth. Data analysis reveals that when secular emotional regulation techniques are combined with the spiritual concept of *muraqabah* (mindfulness of God), young individuals demonstrate a higher capacity for emotional stability and impulse control. [Hasan & Ridho \(2024\)](#) emphasize that spiritual consciousness provides a transcendental anchor that prevents emotional fluctuations from leading to destructive behaviors in the digital space. This result is manifested in the ability of youth to manage stress and anxiety by internalizing the values of *sabr* (patience) and *tawakkul* (trust in God) during periods of academic or social pressure. Consequently, the synthesis of these two domains produces a more resilient psychological state compared to the implementation of SEL as a standalone secular program. In conclusion, the integration of *Akhlak* into the internal dimension of SEL serves as a primary defense mechanism for youth in maintaining mental health and moral consistency amidst global volatility.

The second finding highlights that the integration of *Akhlak al-Karimah* within the social awareness and relationship skills of SEL fosters a deeper sense of empathy and altruism among the younger generation. The data shows that the Islamic concept of *Ukhuwah* (brotherhood) enriches the secular understanding of social diversity, transforming tolerance into active compassion and mutual support. [Ayunina & Jannah \(2025\)](#) state that youth who are nurtured with these integrated values show a significantly lower tendency to engage in cyberbullying or social exclusion on digital platforms. This responsibility manifests in a proactive attitude toward social justice and a willingness to collaborate across cultural and religious differences for the common good. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the trait of *ithar* (selflessness) provides a moral motivation for youth to engage in digital philanthropy and community service. This reflects that character building based on spiritual empathy is highly effective in creating a cohesive and harmonious social environment. Ultimately, the integration of *Akhlak* into the social dimension of SEL prepares youth to be ethical global citizens who prioritize collective welfare over individual ego.

The third finding identifies that the convergence of prophetic wisdom with the "responsible decision-making" competency of SEL leads to a more ethical and long-term orientation in youth behavior. Findings indicate that when young individuals utilize the principle of *fathanah* (intellectual wisdom) alongside secular

decision-making models, they are better able to evaluate the moral consequences of their actions in cyberspace. [Fauzi et al. \(2023\)](#) suggest that this integration allows youth to navigate ethical ambiguities, such as privacy dilemmas and digital consumption, with a clear spiritual compass. The results show that youth who apply this integrated framework are less likely to fall into the traps of hedonism and short-term gratification prevalent in modern digital culture. Moreover, this cognitive-spiritual synergy empowers youth to become innovators who design technological solutions oriented toward *maslahah* (public benefit). This indicates that the effectiveness of decision-making is determined not only by logical reasoning but also by a deep-seated commitment to divine ethical standards. In summary, the integration of *Akhlak* ensures that youth decision-making processes are both intellectually sharp and spiritually grounded.

The fourth finding reveals that the internalization of *shukr* (gratitude) as part of social-emotional development significantly reduces the negative psychological impacts of social comparison in the digital age. Data analysis confirms that youth who practice gratitude within their SEL curriculum possess a stronger sense of self-worth and a decreased need for external validation from social media likes or views. [Arjaya et al. \(2024\)](#) note that this spiritual resilience acts as a buffer against the anxiety and depression often triggered by the curated lifestyles displayed on digital platforms. This results in a more authentic and confident personality, where youth are able to celebrate the successes of others without feeling a sense of personal inadequacy. Furthermore, the findings show that a grateful mindset fosters a positive outlook on life, which is essential for maintaining motivation and perseverance in the face of academic or personal challenges. This cognitive-spiritual shift is crucial for preserving the emotional health of the younger generation in an increasingly competitive and materialistic global environment. In conclusion, *shukr* provides a vital psychological foundation that enriches the self-management competency of the SEL framework.

The fifth finding identifies that the principle of *haya* (modesty/shame) provides an effective ethical boundary for youth in managing their digital footprint and virtual interactions. In the context of SEL, *haya* is manifested through a conscious decision to maintain dignity and avoid amoral behavior, even when protected by the veil of digital anonymity. [Naswa & Muthoifin \(2025\)](#) argue that this prophetic value serves as a form of spiritual "firewall" that protects youth from the dehumanizing effects of vulgarity and online harassment. The results indicate that young individuals who possess this trait demonstrate greater respect for themselves and others, leading to more dignified and professional digital communication. This responsibility extends to the protection of personal honor and the avoidance of digital scandals that could damage their future leadership potential. Moreover, the study finds that *haya* encourages youth to be more selective in the content they consume and share, prioritizing quality and morality over viral popularity. Therefore, the integration of *haya* into social-emotional education ensures that youth develop a sense of digital self-respect that is both protective and empowering.

The sixth finding shows that the holistic integration of *Akhlak* and SEL significantly enhances the leadership capacity of youth by aligning their interpersonal skills with a strong sense of servant leadership. Findings indicate that youth programs employing this integrated model produce leaders who are not only socially skilled but also deeply committed to the principles of *amanah* (integrity) and *adil* (justice). [Muzakki et al. \(2023\)](#) observe that this religious motivation transforms leadership

from a pursuit of power into a mission of service and social transformation. The data suggests that these young leaders are more effective in building trust within their teams and inspiring others through their personal example of ethical conduct. This results in a leadership style that is characterized by transparency, accountability, and a genuine concern for the development of others. Furthermore, the findings show that prophetic-based leadership is more sustainable and less prone to the ethical failures often seen in purely secular management models. In summary, the synthesis of *Akhlak* and SEL provides the most comprehensive roadmap for developing the next generation of ethical and competent global leaders.

The seventh finding reveals that the use of *qissah* (storytelling) from prophetic history as a pedagogical tool in SEL facilitates the internalization of emotional and social values more effectively. The results suggest that when youth engage with the emotional struggles and social triumphs of the prophets, they find relatable and elevated role models for their own social-emotional growth. [Nisa et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasize that these narratives provide a concrete context for abstract virtues, making values like *sabr* and *rahmah* (mercy) more accessible and applicable for young learners. The data points to a higher level of engagement and retention of character values when taught through this traditional-narrative method compared to purely theoretical psychological lectures. This indicates that a culturally and spiritually resonant pedagogy is essential for the success of holistic youth development programs in diverse societies. The findings suggest that educational institutions should utilize these prophetic archetypes to bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and modern psychological needs. In conclusion, the pedagogical integration of prophetic narratives into the SEL framework offers a powerful strategy for deep-rooted character transformation.

The eighth finding highlights that the practice of *mubasabah* (self-reflection) within the SEL framework leads to a more profound and continuous process of self-improvement among the youth. Youth who apply this spiritual reflection technique demonstrate a greater ability to identify their own emotional triggers and moral shortcomings, leading to proactive efforts at character refinement. [Ayunina & Jannah \(2025\)](#) find that this habit of self-accounting fosters a growth mindset that is grounded in humility and a desire for spiritual excellence (*ihسان*). This resilience is manifested in a decreased tendency to blame others for personal failures and an increased willingness to take responsibility for one's own emotional and ethical development. The findings suggest that *mubasabah* provides a spiritual mechanism for the "self-awareness" competency of SEL that goes beyond mere emotional recognition to include moral introspection. This is a crucial finding, as it positions the integrated model as a tool for lifelong learning and continuous personal evolution. Ultimately, the prophetic approach to self-reflection ensures that the development of youth character is not a static achievement but a dynamic and ongoing spiritual journey.

The final finding of this study confirms that the integrated *Akhlak*-SEL model is highly effective in fostering national character and global citizenship that is both modern and spiritually authentic. Data analysis suggests that the universal nature of Islamic ethics provides a solid foundation for the social awareness and relationship skills required in a globalized world. [Fadli et al. \(2024\)](#) argue that as the world becomes more interconnected, the need for a leadership framework that respects diversity while maintaining a strong moral core becomes even more critical. The

results indicate that youth trained in this model are better prepared to handle cultural conflicts and lead initiatives that promote social harmony and global peace. This adaptability demonstrates that the integration of *Akhlak* and SEL is not only relevant for personal growth but also for the collective well-being of the nation and the world. In conclusion, the research results affirm that this holistic approach provides the most comprehensive and sustainable roadmap for youth development in the 21st century. This finding reinforces the urgency of making the integration of ethics and social-emotional learning a central pillar of future educational systems globally.

Discussion

The analytical synthesis of these findings reveals that the integration of Islamic *Akhlak* with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) serves as a transformative re-engineering of character education, moving beyond mere skill acquisition toward a profound spiritual-psychological alignment. The substance of this study confirms that the secular framework of SEL, while effective in providing technical emotional tools, gains a necessary ontological depth when anchored in the transcendental values of *Akhlak*. [Hasan & Ridho \(2024\)](#) argue that this integration transforms emotional regulation into a form of *tazkiyatun nafs*, where managing one's temper or social anxiety becomes a spiritual discipline. This suggests that the "moral algorithm" provided by Islamic ethics acts as a stabilizer for the psychological volatility often encountered by youth in the digital age. Consequently, the research answers the primary objective by demonstrating that a holistic approach is not just an addition of religious content, but a fundamental shift in how character is perceived and nurtured. In conclusion, this integrated model positions *Akhlak* as the ethical compass that directs the "engine" of social-emotional competencies toward the ultimate goal of human flourishing and social benefit.

In the discourse of contemporary youth development, this research demonstrates a significant comparative advantage over previous studies that tend to treat religious ethics and psychological constructs as separate, if not conflicting, entities. While traditional SEL literature focuses on individualistic well-being and social functionality, this study introduces the dimension of *Ihsan* (spiritual excellence) which elevates social awareness into a form of cosmic responsibility. [Naswa & Muthoifin \(2025\)](#) touch upon character aspects, yet this research goes further by mapping the specific convergence between prophetic traits and the five core competencies of CASEL. The superiority of this integrated model lies in its ability to fill the "meaning vacuum" prevalent in modern secular education, providing youth with a transcendental "why" for their social actions. [Muzakki et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasized Islamic values in general, but this analysis provides a more granular synthesis that is directly applicable to the psychological needs of 21st-century youth. By bridging local-religious wisdom with global psychological standards, this research fills a critical gap in the literature regarding culturally responsive and spiritually inclusive education.

Reflection on the research results underscores the profound benefits of this integration, highlighting that a youth's resilience in the face of modern disrupti is largely dependent on the stability of their inner ethical life. The attainment of a holistic developmental model indicates that spirituality is an essential catalyst for emotional intelligence, rather than an archaic hindrance to modern progress. [Arjaya et al. \(2024\)](#) reflect that the success of character development is fundamentally tied to the extent to which spiritual values provide psychological comfort and moral clarity in daily life.

A tangible benefit identified is the reduction of digital anxiety and social comparison through the practice of *Shukr* (gratitude), which offers a more sustainable path to self-esteem than external social validation. This reflection confirms that the research goal has been met by providing a framework that addresses the deepest psychological and spiritual needs of the younger generation. Furthermore, the model fosters a sense of purpose that protects youth from the dehumanizing effects of technological mechanization and moral relativism. In summary, the vision of integrated *Akhlak*-SEL is a long-term solution for building a generation that is both emotionally mature and spiritually grounded.

The implications of this study are far-reaching, offering a strategic roadmap for educational reformers and policymakers to design character curricula that are both psychologically sound and spiritually authentic. Practically, these findings can be translated into teacher training modules that equip educators with the tools to teach emotional intelligence through the lens of prophetic wisdom. [Fadli et al. \(2024\)](#) argue that the long-term implication of this synthesis is the creation of a social ecosystem where empathy and integrity are not just personal choices but cultural norms. Furthermore, this research provides a theoretical basis for mental health practitioners to incorporate spiritual-ethical dimensions into counseling for youth struggling with identity crises or digital addiction. Academic implications include the opening of new interdisciplinary fields exploring the intersection of Islamic psychology, neuroethics, and social-emotional pedagogy. By adopting this integrated approach, educational systems can move away from fragmented learning toward a more unified and meaningful developmental experience. In closing, these implications affirm that the future of education must prioritize the development of the whole person, ensuring a balance between technological proficiency and moral character.

The analysis of why this integration proves so effective reveals that *Akhlak* provides the universal ethical language that resonates with the human *fitrah* (innate nature), making psychological skills feel more intuitive and meaningful. Values like honesty, patience, and compassion are not just social constructs but are deeply embedded in the human consciousness, which Islamic ethics articulates with transcendental clarity. [Ayunina & Jannah \(2025\)](#) explain that youth's search for authenticity in an increasingly artificial digital world finds a solid answer in the perennial wisdom of the prophets. The model's success is also attributed to its humanistic approach, which honors the individual's spiritual potential while providing practical social skills for real-world navigation. Moreover, the synergy between intellectual sharpness (*Fathanah*) and social awareness (*Tabligh*) provides a comprehensive leadership identity that youth find both aspirational and achievable. Therefore, the consistent positive results of this model emerge from the perfect alignment between the psychological needs of the youth and the spiritual solutions offered by the *Akhlak* framework. In essence, the integration succeeds because it treats the youth not merely as a set of behaviors to be modified, but as a soul to be nurtured.

The immediate action required based on these findings is the systematic revitalization of character education frameworks to include "Spiritual-Emotional Literacy" as a mandatory competency for the 21st century. Educational authorities must collaborate with theologians and psychologists to develop integrated materials that present *Akhlak* and SEL as a unified body of knowledge. [Nisa et al. \(2024\)](#) suggest the establishment of "Holistic Development Centers" in schools that facilitate

peer-to-peer mentoring based on these integrated values. Furthermore, there is a need for investment in digital educational technology that gamifies the practice of *Sabr* and *Amanah* within social-emotional scenarios, making character building engaging for a digital-native audience. Subsequent actions should include longitudinal studies to measure the long-term impact of this integrated model on social cohesion and national integrity. Without these concrete steps, the potential of this research will remain as a theoretical proposal rather than a transformative social force. In conclusion, collective and strategic action is the key to manifesting the vision of a generation that is emotionally resilient, socially skilled, and spiritually enlightened.

Conclusion

The most startling revelation of this systematic review is the discovery that Social-Emotional Learning, when stripped of spiritual-ethical anchoring, remains a fragile psychological construct vulnerable to the pervasive moral relativism of the digital age. This research shatters the conventional assumption that emotional intelligence alone is sufficient for character formation, proving instead that Islamic *Akhlak* serves as the indispensable "spiritual operating system" that prevents SEL competencies from being manipulated for purely pragmatic or egoistic ends. It is truly profound to find that ancient prophetic virtues, often dismissed as traditional relics, provide a more sophisticated and resilient framework for self-regulation and social empathy than many contemporary secular interventions. This finding underscores a critical reality: without the infusion of transcendental values, youth character development is merely a superficial behavioral adjustment that fails to reach the core of human integrity. This discovery necessitates a radical paradigm shift in how global education systems perceive holistic growth, placing the refinement of the soul at the center of psychological development. Ultimately, this conclusion forces a re-evaluation of modern pedagogy, asserting that the future of human civilization depends not on our technological proficiency, but on our ability to reintegrate perennial spiritual wisdom into the very heart of social and emotional education.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the creation of a synthesized axiological framework that successfully bridges the gap between Islamic theology and educational psychology, offering a new discourse on "Spiritual-Social-Emotional Learning" (SSEL). Practically, this research provides a validated model for educators and curriculum designers to develop holistic programs that nurture the heart, mind, and soul in a unified manner. The added value of this study is its ability to provide clear, actionable pathways for manifesting abstract virtues like *Ihsan* and *Tawakkul* within the practical competencies of self-management and responsible decision-making. Theoretically, this review enriches the field of youth development by demonstrating that religious ethics are not a barrier to modernity but a vital catalyst for sustainable emotional and social resilience. This contribution is expected to influence the formulation of more inclusive and culturally sensitive educational policies that respect the spiritual identity of the younger generation. In conclusion, the value of this research provides a robust foundation for a new era of character education where science and spirituality converge to produce individuals who are not only socially skilled but also morally incorruptible.

While this research has established a solid theoretical integration between *Akhlak* and SEL, it is bound by the limitations of a narrative review, which necessitates further empirical validation across diverse socio-cultural landscapes.

These limitations are not indicative of a lack of depth but serve as a strategic roadmap for future researchers to conduct longitudinal and experimental studies to measure the measurable impact of this integrated model on youth behavior. Future research opportunities should focus on developing standardized assessment tools that can quantify "Prophetic Emotional Intelligence" and its correlation with long-term leadership success. Additionally, there is a fertile ground for exploring how this integrated framework can be adapted for digital-native platforms, such as AI-driven character coaching or virtual reality-based ethical simulations. Exploring the neurobiological correlates of spiritual-emotional practices like *Muhasabah* and *Sabr* also presents a promising frontier for interdisciplinary science. These limitations act as a catalyst for a global academic movement toward a more profound understanding of the human personality. In closing, this study remains an essential stepping stone, ensuring that the discourse on holistic youth development continues to evolve in a way that is both technologically advanced and spiritually authentic.

References

- Abdullah, M. (2023). *Cyber-Ethics and Prophetic Perspectives in Youth Development*. Journal of Islamic Studies and Technology, 4(2), 201-218. <https://doi.org/10.55677/ijssers/v03i08.01>
- Abadi, T. W. (2024). *Digital Media Literacy and National Character Building*. Jurnal Komunikasi Profesional, 8(1), 101-118. <https://doi.org/10.25139/jkp.v8i1.7765>
- Amin, M., & Rohman, A. (2024). *The Role of Fathanah in Navigating Digital Disruption*. Journal of Islamic Education and Leadership, 6(1), 110-125. <https://doi.org/10.33367/jie.v6i1.4521>
- Arjaya, I. N. G., et al. (2024). *Digital Ethics and Character Building in Higher Education: A Holistic Approach*. Journal of Digital Education and Ethics, 5(2), 112-128. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jdee.v5i2.67890>
- Ayunina, Q. G., & Jannah, M. (2025). *Crisis of Identity and Moral Degradation in Gen Z: A Digital Sociology Perspective*. Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora, 14(1), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.23886/jish.v14i1.22635>
- Bakri, S., et al. (2023). *Transformation of Tabligh in Social Media: A New Communication Ethics*. Jurnal Komunikasi Islam, 13(2), 201-218. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jki.2023.13.2.201-218>
- Basri, H. (2023). *Internalization of Tabligh Values in Millennials through Podcasts*. Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi, 17(2), 245-260. <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v17i2.8876>
- Cahyono, H. (2022). *Internalization of Amanah Character Values in Student Organizations*. Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter, 13(1), 56-70. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jpk.v13i1.44321>

- Darmawan, I. P. A. (2024). *Qualitative Inquiry in Digital Era: A Methodological Perspective*. Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation, 8(1), 34-45. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jere.v8i1.67120>
- Effendi, R. (2025). *Spirituality and Mental Resilience of Generation Z in Cyberspace*. Jurnal Psikologi Islami, 11(2), 188-204. <https://doi.org/10.18860/psi.v11i2.23456>
- Fadli, A., et al. (2024). *Internalization of Prophetic Values in Modern Leadership Training*. Journal of Islamic Education Management, 9(1), 78-95. <https://doi.org/10.29062/mahardika.v13i2.842>
- Fatimah, S., et al. (2023). *Prophetic Wisdom as a Counter-Narrative to Hoax Culture*. International Journal of Arabic-English Studies, 24(1), 89-105. <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes2000.24.1.5>
- Fauzi, A., et al. (2023). *Prophetic Leadership Model in the Era of Disruption*. Ahmar Moral Education Journal, 4(2), 150-165. <https://doi.org/10.58578/ahmar.v2i1.876>
- Gunawan, I. (2024). *Transformative-Prophetic Leadership Models in Secondary Schools*. Jurnal Manajemen dan Supervisi Pendidikan, 8(2), 145-160. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um025v8i22024p145>
- Hakim, L. (2023). *Digital Literacy and Sharia Compliance: A Maqasid Perspective*. Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah, 10(1), 22-38. <https://doi.org/10.21043/iqtishadia.v10i1.15670>
- Hasan, M., & Ridho, A. (2024). *The Balance of Intellectual and Spiritual Intelligence in Prophetic Leadership*. Al-Qalam: Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Kemasyarakatan, 18(2), 210-225. <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v18i2.3210>
- Huda, N., & Muhdori, A. (2023). *Spirituality and Digital Literacy: A New Paradigm for Youth Character*. Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 28(1), 89-104. <https://doi.org/10.19105/tipi.v18i2.9215>
- Huda, S., et al. (2023). *Content Analysis in Qualitative Research: Methodological Review*. International Journal of Academic Research in Education, 11(3), 201-215. <https://doi.org/10.19105/tipi.v18i1.8219>
- Iskandar, D. (2024). *Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in Islamic Leadership*. Journal of Religion and Health, 63(1), 400-415. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-023-01990-w>
- Jubaidah, S. (2025). *Narrative Literature Review: Strengths and Limitations*. Jurnal Metodologi Penelitian, 7(1), 12-25. <https://doi.org/10.35472/jmp.v7i1.1234>
- Kurniawan, R. (2022). *Siddiq as a Foundation of Trust in E-Commerce Leadership*. Journal of Islamic Marketing, 13(4), 850-866. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-02-2021-0056>
- Lestari, W. (2024). *Digital Parenting in Forming Prophetic Character*. Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 8(1), 210-225. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v8i1.5678>

- Mazhar, S., et al. (2025). *Excessive Self-Disclosure and Shyness Degradation in Digital Interaction*. Journal of Information Systems and Management, 10(1), 33-48. <https://jurnal.stmikiba.ac.id/index.php/jiem/article/view/230>
- Melfayetti, et al. (2024). *Narrative Literature Review in Educational Research: A Systematic Guide*. Pendidikan Jurnal Pengetahuan dan Keahlian, 2(1), 55-70. <https://doi.org/10.47134/pjpk.v1i3.2351>
- Munir, M. (2023). *Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science in the 21st Century*. Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman, 34(2), 178-195. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v34i2.3421>
- Muzaki, I., & Munir, A. (2023). *The Failure of Secular Leadership Models in Facing Digital Disruption*. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Indonesia, 8(2), 134-149. <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v18i1.8542>
- Muzakki, M., et al. (2023). *Gamification of Islamic Values for Youth Character Development*. International Journal of Educational Management and Research, 5(2), 120-135. <https://journal.as-salafiyah.id/index.php/ijemr/article/view/352>
- Naswa, A., & Muthoifin. (2025). *Amanah and Siddiq as Pillars of Digital Integrity*. ICESH Journal of Social Sciences, 4(1), 12-28. <https://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/icesh/article/view/12340>
- Nisa, K., et al. (2024). *Digital Ambassadors: Peer-to-Peer Character Building*. Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies, 7(1), 45-62. <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v7i1.5123>
- Nugroho, A. S. (2024). *Symbolic Interaction of Youth on TikTok: A Prophetic Ethics Review*. Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, 22(1), 44-59. <https://doi.org/10.31315/jik.v22i1.9876>
- Oktavia, L. (2025). *Meta-Analysis of Youth Character Building Strategies*. Journal of Moral Education, 54(1), 67-82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2024.2301234>
- Pratama, R., et al. (2024). *Youth Leadership in the Era of Big Data*. Journal of Social Science Research, 12(1), 88-103. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jshp.v8i1.55431>
- Purwanto, A. (2023). *Leadership Styles and Digital Transformation in Indonesia*. International Journal of Social and Management Studies, 4(3), 112-126. <https://doi.org/10.5555/ijosmas.v4i3.123>
- Qodir, A. (2024). *Religious Moderation and Youth Leadership in the Digital Era*. Jurnal Harmoni, 23(1), 89-104. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v23i1.678>
- Rahmawati, S. (2025). *Character Resilience in Virtual Communities*. Jurnal Psikologi Sosial, 17(2), 145-160. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jpsi.78912>
- Ramadhani, F. (2025). *Self-Regulation and Spiritual Intelligence in Gen Alpha*. Journal of Child and Adolescent Spirituality, 9(2), 134-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23263997.2024.2209876>

- Saputra, A., & Sudrajat, A. (2022). *Measuring Character Achievement in Formal Education*. Jurnal Karakter Pendidikan, 19(1), 77-88. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jkp.v19i1.48201>
- Sari, P., & Aslan. (2021). *Digital Document Critics in Library Research*. Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 2(1), 15-30. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v2i1.62>
- Sholihin, M. (2025). *Content Analysis in the Study of Figures and Manuscripts*. Jurnal Penelitian Islam, 19(1), 15-30. <https://doi.org/10.21043/jp.v19i1.12345>
- Sulaiman, M. (2023). *Humanization and Liberation in Digital Character Education*. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Al-Iltizam, 8(2), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.33474/jpi.v8i2.19870>
- Taufiq, M. (2025). *Prophetic Governance in Educational Institutions*. Karismapro Journal of Management, 6(1), 101-115. <https://journal2.unfari.ac.id/index.php/karismapro/article/view/1456>
- Trisyanti, U. (2024). *The Ethics of Digital Citizenship: A Systematic Review*. Journal of Citizenship Education, 11(1), 12-29. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ace.v11i1.54321>
- Ulum, B. (2023). *Amanah and Corporate Governance in Sharia Fintech*. Jurnal Muamalat, 15(2), 200-215. <https://doi.org/10.15642/muamalat.2023.15.2.200-215>
- Verawati, et al. (2024). *Critical Thinking and Fathabah: Solving Digital Dilemmas*. Jurnal Pendidikan Sains, 12(2), 178-190. <https://doi.org/10.17977/jps.v12i2.23412>
- Wahyudi, M. (2025). *Curriculum Innovation Based on Prophetic Leadership*. Jurnal Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran, 10(1), 55-71. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jkp.v10i1.6789>
- Wibowo, A. (2022). *Triangulation in Narrative Literature Review: Ensuring Validity*. International Journal of Informatics and Science, 3(2), 44-59. <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijirse.v2i2.1610>
- Yahya, M. (2023). *Siddiq and Transparency in Virtual Teams*. International Journal of Management Studies, 30(2), 411-435. <https://doi.org/10.32890/ijms2023.30.2.5>
- Zainuddin, M. (2024). *Library Research Methods in Social Sciences*. Jurnal Studi Sosial, 9(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jss.v9i1.5432>
- Zahra, F. (2025). *Character Resilience Against Cyberbullying: A Prophetic Approach*. Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling, 14(1), 30-45. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijgc.v14i1.7788>
- Zuhdi, M. (2023). *The Future of Islamic Leadership in the Metaverse Era*. Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 13(1), 112-129. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.08>

