



Spiritual And Emotional Intelligence As Internal Mechanisms For Strengthening Buddhist Character

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Abstract:

Character education in the digital era requires approaches that strengthen students' psychological capacities. In Buddhist education, the *Dasa Pāramī* (Ten Perfections) provides a framework for character development through generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity. This study aimed to examine the relationships of spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence with the strengthening of Buddhist character in students. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 145 Buddhist students in Grades X-XII at SMA Ahmad Yani Binjai, selected from 227 students through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using 4-point Likert-scale questionnaires. Spiritual intelligence was measured using 15 items across four dimensions: *sammā-ditṭhi*, *sati-sampajañña*, *yoniso manasikāra*, and *attasammāpañidhi*. Emotional intelligence was measured using 18 items across five dimensions: *vedanānupassana*, *indriya-saṃvara*, *āghātaṭṭhavinaya*, *anukampā*, and *saṅgahavatthu*. Buddhist character was operationalized using 35 items representing the ten *Dasa Pāramī*. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression. The results showed positive and significant relationships for spiritual intelligence ($B = 1.131$, $t = 7.913$, $p < 0.001$) and emotional intelligence ($B = 0.994$, $t = 7.603$, $p < 0.001$) with Buddhist character. The regression model was significant ($F = 224.617$, $p < 0.001$), with $R^2 = 0.760$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.756$, indicating that predictors jointly explained 76.0% of the variance in Buddhist character. Their effective contributions were 38.91% and 37.13%, respectively, representing contributions to the explained variance. These findings indicate that spiritual and emotional intelligence are correlates of Buddhist character strengthening within the *Dasa Pāramī* framework.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Character education has emerged as a fundamental aspect of 21st-century learning, particularly in responding to rapid social transformations, technological advancements, and globalization that directly impact the moral fabric of society. Currently, adolescent development is characterized by ecological shifts triggered by digital hyperconnectivity, intense social comparison, and a lack of self-reflection time. Empirically, these conditions correlate with increased attention deficit, emotional regulation difficulties, and complexities in moral decision-making among digital natives (Orben & Przybylski, 2019). Consequently, character education must transcend reactive or corrective measures. A preventive and proactive approach is urgently required to strengthen students' internal psychological foundations before they face severe psychosocial pressures, thereby forming a generation with high integrity, critical thinking, and robust morality (Abdullah & Murtafiah, 2023; Zaidi Salim et al., 2022).

Character education has become an important component of contemporary education because rapid social transformation, technological development, and globalization increasingly shape adolescents' social, emotional, and moral development. In the digital era, adolescents experience greater digital connectivity, social comparison, and reduced opportunities for self-reflection, conditions that have been associated with challenges in attention, emotional regulation, and moral decision-making (Orben & Przybylski, 2019). These challenges indicate that character education should not be limited to the transmission of normative knowledge or corrective responses to misconduct. Rather, character education needs to strengthen students' internal capacities so that moral values can be understood, internalized, and expressed consistently in everyday life (Abdullah & Murtafiah, 2023; Zaidi Salim et al., 2022). This need is particularly relevant in religious education, where character development is expected to connect ethical understanding with the cultivation of inner dispositions.

In Buddhist education, character development is closely related to the cultivation and practice of *pāramī* (perfections), which represent virtues developed through ethical and spiritual practice (Thanh & Kumar, 2024; Zhang, 2025). The *Dasa Pāramī* (Ten Perfections) consists of generosity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), renunciation (*nekkhamma*), wisdom (*paññā*), energy (*virīya*), patience (*khanti*), truthfulness (*sacca*), determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) (Amaliana et al., 2024; Quang & Bhante, 2024). These ten virtues provide a comprehensive framework for understanding Buddhist character because they encompass ethical conduct, self-discipline, wisdom, perseverance, compassion, and emotional balance. Consequently, Buddhist character education should extend beyond students' knowledge of Buddhist teachings toward the internalization and consistent practice of these virtues in their daily lives. The *Dasa Pāramī* therefore provides a relevant framework for operationalizing Buddhist character in empirical educational research.

The internalization of such character values may be related to students' spiritual intelligence, which concerns their capacity to construct meaning, orient themselves toward values, and regulate their conduct according to ethical principles. From a Buddhist perspective, the quality of mental processes and intentions is central to human conduct, as reflected in the teaching that the mind precedes mental states (Dhp. 1). Spiritual intelligence can therefore be viewed as a potential internal resource for developing value orientation and moral judgment. Previous empirical studies have reported positive associations between spiritual intelligence and professional values, ethical behavior, and social responsibility (Korkut & Çetin, 2025; Severino-González et al., 2022). Other theoretical perspectives likewise associate spiritual intelligence with moral judgment, self-transcendence, and the development of spiritual wisdom (Prem Srivastava,

2016; Ronel, 2008). These findings suggest that spiritual intelligence may contribute to the internal orientation through which students understand and apply moral values. However, its relationship with Buddhist character specifically conceptualized through the *Dasa Pāramī* remains insufficiently established empirically.

Alongside spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence represents another potential internal mechanism relevant to character development. Emotional intelligence involves the capacity to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions and to respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Within Buddhist thought, emotional regulation can be related to awareness of feelings (*vedanā*) and restraint of the senses (*indriya-saṃvara*) (M.II.245; S.IV.211). In educational contexts, previous studies have found that emotional intelligence is associated with character development, self-regulation, environmental concern, and the prevention of problematic behaviors such as bullying and violence (Puspitasari et al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2018; Yusuf et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence may therefore complement spiritual intelligence by supporting students' capacity to translate value orientations into emotionally regulated and socially appropriate responses. Nevertheless, the empirical relationship between emotional intelligence and Buddhist character measured through the *Dasa Pāramī* has received limited attention.

The potential complementarity between spiritual and emotional intelligence can also be understood through Lickona's (1991) character education framework, which conceptualizes character through moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In this perspective, spiritual intelligence may be associated primarily with the value-oriented and reflective dimension of character, whereas emotional intelligence may support the affective and regulatory dimension. The combination of these capacities provides a theoretically plausible framework for understanding how students may internalize Buddhist virtues. Previous research has also indicated that adolescents' emotional functioning is relevant to the internalization of adaptive behaviors and moral functioning (Febriannor et al., 2024; Mestvirishvili et al., 2020). However, the existing literature does not sufficiently demonstrate whether these two forms of intelligence are independently and jointly associated with Buddhist character when character is explicitly represented through the ten *Dasa Pāramī*.

Empirical findings from previous studies remain inconsistent and fragmented. Several studies have reported significant positive relationships between emotional or spiritual intelligence and students' morality or character (Nurhadi & Fitria, 2020; Suparman, 2020; Umala et al., 2021). In contrast, other studies have reported nonsignificant relationships between emotional intelligence and character or morality, while some findings have indicated unexpected or negative relationships involving spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior (Lolang et al., 2023; Murwati, 2024; Suprpto, 2023). In addition, empirical studies specifically addressing Buddhist character have generally examined other explanatory factors, including peer influence, *Pañcasīla Buddhis*, and *Pañcadhamma* (Sugiyanto et al., 2024; Surya et al., 2024). Thus, the existing evidence establishes that emotional and spiritual intelligence are potentially relevant to character development, but it does not adequately explain their partial and simultaneous relationships with Buddhist character operationalized through the *Dasa Pāramī* framework, particularly among Indonesian high school students. This constitutes the principal empirical gap addressed by the present study.

Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in empirically integrating spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence as two internal psychological dimensions associated with the strengthening of Buddhist character, while operationalizing Buddhist character through the *Dasa Pāramī* framework. Rather than examining these variables separately or using general measures of morality, this study investigates their partial and simultaneous relationships with the ten dimensions of Buddhist character among high school students in Indonesia. The study therefore aims to examine (1) the relationship between spiritual intelligence and the strengthening of

Buddhist character, (2) the relationship between emotional intelligence and the strengthening of Buddhist character, and (3) the simultaneous relationship of spiritual and emotional intelligence with the strengthening of Buddhist character. Based on the theoretical and empirical considerations above, the study hypothesizes that spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence are positively and significantly related to Buddhist character, both partially and simultaneously.



Method (منهج)

Materials and methods should make readers be able to reproduce the experiment. It should be provided sufficient detail to allow the work to be reproduced. Methods that already published should be indicated by a reference: only relevant modifications should be described. Do not repeat the details of established methods.

Research Design and Participants

This study employed a quantitative approach with a causal-associative explanatory survey design. The quantitative approach was selected to objectively measure the variables through numerical data and to analyze the correlational and causal relationships using statistical procedures. Specifically, the causal-associative design was utilized to examine the direct effect of the independent variables, namely Spiritual Intelligence (X1) and Emotional Intelligence (X2), on the dependent variable, which is the Strengthening of Buddhist Character (Y). The research was conducted at SMA Ahmad Yani Binjai, North Sumatra, Indonesia, spanning from February to July 2026.

The target population in this study comprised all Buddhist students enrolled at SMA Ahmad Yani Binjai in the 2025/2026 academic year, totaling 227 students. To ensure representativeness across different grade levels, the sample was determined using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. This method was justified because the population was stratified based on class levels (Grade X, XI, and XII) and exhibited non-homogeneous characteristics. The minimum sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula with a margin of error of 5% (0.05) to ensure statistical robustness for regression analysis, resulting in a total sample of 145 students.

Research Instruments

The primary data collection instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire utilizing a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The even-numbered scale was deliberately chosen to eliminate the neutral response tendency, thereby forcing respondents to make a definitive choice. The instrument was developed based on the operational definitions and theoretical dimensions of the three constructs. Spiritual Intelligence (X1) was measured through four dimensions: *sammā-diṭṭhi*, *sati-sampajañña*, *yoniso manasikāra*, and *attasammāpañidhi*. Emotional Intelligence (X2) was operationalized into five dimensions: *vedanānupassana*, *indriya-samvara*, *āghātapativinaya*, *anukampā*, and *saṅgahavatthu*. Furthermore, the Strengthening of Buddhist Character (Y) was evaluated based on the ten perfections framework (*dasa pāramī*), which includes *dāna*, *sīla*, *nekkhamma*, *paññā*, *virīya*, *khanti*, *sacca*, *adhiṭṭhāna*, *mettā*, and *upekkhā*.

Prior to actual data collection, the instrument underwent rigorous psychometric evaluations encompassing construct validity and internal consistency reliability. The pilot test was conducted on 30 Buddhist students from SMA Gadjah Mada Binjai, a school with similar demographic characteristics. Construct validity was assessed using the Pearson Product-Moment

correlation. Items with a correlation coefficient (r-count) lower than the critical value (r-table = 0.361 at $\alpha = 0.05$) were eliminated through an iterative process to ensure the purity of the measurement. Reliability was subsequently tested on the valid items using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a widely accepted threshold of 0.70. The summary of the instrument dimensions and the final psychometric test results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Instrument Items

Variable Name	Dimensions	Number of items
Spiritual Intelligence	<i>Sammā-ditṭhi</i> (Right view), <i>Sati-sampajañña</i> (Mindfulness and clear comprehension), <i>Yoniso manasikāra</i> (Wise attention), <i>Attasammāpaṇidhi</i> (Right self-direction)	15
Emotional Intelligence	<i>Vedanānupassana</i> (Contemplation of feelings), <i>Indriya-saṃvara</i> (Restraint of the senses), <i>Āghātaṭṭhavinaya</i> (Subduing hatred), <i>Anukampā</i> (Compassion), <i>Saṅgahavatthu</i> (Bases of sympathy)	18
Buddhist Character	<i>Dāna</i> (Generosity), <i>Sīla</i> (Morality), <i>Nekkhamma</i> (Renunciation), <i>Paññā</i> (Wisdom), <i>Viriya</i> (Energy/Effort), <i>Khanti</i> (Patience), <i>Sacca</i> (Truthfulness), <i>Adhiṭṭhāna</i> (Determination), <i>Mettā</i> (Loving-kindness), <i>Upekkhā</i> (Equanimity)	35

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection phase was systematically executed following the successful validation of the instruments. Initial coordination was established with the school administration to secure research permits and determine the exact proportion of students per grade level. Questionnaires were distributed directly to the 145 selected respondents during their respective class sessions. Researchers provided a brief explanation regarding the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of the responses, and the instructions for filling out the questionnaire to minimize self-report bias. Upon completion, the collected questionnaires underwent a data cleaning process, which included editing for completeness, coding, reverse scoring for negative items, and tabulating the final dataset for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

The gathered data were systematically processed and analyzed. The analysis commenced with descriptive statistics to depict the general tendency of the data through minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation values. To facilitate a clearer interpretation of the respondents' profiles, the mean scores per item were mathematically converted into categorical levels, classifying the spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and Buddhist character variables into low, moderate, and high categories. The specific interval criteria utilized for this categorization are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Categorization Criteria for Variable Levels

Mean Score Range	Category
1.00 – 1.99	Low
2.00 – 2.99	Moderate

3.00 – 4.00	High
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Following the descriptive analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted as prerequisites for the multiple linear regression. These tests included the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov/Shapiro-Wilk method (Sig. > 0.05), the linearity test (Sig. deviation from linearity > 0.05), and the multicollinearity test evaluated through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF < 10) and Tolerance values (> 0.10).

Finally, inferential statistics were employed to test the proposed hypotheses. Multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to determine both the partial and simultaneous effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Partial correlations and t-tests were conducted to evaluate the individual significance of Spiritual Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence on Buddhist Character ($\alpha = 0.05$). Meanwhile, the F-test was applied to assess the simultaneous effect of both independent variables. To measure the explanatory power of the structural model, the Adjusted R-Squared (R^2) value was calculated, which accurately reflects the proportion of variance in the Strengthening of Buddhist Character that can be explained by the combined effect of the independent variables, adjusting for the sample size and the number of predictors.

Result (نتائج)

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistical analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the respondents' distribution across the three main constructs: Spiritual Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, and the Strengthening of Buddhist Character. An evaluation of the 145 respondents demonstrated that the majority exhibited a moderate level across all measured variables. Specifically, Spiritual Intelligence recorded an empirical mean of 44.29 with a standard deviation of 5.88, categorizing 84.83% of the students at a moderate level. Similarly, Emotional Intelligence achieved a mean of 54.72 and a standard deviation of 7.36, placing 85.52% of the sample in the moderate category. The dependent variable, Buddhist Character, yielded a mean of 103.14 and a standard deviation of 13.32, with a substantial 88.28% of students falling into the moderate classification. The general categorization of these variables is systematically presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Categorization of Research Variables

Variable	Category	Score Range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Spiritual Intelligence	High	≥ 51	10	6.90
	Moderate	39 – 50	123	84.83
	Low	≤ 38	12	8.28
Emotional Intelligence	High	≥ 63	11	7.59
	Moderate	48 – 62	124	85.52
	Low	≤ 47	10	6.90
Buddhist Character	High	≥ 117	11	7.59
	Moderate	90 – 116	128	88.28
	Low	≤ 89	6	4.14

Classical Assumption Test

Prior to conducting the multiple linear regression analysis, a series of classical assumption tests were executed to ensure the statistical validity, accuracy, and unbiased nature of the regression model. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed that the residual values were normally distributed, yielding a significance value of 0.200, which robustly exceeds the 0.05 threshold. The linearity test established a strong and significant linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables, with Pearson correlation values of 0.814 for Spiritual Intelligence and 0.809 for Emotional Intelligence, both demonstrating a significance level of 0.000. Furthermore, the multicollinearity test indicated an absolute absence of intercorrelation between the independent variables, as evidenced by a Tolerance value of 0.464 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 2.155. Finally, the Glejser test confirmed the condition of homoscedasticity, with significance values of 0.719 and 0.137 for Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence respectively, indicating that the variance of the residuals remains constant. The statistical summary of these prerequisite evaluations is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Assumption Test

Test Type	Statistical Parameter	Value	Decision / Conclusion
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Sig.)	0.200	Normally Distributed
Linearity	Correlation (r) X1 → Y	0.814 (Sig. 0.000)	Linear Relationship
	Correlation (r) X2 → Y	0.809 (Sig. 0.000)	Linear Relationship
Multicollinearity	Tolerance	0.464	No Multicollinearity
	VIF	2.155	No Multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Test (Sig.) X1	0.719	Homoscedasticity
	Glejser Test (Sig.) X2	0.137	Homoscedasticity

Hypothesis Testing and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The formulated hypotheses were tested using both partial (t-test) and simultaneous (F-test) multiple linear regression procedures. The partial test for Spiritual Intelligence yielded an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 1.131 and a t-value of 7.913 with a significance of 0.000, confirming its positive and significant effect on the Strengthening of Buddhist Character. Similarly, Emotional Intelligence demonstrated a positive and highly significant impact, evidenced by an unstandardized coefficient of 0.994, a t-value of 7.603, and a significance of 0.000. The simultaneous F-test produced a calculated F-value of 224.617 at a significance level of 0.000, signifying that both independent variables collectively exert a highly significant influence on the dependent variable. The regression coefficients and model parameters are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	t-value	F-value	Sig.
Spiritual Intelligence (X1)	1.131	7.913	-	0.000
Emotional Intelligence (X2)	0.994	7.603	-	0.000
Simultaneous Model (X1 & X2)	-	-	224.617	0.000

To determine the predictive power of the structural regression model, the coefficient of determination (R-squared) was calculated alongside the effective contribution of each predictor. The analysis revealed an R-squared value of 0.760, supported by an Adjusted R-squared of 0.756 and a standard error of the estimate of 7.139, indicating that Spiritual Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence collaboratively account for 76% of the variance in the Strengthening of Buddhist Character. A precise mathematical breakdown of the Effective Contribution (SE) illustrates that Spiritual Intelligence uniquely provides an effective contribution of 38.91% to the structural model, while Emotional Intelligence yields an almost equivalent contribution of 37.13%. The remaining 24% of the variance is logically attributed to external ecological and psychosocial factors not examined within the scope of this study.



Discussion (مناقشة)

The Influence of Spiritual Intelligence on the Strengthening of Buddhist Character

The partial hypothesis testing reveals that spiritual intelligence exerts a positive and highly significant influence on the strengthening of Buddhist character, evidenced by an unstandardized coefficient of 1.131, a t-value of 7.913, and a significance level of 0.000. This indicates that every single-unit increase in spiritual intelligence correspondingly enhances the Buddhist character by 1.131 units. These findings substantiate the first hypothesis (Ha1), providing robust empirical evidence that a spiritual foundation serves as the internal anchor for moral character formation within a Buddhist value framework. Furthermore, the effective contribution of spiritual intelligence stands at 38.91%, demonstrating that nearly two-fifths of the variance in Buddhist character can be elucidated by the students' spiritual capacity.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explicated through modern psychological mechanisms. Lickona (1991) posits that comprehensive character formation consists of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In this context, spiritual intelligence functions as the source of moral knowing, as the ability to find meaning in life, maintain a vision of values, and reframe challenges prevents individuals from succumbing to situational pressures or momentary impulses. Additionally, Peterson and Seligman's (2004) virtue psychology identifies character as universal virtues manifested through character strengths, where spiritual intelligence forms the foundation of transcendence and wisdom. Rest's (1986) four-component model further supports this framework, suggesting that spiritual intelligence specifically fortifies moral judgment and moral motivation through the orientation of right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) and a commitment to self-purification (*attasammāpaṇidhi*).

From a Buddhist perspective, this positive impact operates through systematic mental cultivation. The dimension of *sammā-diṭṭhi* provides an accurate value orientation, enabling students to distinguish between wholesome (*kusala*) and unwholesome (*akusala*) actions while understanding karmic consequences. This ensures that virtues become solid character dispositions rather than mere normative formalities. The *sati-sampajañña* dimension empowers students to maintain clear mental awareness before acting, preventing automatic or impulsive reactions, which directly correlates with the development of patience (*khanti pāramī*) and equanimity (*upekkhā pāramī*). Furthermore, *yoniso manasikāra* enables students to consider the causes and effects of actions and view problems as learning opportunities, thereby strengthening wisdom (*paññā pāramī*). Finally, *attasammāpaṇidhi* reflects a sustained commitment to self-improvement, which is closely linked to diligence (*virīya pāramī*) and determination (*adhiṭṭhāna pāramī*).

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Strengthening of Buddhist Character

The regression analysis also demonstrated that emotional intelligence possesses a positive and highly significant effect on the strengthening of Buddhist character, yielding a regression coefficient of 0.994, a t-value of 7.603, and a significance of 0.000. This positive coefficient confirms the second hypothesis (Ha2), asserting that the ability to manage emotions and build healthy social relationships is a psychological prerequisite for internalizing Buddhist virtues. The effective contribution of emotional intelligence is recorded at 37.13%, exhibiting a driving force that is nearly equivalent to, albeit slightly lower than, spiritual intelligence. This proximity signifies that both variables play balanced yet distinct roles in character formation.

Viewed through Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence competency theory, these findings can be delineated into four primary mechanisms. Self-awareness, correlated with *vedanānupassana*, enables students to recognize their emotions prior to taking action, thereby supporting the fortification of morality (*sīla pāramī*) and patience (*khanti pāramī*). Self-regulation, mapped to *indriya-saṃvara*, acts as an early emotional regulation strategy that effectively prevents the emergence of destructive emotions, consequently strengthening self-restraint (*nekkhamma pāramī*) and equanimity (*upekkhā pāramī*). Empathy (*anukampā*) serves as the psychological bedrock for generosity (*dāna pāramī*) and loving-kindness (*mettā pāramī*). Lastly, social skills (*saṅgahavattthu*) sustain relational virtues and interpersonal harmony among the students.

The Simultaneous Influence of Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence on the Strengthening of Buddhist Character

The simultaneous F-test results revealed a calculated F-value of 224.617 with a significance level of 0.000, leading to the acceptance of the third hypothesis (Ha3). This establishes that spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence collectively exert a highly significant influence on the strengthening of Buddhist character. The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.760 confirms that the accumulated effective contribution of both variables explains 76% of the variance in Buddhist character formation. The remaining 24% is logically attributed to extraneous factors outside the proposed model, such as school culture, teacher exemplars, familial support, and other socio-demographic variables. A Standard Error of the Estimate of 7.139 indicates a relatively small regression deviation, confirming the model's viability and precision in predicting student character.

These simultaneous findings validate the study's conceptual framework, which positions spiritual intelligence as the moral compass and emotional intelligence as the mechanism for moral implementation. The synergy between these two variables can be illustrated through a navigational analogy: spiritual intelligence acts as the compass determining the correct moral direction, while emotional intelligence functions as the navigational skill to steer the vessel through emotional waves and social conflicts to stay on course. Without the moral compass, steering skills might be technically efficient but morally misguided; conversely, without steering skills, the knowledge of the destination will never result in arrival.

Theoretically, this synergy aligns seamlessly with Lickona's (1991) character education approach, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, feeling, and action. Spiritual intelligence predominantly reinforces moral knowing through value reflection and a commitment to virtue practice, whereas emotional intelligence predominantly reinforces moral feeling through emotional regulation and social skills. When both variables operate in tandem, a comprehensive internalization of virtues occurs, ensuring that students not only understand goodness but also possess the affective commitment and behavioral capacity to manifest it in real-world actions.

Within the structural framework of the *dasa pāramī*, this simultaneous mechanism becomes even more distinct. Spiritual intelligence tends to most heavily influence the *pāramī* that require

value orientation and training commitment, such as morality (*sīla*), truthfulness (*sacca*), wisdom (*paññā*), determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*), and energy (*virīya*). Conversely, emotional intelligence primarily affects the *pāramī* rooted in emotional regulation and social relations, including patience (*khanti*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), generosity (*dāna*), renunciation (*nekkhamma*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). In practice, these domains are mutually reinforcing. For example, patience requires both emotional regulation and self-awareness, just as morality requires both correct values and impulse control. Loving-kindness necessitates a spiritual orientation alongside active empathy and social skills. Ultimately, the comprehensive strengthening of Buddhist character is optimally achieved only when both spiritual and emotional intelligences function synergistically.

Implications

The findings of this study offer substantial theoretical contributions to the discourse on character education by demonstrating that character formation transcends mere cognitive or normative approaches. Instead, it must be conceptualized as a highly integrative process that synthesizes cognitive-meaning dimensions with emotional regulation capacities. Specifically, this research empirically reinforces Lickona's comprehensive character model by positioning spiritual intelligence as the operationalization of moral knowing and emotional intelligence as the manifestation of moral feeling, which simultaneously coalesce to catalyze moral action. Furthermore, within the paradigm of Buddhist educational philosophy, this study enriches the understanding of character development by providing evidence that the virtues embedded in the *Dasa Pāramī* are not exclusively normative ideals. Rather, these virtues can be explicated and cultivated through measurable psychological mechanisms, including the capacity for profound reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*), mindful awareness (*sati*), and rigorous emotional regulation (*indriya-saṃvara*). Consequently, this research effectively bridges contemporary psychological constructs with traditional Buddhist teachings, offering a robust theoretical framework for understanding ethical character formation.

On a practical level, these empirical findings provide actionable and strategic insights for various educational stakeholders, particularly in the context of Buddhist religious education. For educators, there is a clear imperative to pivot from traditional pedagogies that focus predominantly on the conceptual comprehension of the Dhamma toward approaches that actively nurture students' internal psychological capacities. Educators are strongly encouraged to integrate mindfulness practices into the curriculum to elevate students' self-awareness (*sati-sampajañña*), utilize experience-based reflective learning models to cultivate wise consideration (*yoniso manasikāra*), and apply social simulations or role-playing exercises to train dynamic emotional regulation within authentic social contexts. Through these integrated strategies, the educational process can successfully transcend theoretical understanding to yield tangible and enduring behavioral transformations.

At the institutional level, schools are tasked with establishing holistic environments that inherently support character strengthening. This can be achieved by fostering a deeply value-based school culture and cultivating pedagogical relationships between teachers and students that are grounded in the principle of *kalyāṇamitta* (noble friendship). Furthermore, it is essential for educational institutions to systematically embed character development initiatives across both intracurricular and extracurricular platforms, thereby creating a synergistic environment that aligns internal psychological maturation with external systemic support. Ultimately, for the students themselves, these structural and pedagogical interventions are designed to empower them to independently cultivate self-awareness and emotional regulation through consistent reflection and self-control. This ensures that Buddhist values are not merely intellectually grasped but are authentically actualized in their daily interpersonal behaviors and decision-making processes.

Limitations

However, even though there are many theoretical and empirical insights gained from this study, it has several weaknesses in terms of methodology that cannot be ignored. Specifically, due to the cross-sectional design, the process of the development of characters is hard to be seen through time; moreover, self-reported questionnaire has some disadvantages in terms of social desirability bias. Thus, longitudinal or mixed methods would be beneficial for future research.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence simultaneously exert a positive and highly significant influence on the strengthening of Buddhist character among students, collectively accounting for 76% of the variance in character formation. Partially, spiritual intelligence functions as an essential internal value orientation system that shapes moral awareness through meaning-making, self-reflection, and the establishment of right view (*sammā-ditṭhi*), contributing 38.91% to character development. However, given that the students' spiritual capacity currently resides at a moderate level, there is a critical pedagogical need to enhance direct awareness (*sati-sampajañña*) to ensure that moral values transcend cognitive understanding and manifest as concrete actions. Concurrently, emotional intelligence serves as a crucial self-regulation system, providing a 37.13% effective contribution by dictating the students' capacity to manage emotions, control impulses, and respond adaptively to their environment. Although the students exhibit high levels of empathy, their sub-optimal ability to regulate negative emotions currently destabilizes the consistent practice of relational virtues, particularly patience (*khanti*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). Ultimately, the study affirms that the robust formation of character is not an isolated process but the result of a complementary integration between the spiritual meaning-making system and the emotional regulation system, which together produce definitive moral actions materialized through the *Dasa Pārami* framework.

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