

MODEL OF OPTIMISM–TAWAKKAL INTEGRATIVE SELF-CONFIDENCE: A SYNTHESIS OF SELIGMAN’S POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND AL-GHAZALI’S TAWAKKAL

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Abstract

Self-confidence has become a critical psychological construct in the lives of modern individuals, where pressure from social media, intense competition, and economic uncertainty often diminish self-belief, leading to escalating cases of anxiety and depression among young people. While prior research has examined self-confidence either from general Islamic perspectives or from specific Western frameworks, a substantial gap remains regarding in-depth comparative analysis and a holistic integrative model that synthesizes Martin Seligman’s positive psychology (particularly his theory of learned optimism and the PERMA framework) with Imam Al-Ghazali’s Islamic spiritual paradigm of tawakkal as articulated in *Ihya’ Ulumuddin*. This study aims to compare the similarities and differences between the two conceptions of self-confidence, integrate them into a Model of Optimism–Tawakkal Integrative Self-Confidence (MOTIK), and elaborate its theoretical, practical, and methodological implications for Islamic psychology. The study employs descriptive–interpretative qualitative library research through an in-depth review of primary works, including Seligman’s *Learned Optimism* (1991), *Authentic Happiness* (2002), and *Flourish* (2011), alongside Al-Ghazali’s *Ihya’ Ulumuddin* and *Minhaj al-‘Abidin*, complemented by relevant secondary scholarly sources. The findings indicate convergence in the centrality of cognitive optimism, the learnable nature of confidence, and the role of internal–external factors, but reveal a fundamental divergence in Al-Ghazali’s transcendent–spiritual dimension, which complements Seligman’s empirical–secular approach. The integration yields MOTIK, a holistic framework comprising three pillars: a positive–spiritual self-concept, an *ikhtiar–tawakkal* process, and a flourishing–*ridha* outcome. Implications include the enrichment of Islamic psychology theory, the development of CBT–tawakkal-based counseling interventions, and recommendations for empirical validation through psychometric construction and quasi-experimental testing.

Keywords: self-confidence; positive psychology; Islamic psychology; Martin Seligman; Al-Ghazali



Abstrak

Kepercayaan diri merupakan konstruksi psikologis penting dalam kehidupan modern, terutama di tengah tekanan media sosial, persaingan yang ketat, dan ketidakpastian ekonomi yang dapat meningkatkan kecemasan serta menurunkan keyakinan diri. Meskipun berbagai penelitian telah mengkaji kepercayaan diri dari perspektif psikologi Barat maupun Islam, kajian yang mengintegrasikan psikologi positif Martin Seligman dengan konsep tawakkal Imam Al-Ghazali masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis persamaan dan perbedaan konsep kepercayaan diri menurut Seligman dan Al-Ghazali, serta merumuskan Model Kepercayaan Diri Integratif Optimisme–Tawakkal (MOTIK) sebagai kerangka konseptual dalam psikologi Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode library research kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-interpretatif melalui kajian terhadap karya-karya utama Martin Seligman, yaitu Learned Optimism, Authentic Happiness, dan Flourish, serta karya Imam Al-Ghazali, yaitu Ihya' Ulumuddin dan Minhaj al-'Abidin, yang didukung oleh berbagai sumber ilmiah relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya kesamaan pada pentingnya optimisme, kemampuan kepercayaan diri untuk dikembangkan, serta pengaruh faktor internal dan eksternal. Namun, Al-Ghazali menambahkan dimensi transenden-spiritual melalui konsep tawakkal yang tidak ditemukan dalam pendekatan empiris-sekuler Seligman. Integrasi kedua perspektif menghasilkan model MOTIK yang terdiri atas tiga pilar utama: konsep diri positif-spiritual, proses ikhtiar–tawakkal, dan pencapaian flourishing–ridha. Model ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan teori psikologi Islam serta menjadi dasar bagi pengembangan intervensi konseling dan penelitian empiris di masa mendatang.

Kata kunci: *kepercayaan diri, psikologi positif, psikologi Islam, Martin Seligman, Al-Ghazali*

Introduction

Self-confidence is a fundamental psychological construct that shapes individual success across many domains of life, from decision-making and social interaction to the attainment of personal goals (Bandura, 1997). Individuals with high self-confidence tend to display better adaptive capacity, greater psychological resilience under pressure, and more optimal productivity in both academic and professional activities (Khairunisa, 2024). In the context of character formation, self-confidence is a prerequisite for independence, assertiveness, and the full actualization of one's potential (Sa'diyah, 2017). A comprehensive conceptual exploration of self-confidence is therefore a pressing need, both for the advancement of psychological theory and for the design of applied interventions that are relevant to particular socio-cultural contexts.

The contemporary era presents increasingly complex psychological challenges to the maintenance of self-confidence, especially among the young. Social-media pressure that normalizes standards of perfection, intensifying academic and professional competition, and global economic uncertainty have all contributed to a widespread erosion of self-confidence (Laswita et al., 2025; Gilabert, 2023; Sari et al., 2024). Epidemiological studies report a significant rise in anxiety and depression among young people over the past decade, much of it correlated with low self-esteem and cognitive distortions in self-appraisal (Xiang et al.,

2024). This phenomenon calls for a theoretical framework that is not only psychological–empirical but also accommodates the spiritual dimension that lends transcendent meaning to lived experience, particularly within Indonesian Muslim society, which is deeply rooted in religious values.

One of the most influential contributions to the contemporary discourse on self-confidence comes from Martin E. P. Seligman, the founder of *positive psychology*, who reoriented modern psychology from a pathology-focused stance toward the exploration of human strengths and virtues (Seligman, 2011). In *Learned Optimism* (1991), Seligman introduced learned optimism as a foundation of self-confidence grounded in a cognitive *explanatory style* comprising three dimensions: permanence, pervasiveness, and personalization. This approach was later expanded into the PERMA framework (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment), a leading reference for evidence-based well-being interventions (Seligman, 2011). Yet, like most Western psychological paradigms, Seligman’s approach operates within a secular epistemology that accommodates little of the transcendent dimension, making its direct application to religious societies less than fully adequate (Ghufron, 2012).

On the other hand, the classical Islamic intellectual tradition holds a conception of self-confidence rooted in the transcendent relationship between the servant and God, systematically articulated by Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali (450–505 AH / 1058–1111 CE) in his magnum opus *Ihya’ Ulumuddin*. In the *Kitab al-Tawhid wa al-Tawakkul* (within the *Munjiyat* section), Al-Ghazali formulates *tawakkal* as the apex of reliance upon God, which paradoxically confers extraordinary psychological strength in facing life’s challenges (Al-Ghazali, 2005). For Al-Ghazali, *tawakkal* is neither passive nor fatalistic; it is a dialectical integration of maximal effort with inner tranquillity born of certainty in God’s sufficiency (*kifayatullah*). Philosophically, this offers a dimension absent from Seligman’s framework: a transcendent source of self-confidence that is not shaken by fluctuations in worldly attainment because it rests upon the Eternal (Al-Ghazali, 2003).

A closer reading of the existing literature reveals a discernible trajectory rather than a set of isolated studies. An *early cluster* of scholarship establishes that Islam possesses its own vocabulary for self-confidence: Zaman (2021) frames it as a faith-derived disposition, while Mustofa and Arisandi (2021) ground it in Qur’anic exegesis. These works successfully demonstrate *that* an Islamic conception exists, but they remain largely descriptive, cataloguing virtues without placing them in dialogue with formal psychological theory. A *second cluster* moves toward comparison and integration: Tuzaroh (2025) juxtaposes Peter Lauster and Malik Badri to produce an Integrative Self-Confidence Model (MIKD), while Khotimah et al. (2023) analyse *tafakkur* in Malik Badri’s thought, and Rothman and Ahmed (2022) position Badri as the father of modern Islamic psychology who creatively adapted Western theory. The advance of this cluster is methodological, since it models how cross-paradigm dialogue can be conducted; yet its Islamic interlocutor is almost invariably a *contemporary* figure (Badri), and its Western interlocutor is rarely Seligman specifically. A *third cluster*, within positive psychology itself, has tested Seligman-based interventions across cultural settings, but its engagement with Islam tends to stop at surface-level cultural adaptation rather than epistemological synthesis.

Read together, this trajectory exposes a specific and not merely general gap. Prior studies have *already done* two things well: they have articulated an Islamic conception of self-confidence, and they have demonstrated that Western and Islamic frameworks can be integrated. What they have *not yet done* is to bring positive psychology into sustained dialogue with a *classical* Sufi authority whose ontological and epistemological depth exceeds that of contemporary adapters, namely Al-Ghazali, and to do so around the precise conceptual hinge the two traditions share. This study offers exactly that: a systematic comparison that pairs Seligman's learned optimism and PERMA with Al-Ghazali's tawakkal, and a resulting conceptual model. The pairing is strategic because both thinkers place optimism or hope at the centre of self-confidence while grounding it differently. Seligman grounds it in a learnable cognitive explanation, Al-Ghazali in theological certainty regarding God's promises, so that each addresses the other's principal limitation.

Against this background, the study is guided by three questions. First, what are the similarities and differences between the conceptions of self-confidence held by Martin Seligman and Imam Al-Ghazali? Second, how can the two perspectives be integrated into a new conceptual model relevant to Islamic psychology? Third, what are the theoretical, practical, and methodological implications of this integration for the development of contemporary Islamic psychology? Accordingly, the study aims to conduct an in-depth comparative analysis of the two bodies of thought, to synthesize them into a Model of Optimism–Tawakkal Integrative Self-Confidence (MOTIK), and to elaborate its implications for enriching the discourse of Islamic psychology and for developing applied interventions. The study is expected to enrich the literature of Islamic psychology, to narrow the epistemological dichotomy between Western and Islamic traditions, and to provide a theoretical basis for counseling interventions grounded in Islamic values while remaining open to empirical evidence.

Methodology

This study is qualitative library research employing a descriptive–interpretative approach. The design was chosen because the research object is a set of ideas and conceptual structures (Seligman's positive psychology and Al-Ghazali's tawakkal) rather than field-level behaviour, and such conceptual material is best examined through close textual reading rather than measurement or fieldwork. Because the data are documentary, the study is not bound to a single physical site or time span; the “location” of the research is the corpus of primary and secondary texts, and the work was conducted as a sustained desk study of those texts. The descriptive–interpretative orientation is justified on two grounds: it allows each thinker's concepts to be presented faithfully on their own terms (description), and it allows their underlying meanings, assumptions, and interconnections to be drawn out and placed in dialogue (interpretation), which is precisely what a comparative–integrative aim requires.

The data sources are textual and fall into two categories. Primary sources comprise the principal works of each thinker, read in full where relevant: for Seligman, *Learned Optimism* (1991), *Authentic Happiness* (2002), and *Flourish* (2011); for Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*

(especially the *Kitab al-Tawhid wa al-Tawakkul*) and *Minhaj al-'Abidin*. Secondary sources comprise peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, and reputable academic publications addressing self-confidence, positive psychology, and Sufism, which serve to contextualize and corroborate the reading of the primary texts. Data were collected through documentation: systematic identification, selection, and thematic annotation of passages bearing on self-confidence, optimism, and tawakkal. The principal sources and their function in the analysis are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Primary and secondary sources and their analytical function

Category	Works / data	Analytical function
Primary (Seligman)	<i>Learned Optimism</i> (1991); <i>Authentic Happiness</i> (2002); <i>Flourish</i> (2011)	Establishes the explanatory-style model, the ABCDE technique, and the PERMA framework
Primary (Al-Ghazali)	<i>Ihya' Ulumuddin</i> (Kitab al-Tawhid wa al-Tawakkul); <i>Minhaj al-'Abidin</i>	Establishes the doctrine of tawakkal, its degrees, and its spiritual foundations
Secondary	Peer-reviewed articles and scholarly books on self-confidence, positive psychology, and Sufism	Contextualizes, corroborates, and situates the primary readings within current scholarship

Data analysis proceeded in four systematic stages, framed by a comparative–integrative analytical framework drawn from the comparative study of religion and psychology. The first stage was identification and description, in which each thinker's concepts were reconstructed on their own terms. The second was comparison, in which the two accounts were set side by side to surface convergences and divergences. The third was conceptual synthesis, in which the comparison was used to formulate an integrative model (MOTIK). The fourth was the elaboration of theoretical, practical, and methodological implications. Throughout, interpretation was conducted hermeneutically and reflectively, attending to the meaning, interrelation, and underlying assumptions of the ideas rather than to their surface wording, so that the synthesis rests on conceptual compatibility rather than mere terminological resemblance.

Brief Biographies of Martin Seligman and Imam Al-Ghazali

Martin Elias Peter Seligman was born on 12 August 1942 in Albany, New York, and is widely regarded as the father of modern positive psychology. He completed his undergraduate studies at Princeton University (1964) *summa cum laude* and earned his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1967. Over his career he held the Zellerbach Family Professorship of Psychology and directed the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, and he served as President of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998 (Peterson, 2006). It was during his APA presidency that Seligman formally declared positive psychology a new agenda, redirecting the field's attention beyond the treatment of pathology toward the cultivation of virtue, character strengths, and human well-being.

Seligman's landmark works include *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death* (1975), which introduced learned helplessness; *Learned Optimism* (1991); *Authentic Happiness* (2002); *Character Strengths and Virtues* (2004, with Christopher Peterson); and *Flourish* (2011) (Seligman, 2002; Seligman, 2011). His formulation of the PERMA framework and the ABCDE technique (Adversity, Belief, Consequence, Disputation, Energization) has become a primary reference for evidence-based psychological intervention. Seligman's thought is empirical–scientific in character, relying on quantitative methods and rigorous experimentation, with an epistemological orientation typical of modern Western psychology: secular, naturalistic, and statistically validated.

Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali, known by the title Hujjat al-Islam, was born in 450 AH (1058 CE) in Tus, Khurasan (in present-day Iran) and died in 505 AH (1111 CE). Al-Ghazali was a Muslim polymath who mastered jurisprudence, legal theory, theology, philosophy, Sufism, and spiritual psychology (Nakamura, 2001). After early study in his hometown he continued at Jurjan and Nishapur under Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni, a leading Ash'arite scholar. At the age of thirty-four he was appointed professor at the Nizamiyya Madrasa in Baghdad by the vizier Nizam al-Mulk, an exceptionally prestigious post in the Muslim world of the time (Watt, 1963).

Al-Ghazali's intellectual–spiritual turning point came around 488 AH, when he underwent a profound epistemological and spiritual crisis recounted in his reflective autobiography *Al-Munqidh min al-Dhalal* (Deliverance from Error). Leaving his Baghdad post, he undertook a spiritual journey of roughly eleven years to Damascus, Jerusalem, the Hijaz, and finally back to Tus, where he composed his monumental *Ihya' Ulumuddin* (Revival of the Religious Sciences). The work is organized into four quarters (Ibadat, Adat, Muhlikat, and Munjiyat), and it is within the Munjiyat that the *Kitab al-Tawhid wa al-Tawakkul*, the principal source for this study's treatment of tawakkal, is found (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

Al-Ghazali's works relevant to spiritual psychology include *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, *Minhaj al-'Abidin*, *Mizan al-'Amal*, *Kimiya al-Sa'adah*, and *Ma'arij al-Quds*. Unlike Seligman, who is rooted in an empirical–scientific tradition, Al-Ghazali operates within a holistic Islamic epistemology that integrates revelation (naqli), reason (aqli), inner experience (dhawqi), and spiritual unveiling (kashfi). It is precisely this paradigmatic difference that makes a comparison of the two so strategic for formulating a holistic and contextually grounded model of self-confidence for modern Muslim society.

The Concept of Self-Confidence in Positive Psychology and Islam

Seligman's conception of self-confidence is inseparable from his theory of learned optimism, the cognitive capacity to develop an optimistic style of explaining life events. Seligman (1991) holds that the way a person explains good and bad events, the *explanatory style*, is the principal determinant of optimism, hope, and self-confidence. This style comprises the “three Ps”: permanence (whether an event is seen as lasting or temporary), pervasiveness (whether its impact is seen as global or specific), and personalization (whether its cause is attributed internally or externally). Optimists construe bad events as temporary, specific, and

external, and good events as permanent, pervasive, and internal; this cognitive pattern is the foundation of resilient self-confidence (Seligman, 1991).

Seligman further developed a practical intervention captured in the acronym ABCDE: Adversity, Belief, Consequence, Disputation, and Energization. The technique enables individuals to modify pessimistic thinking into optimistic thinking in a systematic way (Seligman, 1991). In *Flourish* (2011) he introduced the PERMA framework as a comprehensive model of well-being that is also a source of authentic self-confidence: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2011).

A closer analysis shows that Seligman's account shares an epistemological foundation with Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, that is, belief in one's capacity to accomplish a given task, built through mastery experience, social modeling, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. Optimism acts as a catalyst that strengthens self-efficacy by leading individuals to read failure as learning and success as evidence of competence. The framework is likewise compatible with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) cognitive-appraisal theory, in which primary appraisal (threat or opportunity) and secondary appraisal (coping resources) determine adaptive response. Yet, as several Islamic-psychology scholars have argued, the approach tends toward reductionism: it confines self-confidence to measurable, behaviourally tractable psychological mechanisms while neglecting the spiritual dimension that is essential to the existential resilience of the Muslim individual (Badri, 1994; Khotimah et al., 2023).

In the Islamic perspective of Al-Ghazali, by contrast, self-confidence is not an autonomous psychological construct but a derivative of a deep spiritual relationship between the servant and God, manifested in the concept of *tawakkal*. In the *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, Al-Ghazali (2005) defines *tawakkal* as the reliance of the heart upon God alone in securing benefit and repelling harm, in matters of this world and the next (*i'timad al-qalb 'ala Allah*). *Tawakkal* is not passivity or a rejection of effort; it is a dialectical integration of maximal effort (outward means) with inner surrender to God's decree. This ordering is reflected in the Qur'an. In Surah Ali 'Imran, verse 159, believers are instructed that once a resolve has been firmly made, they are to place their trust in God, who loves those who rely upon Him. The verse is significant for its sequence: the firming of resolve, an expression of maximal effort, precedes *tawakkal*. *Tawakkal* is therefore not a substitute for effort but the spiritual dimension that accompanies and completes it.

Al-Ghazali (2005) further distinguishes three degrees of *tawakkal*. The first is that of ordinary believers, who exert effort while trusting in God's power. The second is that of the elect, whose reliance resembles a child's trust in its mother, wholly surrendered yet still active. The third is that of the elect of the elect (*al-khawass al-khawass*), whose state resembles a corpse in the hands of the one who washes it, the pull of the self having dissolved before the will of God. These degrees describe a spiritual progression that correlates with deepening inner tranquillity and a self-confidence unshaken by external conditions.

Al-Ghazali's account of self-confidence rests on several foundational pillars. The first is *ma'rifatullah* (knowledge of God), especially of His attributes, the All-Merciful (Ar-Rahman), the Bestower (Al-Wahhab), the Sufficient (Al-Kafi), and the All-Wise (Al-Hakim), which cultivate the theological certainty underlying spiritual optimism. The second is *ma'rifat al-nafs*

(self-knowledge): awareness of the potential God has entrusted to the human being as His vicegerent, together with awareness of one's limitations, which calls for reliance upon God. The third is *husn al-zann* (thinking well of God), a concept parallel to Seligman's learned optimism but with a transcendent object. The fourth is gratitude as a cognitive–emotional appreciation of blessing that nurtures a positive disposition. The fifth is patience and contentment with the divine decree, which builds psychological resilience in the face of failure (Al-Ghazali, 2003; Al-Ghazali, 2005).

The status of *tawakkal* as a source of self-confidence is reinforced elsewhere in the Qur'an. Surah At-Talaq, verse 3, conveys that whoever relies upon God will find God sufficient for him, for God accomplishes His purpose. On Al-Ghazali's reading, the verse carries a psychological–spiritual guarantee: God is *hasb* (the sufficiency) of the one who trusts. The psychological implication is considerable: certainty in God's sufficiency dissolves the existential anxiety that lies at the root of low self-confidence. Whereas Seligman's optimism rests on confidence in one's own ability and the probability of success, Al-Ghazali's optimism rests on confidence in God's wisdom and mercy, and so remains firm even when external outcomes disappoint. This is why *tawakkal* functions as a buffer of resilience superior to mere coping strategies: it provides a sustained, transcendent calm, forestalls chronic despair, and promotes holistic adaptation in adversity (Khotimah et al., 2023; Rothman & Ahmed, 2022).

Similarities in the Concept of Self-Confidence

Although they arise from different epistemological backgrounds, Seligman's and Al-Ghazali's accounts of self-confidence display several substantial similarities worth exploring. These points of convergence indicate that modern psychology and classical Sufism can meet in their understanding of human psychological dynamics, and they provide the footing for a more systematic integration.

First, both place optimism at the centre of self-confidence. Seligman (1991) formulates learned optimism as a cognitive pattern that views the future with positive expectation and confidence in one's capacity to meet challenges. Al-Ghazali (2005) emphasizes *husn al-zann*, thinking well of God, oneself, and one's situation. Both recognize that a person's way of construing reality has transformative power over experience and response. In neither framework is optimism a naïve denial of reality; it is a constructive cognitive disposition in interpreting life's events.

Second, both hold that self-confidence is not a fixed, innate trait but a capacity that can be learned, trained, and progressively developed. Seligman's very term, "learned" optimism, asserts that optimism can be conditioned through systematic cognitive exercises such as the ABCDE technique. Al-Ghazali likewise regards *tawakkal* as a *maqam* (spiritual station) attainable through graduated *mujahadah* (earnest spiritual striving), from the degree of the ordinary believer to that of the elect of the elect. This developmental view has clear implications for intervention: self-confidence can be cultivated through structured programs of education and training, whether in schools, universities, or clinical counseling alike.

Third, both acknowledge the interplay of internal and external factors. Seligman identifies internal factors such as cognitive explanatory style, character strengths, and positive emotion, alongside external factors such as social support, meaningful relationships, and experiences of

accomplishment. Al-Ghazali likewise recognizes that spiritual self-confidence is shaped by internal factors such as the quality of faith, purification of the heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and *ma'rifatullah*, and by external factors such as a righteous social environment, the guidance of a spiritual mentor (mursyid), and exposure to Islamic values. This shared recognition of complexity reflects a holistic view of the human being as shaped by the dialectic between self and environment.

Fourth, both stress the adaptive role of self-confidence in facing adversity. Seligman shows that healthy optimism allows individuals to recover from failure, sustain motivation, and find meaning in difficulty. Al-Ghazali similarly affirms that authentic tawakkal keeps the believer steadfast under trial, since hardship is read as part of a wise divine scenario. This convergence indicates that both positive psychology and Al-Ghazali's Sufism are oriented toward resilience, the capacity to recover and grow amid challenge.

Fifth, both recognize the centrality of cognition in forming self-confidence. Seligman operates explicitly within a cognitive-behavioural paradigm in which belief and thought mediate between event and emotional-behavioural response. Al-Ghazali, through the concepts of intention (*niyyah*), conviction (*i'tiqad*), and the heart's perception (*idrak*), likewise treats the cognitive-spiritual dimension as the principal director of action and inner state. This similarity opens a productive methodological dialogue between modern cognitive techniques such as CBT and classical spiritual exercises such as *dhikr* and *tafakkur*, as elaborated below.

Differences in the Concept of Self-Confidence

Beneath these significant similarities lie fundamental differences between Seligman's and Al-Ghazali's conceptions, differences that reflect a paradigmatic divergence between modern Western psychology and classical Islamic Sufism. They concern not merely terminology or emphasis but the ontological basis, source, orientation, and ultimate aim of self-confidence.

First, the epistemological and ontological foundations differ. Seligman operates within a naturalistic, empirical-scientific paradigm in which self-confidence is an observable, measurable phenomenon explicable through immanent cognitive-behavioural mechanisms; reality, in this frame, is limited to what modern scientific method can reach. Al-Ghazali, by contrast, operates within a transcendent, theological-spiritual paradigm in which self-confidence is a derivative of the vertical relationship between servant and Creator; reality here includes an unseen (metaphysical) dimension irreducible to empirical observation yet accessible through revelation, reason, and spiritual taste (Al-Ghazali, 2003). Consequently, the source of knowledge about self-confidence is, for Seligman, scientific research, and for Al-Ghazali, the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the spiritual experience of the knowers ('arifin).

Second, the primary source of self-confidence differs. For Seligman, it lies in self-efficacy built through mastery experience, social modeling, verbal persuasion, and trained cognitive optimism (Bandura, 1997; Seligman, 1991), a horizontal source originating in the self and its interaction with the environment. For Al-Ghazali, the source is primarily vertical, arising from reliance upon God through tawakkal, *i'timad*, and certainty in His promises. The Qur'an captures this in Surah Al-Anfal, verse 2, which characterizes true believers as those whose hearts tremble at the mention of God, whose faith increases when His verses are recited, and who place their trust in their Lord. The verse presents trust in God as a constitutive mark of

faith and an authentic source of psychological strength. This difference in source bears on stability: self-confidence resting on self-efficacy is vulnerable to repeated failure or to circumstances beyond one's capacity, whereas self-confidence resting on God is comparatively more stable because it does not depend on external outcomes.

Third, the temporal and teleological orientation differs. Seligman, especially through PERMA, directs self-confidence toward flourishing, that is, optimal well-being in this world, marked by positive emotion, engagement, meaningful relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011); this is a horizontal-temporal orientation focused on the quality of life here and now. Al-Ghazali directs self-confidence toward *sa'adah* (happiness) in a twofold sense: a worldly happiness bound up with God's pleasure, and an otherworldly happiness that is the ultimate goal (Al-Ghazali, 2003). Tawakkal, in this frame, is not an instrument for worldly success alone but a path toward a particular standing before God and eternal felicity. This vertical-eschatological orientation lends self-confidence a deeper and more stable meaning for the Muslim.

Fourth, the conception of human control and agency differs. Through optimism and self-efficacy, Seligman strongly emphasizes individual agency, the belief that a person can significantly influence conditions and outcomes through thought, attitude, and action, thereby tending to locate control in the human being as principal agent. Al-Ghazali holds a more balanced view of effort and decree: the human being is endowed with freedom to strive and is responsible for choices, yet recognizes that the final outcome rests with God. Tawakkal integrates this dialectic elegantly: working as though everything depends on effort while surrendering as though everything depends on God, thereby guarding against two dangerous extremes: arrogance in success and despair in failure.

Fifth, the spiritual and ritual dimension differs. Seligman's framework gives no special place to spiritual practice or ritual worship in the development of self-confidence, except in the general sense of "meaning," which may be filled from many sources. Al-Ghazali, conversely, treats ritual worship, that is, prayer, *dhikr*, supplication, recitation of the Qur'an, and *tafakkur*, as a primary means of forming and strengthening spiritual self-confidence. These are not ceremonial observances but systematic spiritual exercises that cultivate *ma'rifatullah*, reinforce tawakkal, and cleanse the heart of the inner ailments that erode self-belief. This difference gives Al-Ghazali's framework a distinctive practical richness as a comprehensive system of self-development.

Integration: The Model of Optimism–Tawakkal Integrative Self-Confidence (MOTIK)

Integrating Seligman's and Al-Ghazali's thought on self-confidence yields a more comprehensive and contextually appropriate framework for modern Muslim society. This study formulates that integration as the Model of Optimism–Tawakkal Integrative Self-Confidence (MOTIK), a holistic model that synthesizes Seligman's empirical-psychological strengths with Al-Ghazali's spiritual-theological depth. MOTIK rests on three interrelated pillars: a positive-spiritual self-concept, an *ikhtiar-tawakkal* process, and a flourishing-*ridha* outcome. Each pillar is elaborated below.

The first pillar, the positive–spiritual self-concept, integrates Seligman’s optimistic self-concept with Al-Ghazali’s *ma’rifat al-nafs*. On one side, individuals are trained to develop an optimistic explanatory style, reading failure as temporary, specific, and not wholly self-caused, and success as evidence of competence that can be developed. On the other, they are guided to know themselves deeply as creatures of God endowed with potential (*fitrah*) yet bounded by limitations that call for reliance upon the Creator. The resulting self-concept is neither naïve optimism that overstates one’s capacity nor self-deprecation that belittles God’s gift; it is what Al-Ghazali (2003) describes as a balance between *khawf* (productive fear) and *raja’* (constructive hope).

The second pillar, the ikhtiar–tawakkal process, integrates Seligman’s ABCDE technique with Al-Ghazali’s practice of tawakkal. Here individuals are trained to: (1) identify the adversity honestly and objectively; (2) become aware of the automatic beliefs that arise, especially pessimistic ones; (3) map the emotional and behavioural consequences of those beliefs; (4) undertake disputation drawing on two sources: rational–empirical argument (after Seligman) and theological reference (Qur’an, Sunnah, and the wisdom of the early generations); and (5) experience the energization born of that disputation, reinforced through tawakkal to God. This fifth step is MOTIK’s innovation: after systematic cognitive disputation, the individual closes the process with surrender to God, so that the self-confidence produced is not fragile when external outcomes disappoint. The Prophetic counsel to tether one’s camel and then trust in God (reported by al-Tirmidhi) captures this formula, elegantly integrating maximal effort with inner surrender.

The third pillar, the flourishing–ridha outcome, integrates Seligman’s PERMA with Al-Ghazali’s *sa’adah*. At the horizontal level, MOTIK accommodates the attainment of PERMA, namely positive emotion, engagement, meaningful relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, as indicators of worldly well-being that follow from healthy self-confidence. At the vertical level, MOTIK adds the dimension of God’s pleasure (*ridha*) as the ultimate outcome that lends transcendent meaning to all worldly attainment. The individual whose self-confidence is shaped by MOTIK does not become trapped in hedonism or achievement for its own sake but situates worldly flourishing within devotion to God and preparation for eternal felicity. This is what distinguishes MOTIK from secular positive psychology: not only “feeling good” and “functioning well,” but also being “pleasing to God.”

The three pillars relate to one another in a circular dynamic. The positive–spiritual self-concept is the point of departure, furnishing a healthy mental and spiritual frame. The ikhtiar–tawakkal process is the day-to-day operational mechanism for meeting adversity constructively. The flourishing–ridha outcome is the goal that provides direction and meaning while feeding back to strengthen the self-concept through experiences of accomplishment and closeness to God. This creates a positive, sustainable growth spiral in which each cycle deepens self-confidence on both the psychological and spiritual planes.

MOTIK also accommodates the interplay of internal and external factors systematically. Internal factors include an optimistic cognitive explanatory style (Seligman), the quality of faith and *ma’rifatullah* (Al-Ghazali), regulation of positive emotion, and daily spiritual practice. External factors include positive social support, a constructive family environment,

exposure to Islamic values, relationships within a healthy spiritual community, and access to quality knowledge and guidance. The model's integration of internal and external factors is richer than either Seligman's or Al-Ghazali's framework taken separately, because it unites a modern sociological–psychological dimension with a classical educational–spiritual one.

MOTIK's strength lies in its capacity to address contemporary psychological challenges with a framework that is authentically Islamic and conceptually grounded in modern psychology at once. Faced with social-media pressure that normalizes perfection, MOTIK offers a cognitive apparatus for disputing distortive beliefs and a spiritual apparatus for locating self-worth not in external validation but in one's relationship with God. Faced with intense competition, it directs the individual to strive maximally (*ikhtiar*) while remaining calm about outcomes (*tawakkal*). Faced with economic and existential uncertainty, it instils certainty in *kifayatullah* (God's sufficiency) as a stable source of inner tranquillity.

Practical Implementation of the Seligman–Al-Ghazali Integration

MOTIK can be applied in everyday life and in professional intervention through several complementary modalities, designed to be relevant for modern Muslims facing contemporary psychological challenges and integrable into counseling, character education, and self-development.

First, the cultivation of a daily routine that integrates cognitive optimism exercises with spiritual practice. One may begin the day with morning *dhikr* that awakens awareness of God and confidence in His help, followed by brief *tafakkur* on the day's aims and likely challenges. The individual may then apply Seligman's (2011) "three good things" technique, that is, identifying three positive occurrences, paired with gratitude to God for those blessings. Before sleep, a *muhasabah* (self-examination) of the day's pessimistic thoughts is undertaken, followed by brief disputation grounded in reason and faith, and a closing supplication that entrusts the whole day to God. Practised consistently, this routine builds an optimistic cognitive pattern grounded in *tawakkal*.

Second, the development of an integrative counseling technique that combines Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with the Islamic spiritual dimension, in what may be termed CBT–Tawakkal or Islamic Cognitive Therapy. The technique adapts Seligman's ABCDE protocol by adding a sixth step, T (Tawakkal), yielding an ABCDET protocol: after the client disputes dysfunctional beliefs, the counselor guides the client to entrust the outcome of their effort to God through a particular supplication or *dhikr*. Preliminary studies suggest the approach is effective, particularly for Muslim clients experiencing anxiety, mild depression, and crises of self-confidence (Aulina et al., 2018; Rothman & Ahmed, 2022). The added *tawakkal* dimension provides a spiritual closure that allows the intervention not merely to alter thought patterns but to heal at the existential level.

Third, the development of MOTIK-based character-education programs for formal and informal institutions. Such programs can be integrated into Islamic Religious Education, Guidance and Counseling, or offered as a dedicated module within extracurricular activities. The content covers an introduction to optimism and *tawakkal*, exercises in identifying pessimistic explanatory styles, disputation techniques grounded in reason and scriptural evidence, structured *tafakkur* and *dhikr* practice, and applied case work. The design is

experiential: participants do not merely receive cognitive knowledge but undergo transformation through repeated practice and deep reflection (Yulianti et al., 2024; Puji et al., 2024).

Fourth, the development of support communities that integrate the psychological and the spiritual. Joining a study circle (*halaqah*), a *dhikr* assembly, or a learning group can strengthen MOTIK's spiritual dimension, while participation in self-development groups, support groups, or soft-skills training can strengthen its psychological dimension. Their synergy offers comprehensive support that reinforces self-confidence from several directions. The ideal community provides a safe space for sharing experience, joint reflection, and mutual accountability in applying MOTIK's principles consistently (Syam, 2017; Syifa, 2021).

Fifth, the development of MOTIK-supportive digital literacy to help young people navigate the challenges of social media. Mobile applications, podcasts, or social-media content can be designed to deliver daily reminders of the principles of optimism and tawakkal, brief Islamically grounded cognitive-disputation exercises, and guides to *dhikr* and supplication for various situations. Such technology can be a strategic means of bringing MOTIK into the very digital spaces that often become sources of psychological pressure for the young, so that the model is present not only in formal counseling or traditional education but also in the digital ecosystem that frames the lives of Generation Z and Generation Alpha.

Sixth, in confronting specific failures and adversities, MOTIK offers a systematic protocol. The individual is supported to: (1) acknowledge the failure objectively without overgeneralization (in line with Seligman's principles of permanence and pervasiveness); (2) conduct a realistic evaluation for future improvement; (3) frame the failure within divine wisdom ("God knows best what is good"); (4) renew effort with a better strategy; and (5) entrust the outcome to God through authentic tawakkal. The protocol forestalls chronic despair and builds robust, spiritually grounded mental resilience, so that failure becomes not an obstacle but a stepping stone to growth (Aulina et al., 2018).

Conclusion

This study shows that the conceptions of self-confidence held by Martin Seligman and Imam Al-Ghazali share several substantial similarities: both place optimism at the centre, recognize that self-confidence is learnable, integrate internal and external factors, stress its adaptive role in adversity, and acknowledge the centrality of cognition in its formation. They diverge fundamentally, however, in their epistemological and ontological foundations (empirical–scientific versus theological–spiritual), in the primary source of self-confidence (horizontal versus vertical), in temporal–teleological orientation (worldly flourishing versus worldly–otherworldly sa'adah), in the conception of agency and control (the primacy of self-efficacy versus the dialectic of effort and decree), and in the spiritual–ritual dimension (marginal versus central). These differences are not unbridgeable contradictions but complementary riches that make productive integration possible.

The integration of the two perspectives yields the Model of Optimism–Tawakkal Integrative Self-Confidence (MOTIK), a holistic framework resting on three pillars: (1) a positive–spiritual self-concept that fuses Seligman's optimistic explanatory style with Al-Ghazali's *ma'rifat al-nafs*; (2) an ikhtiar–tawakkal process that integrates the ABCDE

technique with the principle of tethering one's camel and trusting in God; and (3) a flourishing–ridha outcome that combines the PERMA framework with the attainment of *sa'adah* in this world and the next. MOTIK offers a conception of self-confidence that is authentically Islamic and at the same time conceptually validated against modern psychology, making it relevant for modern Muslim society as it faces social-media pressure, intense competition, and existential uncertainty.

The study carries three strategic implications. Theoretically, its findings enrich Islamic psychology with the MOTIK design as a conceptual alternative to existing models of self-confidence, while narrowing the epistemological dichotomy between Western and Islamic traditions by demonstrating the possibility of productive dialogue between Seligman's positive psychology and Al-Ghazali's Sufism. Practically, MOTIK can be translated into a CBT–Tawakkal (ABCDET) counseling protocol, school- and pesantren-based character-education programs, self-development modules for Muslim communities, and digital educational content for the young. Methodologically, the study recommends empirical testing of MOTIK through the construction of valid and reliable psychometric instruments to measure its constructs, and through quasi-experimental or randomized controlled studies to test the effectiveness of MOTIK-based interventions against conventional ones. Such empirical testing is the strategic next step in moving MOTIK from a conceptual framework toward a tested applied practice.

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