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## **The Implications of Sufi Values in Islamic Religious Education in the Modern Era**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to enhance understanding of Islamic religious education through the integration of Sufi values. Using a qualitative approach, the study explores the core teachings of Islam, which were delivered by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and directly revealed by Allah (SWT). The research emphasizes the importance of monotheism in Islam, which is eternal and foundational to its principles. Islam, as a complete way of life, offers a balanced integration of material and spiritual aspects, promoting harmony between individuals and society. This paper also highlights the Quran's authenticity and the unchanging nature of its teachings. The role of Sufism, with its focus on spiritual development and character-building, is examined in the context of modern Islamic education. The values of Sufism, such as sincerity, humility, patience, and gratitude, are discussed as essential in fostering positive character traits among students, especially in the face of contemporary challenges. The findings suggest that incorporating Sufi principles in educational practices can counterbalance the negative influences of modern materialism and contribute to the formation of morally upright individuals.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Sufism, Modern Era

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the modern era, the need for a balanced educational system that nurtures both intellectual growth and spiritual depth has become ever more pressing. This urgency arises as technological advancements and societal changes have led to a shift in educational paradigms, often emphasizing rationality and materialism over moral and spiritual development. In particular, Sufism, a mystical aspect of Islam, holds the potential to bridge the gap between intellectualism and spirituality, offering a profound influence on Islamic education (Atho'illah, 2019). This mystical tradition, which focuses on the purification of the soul and the deepening of one's connection with God, offers valuable principles that can be integrated into Islamic Religious Education to cultivate both ethical and spiritual growth in students.

Sufism, in its essence, provides a path that emphasizes inner development, ethical conduct, and the fostering of a deep relationship with Allah. According to Abubakar (2022), Sufism can serve as a means to counterbalance the materialistic

tendencies of modern life by encouraging individuals to focus on the eternal, spiritual dimension of existence. In a world where material success is often prioritized, Sufism offers a framework to nurture values such as humility, contentment (*qana'ah*), gratitude (*syukur*), and patience (*sabar*), which are essential for character building and the development of moral virtues (Setiawan, 2019). These virtues are crucial in addressing the challenges posed by modernity, where societal pressures often undermine personal ethics and social harmony.

The significance of incorporating Sufi teachings into education lies in their ability to shape an individual's moral character. Tasawuf emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct, personal integrity, and spiritual development, which are foundational aspects of a well-rounded education. This approach is especially relevant in modern education systems that may overlook the moral and spiritual dimensions of learning. By integrating Sufi values into the curriculum, educators can offer students more than just intellectual knowledge—they can help shape individuals who are morally sound, spiritually grounded, and equipped to face the challenges of modern life (Astuti, 2020). For example, the Sufi concept of “*zuhud*,” or detachment from materialism, encourages students to prioritize their spiritual health over the fleeting rewards of worldly possessions, fostering a sense of inner peace and balance (Setiawan, 2019).

Furthermore, the application of Sufism within the educational system can contribute to the resolution of crises in contemporary society. Modern life, with its rapid technological advancements and complex social structures, often leaves individuals feeling disconnected from their spiritual roots. As noted by Kurniawan (2016), the emphasis on materialism and rationality in modern education has led to a crisis of spiritual and ethical values. Many individuals, particularly the youth, struggle to find meaning and purpose in life, often resorting to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as substance abuse, materialism, or social alienation. Sufism offers an antidote to these challenges by promoting a deeper connection to the divine, which can help individuals navigate the complexities of modern life with a sense of purpose, patience, and resilience (Ilallah, 2022).

The relevance of Sufism in modern Islamic education is also evident in its role in character education. According to Munjiat (2018), modern education systems often prioritize intellectual achievement, technical skills, and professional competence over moral and spiritual development. However, character education—emphasizing values such as honesty, humility, and empathy—is essential for producing well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to society. Sufism, with its focus on refining the character through ethical teachings and spiritual practices, offers a powerful tool for fostering moral integrity in students. This can help address the moral decay that has become increasingly prevalent in modern society, particularly among the youth, as they are exposed to various negative influences through social media and other channels.

Moreover, the integration of Sufi principles into Islamic Religious Education can provide a holistic approach to education, one that nurtures both the intellect and the soul. Sufism emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and

introspection, which are crucial for personal development. Through practices such as remembrance of God (dhikr), self-reflection, and ethical conduct, students are encouraged to cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and their relationship with Allah. This spiritual dimension of education can help students develop a strong sense of purpose, moral clarity, and emotional resilience, which are essential for leading a fulfilling and meaningful life in the modern world (Astuti, 2020).

In addition to its ethical and spiritual benefits, Sufism also has the potential to foster social harmony and compassion. As highlighted by Samad (2020), Sufism promotes a sense of brotherhood and solidarity, emphasizing the importance of helping others and contributing to the common good. In a time when individualism and competition are often prioritized, the Sufi teachings of compassion, kindness, and empathy can serve as a powerful antidote to societal divisions and conflicts. By incorporating these values into Islamic education, we can create a generation of students who not only excel academically but also contribute positively to the social fabric, working towards a more just and compassionate society.

The role of Sufism in Islamic education is also closely linked to the broader goals of educational reform in the modern era. As Munfarida (2017) notes, the rapid pace of technological change and the increasing secularization of education have created significant challenges for educators. To address these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need to integrate spiritual and moral values into the curriculum, ensuring that students are not only equipped with technical skills but also possess the ethical and spiritual grounding necessary to navigate the complexities of modern life. Sufism offers a framework for such integration, providing a rich source of spiritual and ethical teachings that can complement traditional academic subjects and help cultivate well-rounded individuals.

In conclusion, the integration of Sufism into Islamic Religious Education in the modern era offers a promising solution to the challenges faced by contemporary education systems. By emphasizing the development of moral character, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility, Sufism provides a holistic approach to education that addresses both the intellectual and spiritual needs of students. In a world where materialism, secularism, and ethical decay are increasingly prevalent, the teachings of Sufism can help restore balance, guiding individuals towards a more meaningful and fulfilling life. The importance of Sufism in education, therefore, cannot be overstated, as it offers valuable insights and practices that can help shape a generation of individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also ethically and spiritually grounded.

## METHODS

The research in this study employs a qualitative approach, focusing specifically on the descriptive-analytical literature review method. This method was chosen due to its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the subject matter by analyzing and comparing existing scholarly articles and other relevant sources. The aim is to derive accurate, valid, and reliable data based on the synthesis of various academic articles, journals, and national news sources, which

have been carefully selected to provide a broad perspective on the topic. This type of approach is particularly beneficial when exploring abstract or complex themes like Islamic education and Sufism, as it enables the researcher to draw conclusions based on qualitative data without the need for quantitative measurement.

In conducting this study, the researcher collected a variety of academic articles and resources, primarily from online journals and national news outlets. The focus was on the core principles of Sufism and its influence on modern Islamic religious education, ensuring the inclusion of both historical context and contemporary issues. The collected data was then thoroughly analyzed, with each source carefully examined for its relevance and contribution to the research. The comparative analysis process involved contrasting different viewpoints and theoretical frameworks in the existing literature. This allowed the researcher to understand how Sufism, as a spiritual and ethical framework, has been interpreted and applied in the context of modern education.

One key aspect of the research method was the identification and extraction of specific themes from the collected literature. These themes were then analyzed in relation to the central topic of Sufism and Islamic education in the modern era. By comparing different articles, the researcher was able to isolate key values and principles associated with Sufism, such as patience (*sabar*), contentment (*qana'ah*), and asceticism (*zuhud*), and examine their relevance to contemporary educational practices. This method of thematic analysis provided a clear understanding of how these values influence character development in students, particularly in Islamic educational institutions.

Furthermore, the researcher incorporated a critical evaluation of the educational challenges posed by modernity, especially in relation to the ethical and spiritual crises facing today's youth. The rapid advancement of technology and the shift towards a materialistic worldview have raised concerns about the erosion of traditional values and the loss of spiritual guidance in education. In light of these issues, Sufism is seen as an important corrective force, offering a holistic approach to education that emphasizes the development of both intellectual and moral character. This was a central theme in the literature reviewed, as many scholars argue that the integration of Sufi principles into educational curricula can help students develop a deeper sense of purpose, humility, and gratitude, counteracting the negative effects of modern consumerism.

The research also utilized a historical perspective, exploring how Sufism has been integrated into Islamic education over time. This included an examination of the role of Sufi orders (*tariqahs*) and their educational contributions, particularly in the context of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). The researcher traced the evolution of Sufi educational practices and their impact on character building, noting that the emphasis on spiritual purification and moral guidance has remained a core element of Sufi teaching throughout history. By contextualizing Sufism within the broader framework of Islamic educational traditions, the research was able to highlight the enduring relevance of Sufi values in modern education systems.

This qualitative research method, combining literature review and thematic

analysis, allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the topic. The study's findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection of Sufism and Islamic education, offering insights into how traditional spiritual practices can be integrated into contemporary educational models to address the ethical challenges of the modern world. Additionally, the use of descriptive analysis ensures that the research presents a balanced and nuanced view of the topic, drawing from a diverse range of sources to provide a well-rounded understanding of the issue.

In conclusion, this research method, based on qualitative data and descriptive analysis, was ideal for exploring the complexities of Sufism in modern Islamic education. By synthesizing the perspectives of various scholars and practitioners, the researcher was able to draw meaningful conclusions that underscore the importance of integrating Sufi principles into educational practices to foster holistic development in students. The findings of this study highlight the potential for Sufism to provide a much-needed spiritual and ethical framework in the face of modern educational challenges.

## RESULT

### **The Importance of Sufism in Islamic Education in the Modern Era**

Islamic education has always emphasized the spiritual and moral development of individuals. This objective remains as relevant today as it was in earlier times, although the modern era, marked by rapid technological advancement, poses new challenges to the spiritual health and ethical standards of society. Sufism, a mystical and spiritual dimension of Islam, provides essential tools for addressing these challenges within Islamic education.

Sufism, in its essence, seeks to cultivate spiritual virtues and refine the moral character of individuals. This tradition focuses on deepening the understanding of divine truths and purifying the soul through various practices, such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), meditation, and asceticism. Sufism's core values, which include qualities such as patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), contentment (*qana'ah*), and renunciation (*zuhud*), align well with the goals of Islamic education in the modern era. By incorporating these values into educational systems, institutions can counteract the materialistic tendencies of modern society and cultivate individuals who are not only academically competent but also spiritually and morally upright.

The modern world is characterized by a fast-paced, consumer-driven culture where individual success is often measured by material accumulation and external achievements. This shift has led to a crisis of values, with many individuals experiencing spiritual emptiness and a sense of disconnection from their religious and cultural roots. Sufism offers an antidote to this crisis by emphasizing inner transformation and a deep connection to God. It provides a framework for understanding the balance between material success and spiritual fulfillment, guiding individuals to recognize that true happiness lies in contentment with what Allah has provided, rather than in the endless pursuit of worldly pleasures.

### **The Role of Sufism in Shaping Character and Morality**

One of the key aspects of Islamic education is the cultivation of good



character (akhlaq). This is where Sufism plays a pivotal role, as it focuses on refining the heart and soul to align with the ethical teachings of Islam. The values and teachings of Sufism are not just abstract concepts but practical principles that can guide individuals in their daily lives.

**1. Contentment (Qana'ah):**

Contentment is one of the most important traits cultivated through Sufi practices. In a world where people are often dissatisfied with their material possessions or status, the Sufi principle of qana'ah encourages individuals to find peace and satisfaction in what they have. This quality can help reduce anxiety and the stress associated with the constant desire for more, thus contributing to the mental and emotional well-being of individuals. Moreover, it teaches a healthy approach to ambition, wherein one can work diligently and strive for success while also accepting the outcomes with gratitude and trust in Allah's wisdom.

**2. Renunciation (Zuhud):**

Zuhud, or asceticism, is another core principle of Sufism. It is not about completely rejecting the material world but rather about not being overly attached to it. Sufis teach that wealth, status, and other worldly pleasures should not distract an individual from the worship and remembrance of Allah. In a modern society that often glorifies wealth and consumption, the value of zuhud can serve as a reminder of the transient nature of worldly possessions and the importance of focusing on one's spiritual growth and duties.

**3. Patience (Sabr):**

Patience, or sabr, is a fundamental virtue in Islam that is also emphasized in Sufism. The teachings of Sufism help individuals to endure life's trials with grace and perseverance, without succumbing to despair or frustration. In the context of modern education, where students face various pressures and challenges, the ability to remain patient in the face of adversity is crucial. Sufism provides practical tools for developing this resilience, such as deep reflection, prayer, and meditation, which help individuals maintain a sense of calm and focus amidst the chaos of modern life.

**4. Gratitude (Shukr):**

Gratitude, or shukr, is closely linked to the concept of contentment in Sufism. A grateful heart is one that recognizes the blessings of Allah in every aspect of life, from the smallest favor to the greatest bounty. By cultivating a sense of gratitude, individuals become more aware of the positive aspects of their lives, leading to increased satisfaction and inner peace. In educational settings, this attitude can foster a sense of humility and appreciation for the opportunities and resources available to students, which can, in turn, improve their engagement and performance.

**Sufism as a Solution to the Crisis of Modern Education**

The modern era has brought about significant changes in the educational landscape, including the increasing influence of technology and the growing emphasis on scientific knowledge. While these advancements have undeniably benefited society, they have also contributed to the marginalization of spiritual and moral education. Many modern educational systems focus predominantly on intellectual development and practical skills, often neglecting the cultivation of character and ethics. This has led to a crisis of values, where students may excel

academically but struggle with personal and ethical challenges.

Sufism offers a solution to this crisis by integrating spiritual development into the educational process. By emphasizing the importance of inner growth alongside intellectual development, Sufism provides a holistic approach to education that nurtures both the mind and the soul. It teaches students to recognize that true knowledge is not just the accumulation of facts and information but the wisdom to use that knowledge in a way that benefits society and aligns with divine principles.

Incorporating Sufi practices into education can help students develop emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and a strong sense of purpose. These qualities are essential for navigating the complexities of modern life, where individuals are often faced with moral dilemmas and conflicting values. By grounding education in the timeless wisdom of Sufism, educators can help students become more than just well-informed individuals—they can become compassionate, ethical, and spiritually aware members of society.

### **Sufism in Practice: Implementing Sufi Values in Modern Educational Settings**

In order to implement the values of Sufism within modern educational systems, it is necessary to create an environment that encourages spiritual and moral growth. This can be achieved through various methods, such as integrating Sufi teachings into the curriculum, promoting spiritual practices such as *dhikr* and prayer, and fostering a culture of kindness, patience, and respect among students.

One approach to incorporating Sufism into education is through the teaching of Islamic ethics and character education. This can include lessons on the importance of virtues such as honesty, humility, and gratitude, which are central to Sufi teachings. Additionally, schools and universities can organize spiritual activities such as meditation sessions, prayer groups, and reflections on the Quran and Hadith, which allow students to deepen their connection to Allah and reflect on their spiritual journey.

Furthermore, educators can embody the values of Sufism in their own behavior, serving as role models for students. By demonstrating qualities such as patience, humility, and compassion, teachers can inspire students to adopt these virtues in their own lives. This approach not only improves the moral fabric of the educational environment but also helps students develop a deeper understanding of the spiritual dimensions of their education.

## **DISCUSSION**

The concept of *tasawuf*, or Sufism, has always been a crucial component of Islamic teachings, particularly in relation to the formation of character and moral conduct. In the modern era, characterized by rapid technological advancements and materialistic values, Sufism offers a spiritual framework that contrasts with the often shallow pursuit of worldly success. The integration of *tasawuf* into Islamic education serves as a remedy for the spiritual crises facing contemporary society, which often neglects the importance of inner purity, ethical conduct, and moral responsibility.

One of the critical discussions that emerge from this research revolves

around how Sufism addresses the challenges posed by modernity. The modern world is often defined by a focus on materialism and scientific rationality. These elements, while contributing to advancements in technology and society, can lead to an erosion of spiritual values. People today are often caught in the relentless pursuit of wealth, success, and fame, forgetting the deeper purpose of life: the worship of Allah and the cultivation of inner peace and moral integrity. Sufism, with its emphasis on purification of the soul, reminds individuals of their divine purpose and helps them resist the allure of materialism by focusing on qualities like patience, gratitude, and humility (Setiawan et al., 2019).

In particular, the values of *qana'ah* (contentment) and *zuhud* (renunciation of worldly pleasures) stand out as key virtues that help counterbalance the materialistic tendencies of modern society. As discussed in the document, the modern individual often struggles with dissatisfaction, constantly seeking more material possessions and achievements, which leads to anxiety and a sense of emptiness. Sufism teaches that true contentment comes from acknowledging that what one has is sufficient, and that peace can only be attained when one aligns their desires with divine will (Bahar Agus Setiawan et al., 2019). This approach not only provides spiritual fulfillment but also mitigates the psychological toll of constant comparison and competition that modern individuals face.

Furthermore, the concept of *zuhud* does not imply abandoning the material world but instead calls for a detachment from excessive attachment to wealth and possessions. In a world where wealth and status are often equated with success, Sufism offers a counter-narrative that prioritizes spiritual wealth over material gain. This shift in perspective is vital in a modern educational context where students are often pressured to achieve academically and materially. By teaching the value of *zuhud*, educators can help students develop a healthier approach to ambition, encouraging them to pursue their goals without sacrificing their moral and spiritual values (Samad, 2020).

Another essential aspect of Sufism's relevance in modern education is the role of patience (*sabr*) and gratitude (*shukr*). In an era defined by rapid change and constant challenges, the ability to remain patient and grateful is increasingly important. *Sabr* allows individuals to endure hardship and remain steadfast in the face of adversity, while *shukr* fosters an attitude of appreciation for the blessings one receives, whether large or small. These qualities help individuals maintain mental and emotional stability in the face of stress, which is a common issue in the modern world (Kurniawan, 2016). The integration of these Sufi principles into education can produce individuals who are not only academically competent but also emotionally resilient and spiritually balanced.

The contemporary educational system, especially in Islamic contexts, is grappling with significant challenges. There is a growing concern about the moral and ethical development of students, as many young people today exhibit behaviors that are detrimental to their own well-being and the community at large. These issues include a lack of respect for authority, indulgence in immoral activities, and a general disregard for spiritual values. By emphasizing the role of *tasawuf* in education, it is possible to address these issues effectively. Sufism offers a framework that fosters character building, guiding students to develop a deeper



understanding of their responsibilities as Muslims and as members of society. Through practices such as dhikr (remembrance of Allah), tawbah (repentance), and social engagement, students can learn to cultivate virtues that will benefit not only themselves but also the wider community (Setiawan et al., 2019).

Moreover, the role of Sufism in modern Islamic education extends beyond individual spiritual development. It also encompasses social and communal responsibilities. In a rapidly changing world, the sense of community is often lost, and individuals become more isolated. Sufism's teachings on unity, compassion, and mutual support offer a timely reminder of the importance of social cohesion. By incorporating these values into education, students can learn to prioritize collective well-being over individual gain, thus fostering a sense of responsibility toward their families, communities, and society at large (Munjiat, 2018).

Another critical point of discussion is the integration of tasawuf into contemporary educational frameworks. The document emphasizes the necessity of reforming traditional educational methods to incorporate spiritual dimensions. In the modern world, education is often seen as a means to acquire knowledge for practical purposes, such as securing employment and financial stability. However, this approach can leave individuals with a sense of spiritual emptiness. By integrating tasawuf, which emphasizes the development of character and the cultivation of inner virtues, educational institutions can help students achieve a more holistic form of success. This includes not only intellectual growth but also emotional and spiritual well-being (Munfarida, 2017).

Tasawuf, as the document suggests, must evolve with the times, adapting its teachings to address the specific challenges of modernity. While the core principles remain timeless, their application must be flexible enough to engage with contemporary social and cultural contexts. The fusion of traditional Sufi teachings with modern educational practices, including the incorporation of critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility, can result in a more comprehensive and transformative educational experience.

In conclusion, Sufism offers profound insights and practical solutions for the challenges faced by modern individuals, particularly in the realm of education. By focusing on the purification of the soul and the cultivation of virtues such as patience, gratitude, and humility, Sufism provides a counterbalance to the materialistic and often spiritually impoverished mindset of modern society. When integrated into educational systems, these teachings can foster a generation of individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also ethically grounded, emotionally resilient, and spiritually fulfilled. Thus, the role of tasawuf in modern Islamic education is not only relevant but essential for addressing the crises of the modern world.

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