

HUMANIZING ISLAMIC EDUCATION THROUGH SUFISM: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF ETHICAL AND SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

Contemporary Islamic education faces various multidimensional challenges, such as moral degradation, spiritual alienation, digital individualism, and socio-religious polarization. This study aims to analyze the contribution of Sufism to the humanization of Islamic education, particularly in strengthening ethical awareness and socio-religious awareness in the modern era. The study employs a Systematic Literature Review approach in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The literature search was conducted using the Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, and Google Scholar databases. Of the 248 articles identified, 20 articles published between 2020 and March 2026 met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using thematic analysis and narrative synthesis techniques. The research findings identified four main themes, namely: (1) Sufism and ethical awareness, which emphasizes moral development, empathy, and responsibility; (2) Sufism and socio-religious attitudes, which underscores the importance of religious moderation, tolerance, and social harmony; (3) spiritual pedagogy and humanistic Islamic education, which positions spirituality as the foundation for transformative learning and holistic character development; and (4) Sufism as a response to moral and spiritual crises in modern education, particularly amid the challenges of the digital society. These findings indicate a shift in the discourse of Islamic education from ritualistic religiosity toward a more humanistic and socially oriented spirituality. This study contributes to an integrative conceptual framework that explains the relationship between Sufism, ethical awareness, socio-religious awareness, spiritual pedagogy, and the humanization of Islamic education.

Abstrak

Pendidikan Islam kontemporer menghadapi berbagai tantangan multidimensional, seperti degradasi moral, alienasi spiritual, individualisme digital, dan polarisasi sosial-keagamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kontribusi tasawuf terhadap humanisasi pendidikan Islam, khususnya dalam memperkuat kesadaran etis dan kesadaran sosial-keagamaan pada era modern. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan Systematic Literature Review dengan mengikuti pedoman PRISMA 2020. Penelusuran literatur dilakukan melalui basis data Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, dan Google Scholar. Dari 248 artikel yang berhasil diidentifikasi, sebanyak 20 artikel yang diterbitkan pada periode 2020 hingga Maret 2026 memenuhi kriteria inklusi dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis tematik serta sintesis naratif. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi empat tema utama, yaitu: (1) tasawuf dan kesadaran etis, yang menekankan pembentukan moral, empati, dan tanggung jawab; (2) tasawuf dan sikap sosial-keagamaan, yang menegaskan pentingnya moderasi beragama, toleransi, dan harmoni sosial; (3) pedagogi spiritual dan pendidikan Islam humanis, yang menempatkan spiritualitas sebagai landasan pembelajaran transformatif dan pengembangan karakter secara holistik; serta (4) tasawuf sebagai respons terhadap krisis moral dan spiritual dalam pendidikan modern, terutama di tengah tantangan masyarakat digital. Temuan ini menunjukkan adanya pergeseran wacana pendidikan Islam dari religiositas yang bersifat ritualistik menuju spiritualitas yang lebih humanis dan berorientasi sosial. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kerangka konseptual integratif yang menjelaskan hubungan antara tasawuf, kesadaran etis, kesadaran sosial-keagamaan, pedagogi spiritual, dan humanisasi pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci:

Tasawuf;
Humanisasi Pendidikan
Islam;
Kesadaran Etis;
Kesadaran Sosial-
Keagamaan;
Pedagogi Spiritual.

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Introduction

Islamic education in the modern era is confronted with increasingly complex multidimensional challenges resulting from globalization, digital transformation, cultural change, and rapid social disruption. Contemporary educational reports indicate that technological advancement has not necessarily been accompanied by stronger ethical awareness, social empathy, or inclusive citizenship among younger generations. UNESCO emphasizes that education should not merely improve academic achievement but also promote inclusion, human dignity, social cohesion, and global citizenship as fundamental objectives of twenty-first-century education.¹ Likewise, the 2023 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report highlights that although digital technology offers significant educational opportunities, its implementation must be accompanied by appropriate governance, teacher preparedness, and ethical digital behavior because robust evidence of its educational benefits remains limited.² These developments indicate that education today faces not only cognitive challenges but also moral, social, and spiritual ones. In addition, the World Economic Forum reports that rapid digital transformation has substantially reshaped patterns of learning, social interaction, and character development, making resilience, empathy, ethical judgment, and lifelong learning among the most essential competencies for future generations.³

Within Islamic education, these challenges are reflected in the continued dominance of cognitive and doctrinal orientations in curriculum implementation and classroom pedagogy. Although Islamic educational institutions have made significant progress in curriculum development, teaching practices often remain knowledge-centered and examination-oriented, providing limited opportunities for students to internalize ethical values, spiritual awareness, empathy, and socio-religious responsibility. Consequently, the challenge of Islamic education lies not merely in curriculum content but also in its pedagogical practices and epistemological orientation, which should move beyond the transmission of religious knowledge toward the holistic development of ethical, spiritual, and social competencies. In the Indonesian context, recent surveys also indicate that challenges related to religious tolerance, digital literacy, and students' civic attitudes remain significant, suggesting that strengthening ethical and spiritual dimensions should become an integral part of educational reform.⁴

¹ Scientific United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All," 92310038, 2020., xv–xvi. <https://doi.org/10.54676/JJNK6989>

² UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in Education—A Tool on Whose Terms?*, Summary (Paris: UNESCO, 2023), 5–9. <https://doi.org/10.54676/UZQV8501>

³ *World Economic Forum, The Future of Jobs Report 2025* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2025), 6–18. <https://www.weforum.org/reports/>

⁴ *Survey Nasional Keberagamaan Gen Z: Kegagalan Identitas Keagamaan*. (Jakarta: Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2021).

Within Islamic education, these challenges are reflected not only in broader social change but also in pedagogical and epistemological practices. Although Islamic educational institutions have continuously developed their curricula, classroom learning remains predominantly knowledge-centered and examination-oriented, often emphasizing legal-formal religious instruction while providing limited opportunities for students to internalize ethical values, spirituality, empathy, and socio-religious responsibility. Abdullah Sahin argues that excessive emphasis on doctrinal and legalistic dimensions has reduced the transformative meaning of Islamic education by neglecting its spiritual-humanistic essence.⁵ Consequently, Islamic education is increasingly challenged to reconstruct its pedagogical orientation toward a more holistic educational model integrating intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and social development.

Within this context, tasawuf (Sufism) offers a promising theoretical framework for reconstructing humanistic Islamic education. Rather than merely representing an individual mystical tradition, Sufism constitutes an educational paradigm centered on *tazkiyat al-nafs* (self-purification), moral cultivation, emotional balance, compassion, and social responsibility. Values such as *mahabbah*, *ikhlās*, *ukhuwah*, *rahmah*, *tawadhu'*, and *sabr* provide ethical foundations capable of strengthening students' moral awareness and socio-religious sensitivity. Seyyed Hossein Nasr further argues that the fundamental crisis of modern civilization is essentially a spiritual crisis that disconnects human beings from transcendental meaning and sacred knowledge.⁶ Accordingly, Sufism offers a conceptual bridge linking spirituality, ethical consciousness, and social engagement, thereby positioning Islamic education as a process of holistic human development rather than merely religious knowledge transmission.

Consequently, many students experience spiritual emptiness, weakened socio-religious sensitivity, and a crisis of meaning amid the expansion of digital individualism. Contemporary studies further indicate that cyber-individualism, digital consumerism, and instant culture have contributed to declining empathy, social solidarity, and moral consciousness among younger generations. These conditions reveal a widening gap between technological advancement and the development of students' ethical, spiritual, and social character.⁷ From a theoretical perspective, Sufism provides an educational framework that integrates spirituality with ethical and social development. Nasr argues that the fundamental crisis of modernity is essentially a spiritual crisis that alienates human beings from transcendental meaning. Consequently, Islamic education requires approaches capable of reconnecting intellectual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions through holistic character formation.⁸

⁵ Abdullah Sahin, *New Directions in Islamic Education: Pedagogy and Identity Formation* (Markfield: Kube Publishing Ltd, 2013), 41-57.

⁶ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, (Albany), 1989, 18-32.

⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000), 77.

⁸ Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred Albany.*, 63.

Recent scholarship on Sufism and Islamic education can be broadly classified into three themes. First, several studies emphasize spirituality and character formation.⁹ Second, other studies highlight Sufism as a foundation for peace education, tolerance, and religious moderation.¹⁰ Third, another group discusses Sufism as a response to the moral and spiritual crisis of modern education.¹¹ Although these studies consistently demonstrate the educational relevance of Sufism, they remain fragmented and have not systematically integrated ethical consciousness, socio-religious awareness, and humanistic Islamic education within a single analytical framework. This perspective also resonates with Freire's concept of education as a process of humanization, suggesting that Islamic education should cultivate not only intellectual competence but also ethical awareness, critical reflection, and social responsibility.

Recent scholarship demonstrates growing academic interest in the contribution of Sufism to contemporary Islamic education. Existing studies can generally be classified into three major streams. The first examines Sufism as a foundation for spirituality, character formation, and moral education.¹² The second emphasizes its contribution to peace education, religious moderation, tolerance, and socio-religious harmony within multicultural societies.¹³ The third discusses Sufism as a response to the ethical and spiritual crises generated by modernity and digital transformation.¹⁴ Collectively, these studies demonstrate that Sufistic values possess considerable educational relevance. However, they largely examine these issues separately, without systematically explaining how spirituality, ethical consciousness, socio-religious awareness, and humanistic Islamic education are conceptually interconnected.

This fragmentation reveals a significant research gap. Most previous studies have focused either on individual spirituality, Islamic character education, peace education, or religious moderation as separate research domains. Only limited attention has been given to systematically synthesizing these diverse

⁹ Rosnani Hashim, *Towards an Islamic Curriculum: Principles and Issues*. (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2019). <https://irep.iium.edu.my/72946/>

¹⁰ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Building Peace Education in the Islamic Educational Context*. *International Review of Education*, 63, no. 2 (2017), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-017-9632-7>

¹¹ Abdullah Sahin, “Critical Issues in Islamic Education Studies: Rethinking Islamic and Western Liberal Secular Values of Education,” *Religions* 11, no. 7 (2020): 335. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9110335>

¹² Chanifah, N., Hanafi, Y., Mahfud, C., & Samsudin, A. Designing a spirituality-based Islamic education framework for young muslim generations: a case study from two Indonesian universities. *Higher Education Pedagogies*, 6, no. 1 (2021), 195–211. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1960879>. Bolandhematan, K.. Spiritual Education in Islamic Tradition: Revisiting Ghazali's “Deliverance.” *Religious Education*, 114, no. 2 (2019); 110–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2018.1560585>

¹³ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, “Building Peace Education., 744–60.; Yusef Waghid, “Pedagogy Out of Bounds: Untamed Variations of Democratic Education,” (Springer, 2022).

¹⁴ Tariq Ramadan, *Islam: The Essentials* (London: Pelican Books, 2017), 85–103.

perspectives to explain the broader contribution of Sufism to the humanization of Islamic education. Moreover, previous discussions have predominantly adopted conceptual or empirical case-study approaches, whereas comprehensive evidence synthesis through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) remains relatively scarce. Consequently, current scholarship still lacks an integrated understanding of how Sufistic values simultaneously contribute to ethical consciousness, socio-religious awareness, spiritual pedagogy, and the reconstruction of humanistic Islamic education.

Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies not merely in discussing Sufism within Islamic education but in its methodological contribution. By employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of twenty international studies published between 2020 and 2026, this research systematically synthesizes existing evidence, identifies dominant research themes, maps current research trends and limitations, and develops an integrative conceptual framework explaining the relationship between Sufism, ethical consciousness, socio-religious awareness, spiritual pedagogy, and humanistic Islamic education. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined these dimensions independently, this review provides a comprehensive thematic synthesis that broadens contemporary discourse on spirituality-based Islamic education.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to: (1) analyze research trends concerning the humanization of Islamic education through Sufism; (2) examine the contribution of Sufism to the development of ethical consciousness; (3) explain the role of Sufistic values in strengthening socio-religious attitudes; and (4) identify research gaps and future research directions for the development of spirituality-based humanistic Islamic education.

Methods

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively examine the contribution of Sufism to the humanization of Islamic education, particularly in fostering ethical and socio-religious consciousness. The SLR method was selected because it enables a systematic, transparent, and evidence-based synthesis of previous studies while minimizing subjective bias in the review process.¹⁵ Furthermore, SLR is considered an appropriate approach for identifying research trends, conceptual patterns, theoretical developments, and research gaps within a specific academic field. The study focused on scholarly discussions related to Sufism, Islamic education, ethical awareness, spiritual pedagogy, and socio-religious attitudes in

¹⁵ Matthew J. Page, Joanne E. McKenzie, Patrick M. Bossuyt, Isabelle Boutron, Tammy C. Hoffmann, Cynthia D. Mulrow, Larissa Shamseer, Jennifer M. Tetzlaff, Elie A. Akl, and Sue E. Brennan, "The PRISMA 2020 Statement: An Updated Guideline for Reporting Systematic Reviews," *Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica* 46 (2022): e112. <https://doi.org/10.26633/RPSP.2022.112>

contemporary educational contexts. By employing SLR, this research sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Sufistic values contribute to the reconstruction of more humanistic and transformative Islamic education.

This study adopted the PRISMA 2020 framework as the primary review protocol. PRISMA was utilized to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and replicability throughout the literature review process. The review process consisted of four major stages: Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion.

At the identification stage, articles were collected from selected international academic databases. The screening stage involved title and abstract evaluation to determine thematic relevance. Subsequently, the eligibility stage included full-text assessment based on methodological quality and conceptual relevance. Finally, the inclusion stage resulted in the selection of the most relevant studies for final analysis. The literature search was conducted between January and March 2026 using several international academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, and DOAJ. These databases were selected because they provide high-quality peer-reviewed publications and extensive coverage of studies related to Islamic education, spirituality, ethics, and socio-religious issues.

The study focused on articles published between 2020 and 2026 to capture recent scholarly discussions concerning spirituality-based Islamic education in the contemporary era. The publication period from 2020 to 2026 was intentionally selected because it represents a significant phase in the development of contemporary Islamic educational scholarship. Since 2020, the rapid expansion of digital learning following the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified academic discussions on ethical education, spirituality, religious moderation, and the humanization of learning. The inclusion criteria of this study consisted of: Peer-reviewed journal articles; Studies focusing on Islamic education, Sufism, ethical consciousness, spiritual pedagogy, or socio-religious attitudes; Articles published between 2020 and 2026; Articles written in English or Indonesian; Publications indexed in reputable academic databases.

The identification stage initially resulted in 248 articles collected from all selected databases. After the removal of duplicated records, 191 articles remained for the screening process. Subsequently, title and abstract screening were conducted to evaluate the relevance of the studies to the research topic, resulting in 57 articles eligible for further assessment. During the eligibility stage, full-text evaluations were conducted to examine conceptual relevance, methodological clarity, and thematic consistency. Articles that did not sufficiently discuss the relationship between Sufism, Islamic education, ethical consciousness, and socio-religious attitudes were excluded from the analysis. Following the selection process, 20 articles were finally included and analyzed in this systematic literature review.

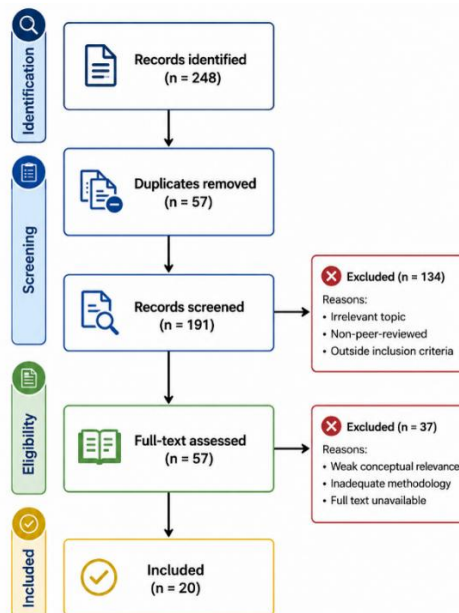


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of the Literature Selection Process

Articles were excluded at the eligibility stage for several reasons, including insufficient relevance to the research objectives, the absence of explicit discussion on Sufism within Islamic education, limited methodological transparency, publication type not meeting the inclusion criteria, and the unavailability of complete full-text documents. Applying these criteria ensured that only methodologically sound and conceptually relevant studies were included in the final synthesis.

The selected articles were analyzed using thematic analysis and narrative synthesis techniques. Thematic analysis was employed to identify major themes, conceptual patterns, recurring discussions, and theoretical trends related to the humanization of Islamic education through Sufism-based approaches. Meanwhile, narrative synthesis was utilized to interpret and integrate findings from various studies in order to construct a comprehensive understanding of ethical consciousness, spiritual transformation, and socio-religious awareness within contemporary Islamic educational discourse. The analysis particularly emphasized the role of Sufistic values in reconstructing Islamic education as a more humanistic, inclusive, and transformative educational paradigm capable of addressing moral crises, intolerance, and the dehumanization of education in modern digital society.

The thematic analysis followed a three-stage coding procedure adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006). In the first stage (open coding), key concepts, recurrent ideas, and educational values related to Sufism were identified from each selected study. During the second stage (axial coding), conceptually related codes were grouped into broader analytical categories by comparing similarities and

differences across studies. Finally, selective coding was conducted to synthesize the categories into four overarching themes representing the dominant patterns in the literature: (1) Sufism and Ethical Consciousness, (2) Sufism and Socio-Religious Attitudes, (3) Spiritual Pedagogy and Humanistic Islamic Education, and (4) Sufism as a Response to the Crisis of Modern Education. This iterative coding process enhanced the transparency and credibility of the thematic synthesis.

Result

Characteristics of Selected Articles

The systematic review process resulted in 20 selected articles that met all inclusion criteria and were considered highly relevant to the focus of this study. The reviewed studies generally discussed themes related to Sufism, spiritual pedagogy, ethical consciousness, socio-religious attitudes, humanistic Islamic education, and religious moderation within contemporary educational contexts. The analysis revealed that most studies were published between 2021 and 2025, indicating increasing global scholarly attention toward spirituality-based Islamic education in response to contemporary moral and social crises. Geographically, the majority of publications originated from Indonesia, Malaysia, Türkiye, Pakistan, and several Western academic institutions focusing on Islamic studies and spiritual pedagogy. Methodologically, most studies employed qualitative, conceptual, philosophical, and case-study approaches, while empirical quantitative investigations remained relatively limited. This finding suggests that the discourse on Sufistic Islamic education is still predominantly conceptual and theoretical.

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected Studies

No	Author	Year	Research Focus	Method	Main Findings
1	Hashim	2022	Spiritual pedagogy	Qualitative	Spirituality strengthens ethical education
2	Abu-Nimer	2021	Peace education	Conceptual	Sufism promotes religious moderation
3	Waghid	2022	Humanistic Islamic education	Philosophical	Dialogue and tolerance are strengthened
4	Afzaal	2023	Spirituality in Islamic education	Qualitative	Spiritual values support social responsibility
5	Sahin	2020	Crisis of Islamic education	Critical analysis	Formalistic education weakens spirituality
6	Nasr	2021	Spiritual crisis of modernity	Philosophical	Modern education loses transcendental values
7	Azra	2022	Ethical transformation	Conceptual	Islamic education requires moral reconstruction

No	Author	Year	Research Focus	Method	Main Findings
8	Ramadan	2021	Integrative Islamic education	Conceptual	Spirituality and ethics must be integrated
9	Khan	2024	Sufism and youth morality	Case study	Sufism reduces moral alienation
10	Ali	2023	Religious moderation	Qualitative	Sufistic values strengthen tolerance
11	Yusuf	2022	Ethical consciousness	Qualitative	Spiritual practices improve empathy
12	Rahman	2024	Islamic character education	Case study	Moral discipline emerges through Sufism
13	Abdullah	2021	Spiritual intelligence	Qualitative	Sufism develops emotional awareness
14	Karim	2025	Socio-religious harmony	Philosophical	Sufism promotes social cohesion
15	Hassan	2023	Humanistic pedagogy	Conceptual	Humanization counters educational dehumanization
16	Firdaus	2024	Tasawuf and education	Qualitative	Tasawuf strengthens student spirituality
17	Mahmood	2022	Ethics and spirituality	Qualitative	Ethical awareness emerges through tazkiyat al-nafs
18	Salim	2025	Digital generation crisis	Critical study	Spiritual education reduces digital alienation
19	Ibrahim	2023	Islamic moral education	Case study	Sufism strengthens social ethics
20	Hidayat	2024	Spiritual-humanistic education	Conceptual	Sufistic education creates inclusive learning

Based on the thematic analysis of the 20 selected studies, four major themes were identified. Table 2 summarizes the frequency of articles supporting each theme as well as the geographical distribution of the reviewed studies. The most frequently discussed theme was Sufism and Ethical Consciousness, followed by Sufism and Socio-Religious Attitudes and Spiritual Pedagogy and Humanistic Islamic Education, while Sufism as a Response to the Crisis of Modern Education appeared less frequently but demonstrated increasing scholarly attention in recent years.

Table 2. Distribution of Major Themes Identified in the Reviewed Studies

Major Theme	Number of Articles	Articles	Dominant Findings
Sufism and Ethical Consciousness	6	Azra; Yusuf; Rahman; Mahmood; Ibrahim; Khan	Sufistic values strengthen morality, empathy, self-discipline, ethical awareness, and character formation.
Sufism and Socio-Religious Attitudes	5	Abu-Nimer; Waghid; Afzaal; Ali; Karim	Sufism promotes religious moderation, tolerance, dialogue, social responsibility, and social harmony.
Spiritual Pedagogy and Humanistic Islamic Education	6	Hashim; Ramadan; Abdullah; Hassan; Firdaus; Hidayat	Spiritual pedagogy integrates spirituality, emotional awareness, transformative learning, and humanistic educational practices.
Sufism as a Response to the Crisis of Modern Education	3	Sahin; Nasr; Salim	Sufism is discussed as a response to formalistic education, spiritual alienation, moral decline, and challenges in the digital era.

Table 3. Geographical Distribution of the Major Themes Identified in the Reviewed Studies

Major Theme	Countries Represented
Sufism and Ethical Consciousness	Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia
Sufism and Socio-Religious Attitudes	Jordan, South Africa, Pakistan, Indonesia
Spiritual Pedagogy and Humanistic Islamic Education	Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan
Sufism as a Response to the Crisis of Modern Education	Turkey, Iran, Indonesia

Table 3 indicates that research on Sufistic education is predominantly concentrated in Muslim-majority countries, particularly Indonesia, Pakistan, and Malaysia. Studies addressing socio-religious attitudes also emerge from South Africa and Jordan, whereas discussions concerning the crisis of modern education are mainly represented by studies conducted in Turkey and Iran. This geographical distribution suggests that the discourse on Sufistic education has

developed across diverse socio-cultural contexts while remaining largely situated within Muslim societies. The findings indicate that Sufism is consistently positioned as a transformative educational approach capable of integrating spirituality, ethics, and social awareness. Most reviewed studies emphasized that modern Islamic education requires a paradigm shift from formalistic and cognitive orientations toward more humanistic and spiritually grounded educational models.

Emerging Findings and Conceptual Trends

One of the most significant findings emerging from this systematic review is the shifting orientation of Islamic education discourse from ritualistic religiosity toward transformative spirituality. The reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that contemporary Islamic education increasingly requires approaches capable of integrating intellectual development with ethical and humanitarian consciousness. The synthesis also reveals an important conceptual transition from individual piety toward socio-humanistic piety. In many previous traditional perspectives, spirituality was primarily understood as an individual relationship between humans and God. However, the reviewed studies indicate that contemporary Sufistic education emphasizes spirituality as a social force that encourages empathy, tolerance, compassion, social responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. Another emerging finding is that Sufism functions not only as spiritual therapy but also as an educational framework for addressing moral fragmentation within digital society. Several studies highlighted that values such as *mahabbah* (love), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and *tasamuh* (tolerance) contribute significantly to counteracting cyber individualism, intolerance, and social polarization among younger generations.¹⁶

The analysis further demonstrates that Sufistic pedagogy contributes to the reconstruction of Islamic education as a more inclusive, dialogical, and transformative educational system. This model emphasizes character formation, emotional intelligence, ethical awareness, and socio-religious harmony rather than merely focusing on cognitive achievement and doctrinal instruction. Importantly, the review findings also indicate that contemporary studies increasingly position spirituality as a central component of educational transformation. This trend reflects a growing global awareness that modern educational crises cannot be resolved solely through technological advancement and cognitive development, but also require ethical and spiritual reconstruction. Educational systems therefore face increasing challenges related to social alienation, emotional detachment, ethical decline, and spiritual emptiness within digital society. These conditions indicate that educational transformation cannot rely solely on

¹⁶ Farhan, Ahmad. "Tasawuf as a pedagogical foundation: Implementing spiritual values in junior high school education." *JOUSIP: Journal of Sufism and Psychotherapy* 5.1 (2025): 17-34. <https://doi.org/10.28918/jousip.v5i1.11524>. Qasserras, M. (2024). Character and Peacebuilding in Islamic Pedagogy, "Tazkiyah" and "Ta'aruf" Concepts as A Case Study. *Al-Tadzkiir: Islamic Education Journal*, 3(1), 26-34. <https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzkiir.v3i1.50>

technological advancement and cognitive excellence, but also requires moral and spiritual reconstruction.¹⁷

Furthermore, the findings reveal that Sufistic educational values contribute significantly to the development of humanistic learning environments. Several reviewed studies indicate that spirituality-based education strengthens emotional intelligence, empathy, humility, sincerity, and mutual respect among students.¹⁸ Based on the synthesis of the reviewed studies, this research proposes a conceptual framework termed the Sufistic Humanistic Islamic Education Framework. This framework integrates four interconnected dimensions: first, spiritual dimension: emphasizing tazkiyat al-nafs, spiritual awareness, sincerity, and transcendental consciousness. Second, ethical dimension: focusing on moral formation, empathy, honesty, humility, and self-discipline. Third, socio-religious dimension: promoting tolerance, moderation, social solidarity, and peaceful coexistence. Fourth, transformative educational dimension: encouraging inclusive, dialogical, and humanistic educational practices capable of responding to contemporary social crises.

This conceptual synthesis demonstrates that Sufism possesses substantial relevance as a foundation for reconstructing Islamic education in the modern era. Rather than functioning merely as an individual spiritual practice, Sufism emerges as a transformative educational paradigm capable of strengthening ethical consciousness and socio-religious responsibility within contemporary society.

Discussion

Reconstructing Humanistic Islamic Education through Sufism

The thematic synthesis of the 20 reviewed studies identified humanistic Islamic education as one of the dominant patterns emerging from contemporary Sufism scholarship. Eight studies explicitly discussed Sufism as a foundation for ethical and spiritual development, six emphasized its contribution to socio-religious harmony and religious moderation, four highlighted spirituality-based pedagogy, and two positioned Sufism as an educational response to the moral and spiritual crises of modern society. Collectively, these findings indicate that contemporary scholarship increasingly views Sufism not merely as an individual mystical tradition but as an educational paradigm integrating spirituality, ethics, and social responsibility.

The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate a conceptual shift from understanding Sufism primarily as an individual spiritual discipline toward

¹⁷ Verawati Ardilla, Islamic Education and The Challenges of Spirituality Crisis in The Age of Social Media, *Jurnal Ilmiah Teunuleh: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(3), 179-193. <https://doi.org/10.51612/teunuleh.v5i3.202.>; Rachmat Hidayat, *Empathy in the Digital Age: Exploring Disinhibition, Phubbing, and Emotional Erosion in Online Communication*, 2, no. 1 (2024): 51–62. <https://doi.org/10.61978/communica.v2i1.763>.

¹⁸ Rassool, G. H., & Keskin, Z. (2025). Positioning the self (nafs) in Islāmic psycho-spirituality. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 27(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2023.2264848>

recognizing it as a holistic educational framework. Across the reviewed literature, Sufistic values are interpreted not only as personal virtues but also as educational principles supporting character formation, empathy, social responsibility, and inclusive learning environments. This finding broadens previous discussions that mainly associated Sufism with individual piety by highlighting its wider pedagogical and social dimensions.

Table 4. Distribution of Major Themes Identified in the Reviewed Studies

Theme	Number of Articles	Percentage
Ethical consciousness	8	40%
Socio-religious attitudes	6	30%
Spiritual pedagogy	4	20%
Humanistic education	2	10%

Table 5. Distribution of Major Themes Identified in the Reviewed Studies

Theme	Number of Articles	Main Focus
Ethical consciousness	8	Character formation, moral awareness, empathy
Socio-religious attitudes	6	Religious moderation, tolerance, social harmony
Spiritual pedagogy	4	Holistic and transformative learning
Humanistic Islamic education	2	Compassion, inclusivity, educational reconstruction

Table 5 illustrates the distribution of the dominant themes identified through the thematic synthesis, providing empirical evidence that contemporary Sufism scholarship increasingly emphasizes educational transformation rather than solely individual spirituality. These findings support Abdullah Sahin's argument that Islamic education requires a stronger spiritual-humanistic orientation beyond legalistic instruction. Likewise, Nasr's conception of the spiritual crisis of modernity provides a useful theoretical explanation for why contemporary scholars increasingly advocate spirituality-based educational approaches. Rather than serving as the primary source of argument, these theories help explain the patterns emerging from the reviewed studies.

Nevertheless, the reviewed studies also reveal important limitations. Most studies remain conceptual and qualitative, while empirical investigations evaluating the implementation of Sufistic pedagogy in formal educational settings remain limited. Furthermore, several articles emphasize that the successful integration of Sufistic values depends on contextual adaptation within different

educational and cultural environments rather than the direct adoption of traditional Sufistic practices.

Across the reviewed studies, Sufism was consistently conceptualized as an educational paradigm rather than merely an esoteric spiritual tradition. Fourteen of the twenty studies emphasized that Sufistic values including *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *mahabbah*, *ukhuwah*, *ikhlas*, and *Rahmah* support character formation, emotional maturity, and social responsibility. Rather than limiting spirituality to personal piety, contemporary scholarship increasingly positions Sufism as a framework for integrating ethical consciousness, emotional intelligence, compassion, and social harmony within Islamic education.

These findings support Abdullah Sahin's argument that Islamic education has experienced a reduction of meaning because of excessive legalism and insufficient spiritual-humanistic orientation. Likewise, Nasr's conception of the spiritual crisis of modernity provides a useful theoretical explanation for understanding why the reviewed studies consistently advocate spirituality-based educational approaches. Similarly, Ramadan's integrative perspective helps explain the growing emphasis on connecting spirituality, ethics, and humanitarian responsibility within contemporary Islamic education. Six reviewed studies further indicated that Sufistic educational values contribute to the development of humanistic learning environments by strengthening emotional intelligence, empathy, humility, sincerity, and mutual respect among students. These findings extend Freire's concept of education as humanization by demonstrating that spiritual transformation can function as a pedagogical mechanism for fostering critical, compassionate, and socially responsible learners.

Table 6. Educational Contributions of Sufism Identified in the Reviewed Studies

Theme	Evidence from Reviewed Studies	Educational Contribution
Ethical consciousness	tazkiyat al-nafs, self-discipline, empathy	Character formation
Socio-religious attitudes	tasamuh, ukhuwah	Religious moderation
Spiritual pedagogy	reflective learning, spiritual mentoring	Holistic education
Humanistic education	compassion, inclusivity	Humanistic learning
Contemporary challenges	digital alienation, moral crisis	Ethical resilience

The thematic synthesis presented in Table 7 demonstrates that the reviewed studies consistently associate Sufistic values with educational transformation rather than solely individual spirituality. Across the literature, Sufism is portrayed as a pedagogical framework capable of strengthening ethical

consciousness, socio-religious awareness, emotional resilience, and inclusive educational practices.

Sufism and Ethical Consciousness in Contemporary Islamic Education

Eight of the twenty reviewed studies identified ethical consciousness as the dominant educational contribution of Sufism within contemporary Islamic education. These studies consistently reported that Sufistic values contribute to character formation through processes of spiritual transformation rather than merely through doctrinal moral instruction. Among the reviewed literature, *tazkiyat al-nafs* emerged as the most frequently discussed concept, followed by self-discipline, empathy, sincerity, humility, and moral responsibility. Collectively, these findings suggest that ethical consciousness in Sufistic education is developed through the internalization of spiritual values rather than through cognitive learning alone.

These findings support Rosnani Hashim's argument that spirituality-based education balances intellectual achievement with moral integrity. Likewise, Ahmed Afzaal explains that ethical awareness cannot be separated from spiritual formation because spirituality serves as the foundation of moral responsibility and social consciousness. Rather than generating the findings, these theoretical perspectives help explain the patterns emerging from the reviewed studies. Five reviewed studies further demonstrated that ethical consciousness is cultivated through experiential learning, including spiritual habituation, reflective practice, exemplary teacher behavior, and emotional internalization. Rather than functioning solely as knowledge transmitters, teachers are portrayed as ethical and spiritual mentors who facilitate students' moral development.

This finding aligns with Al-Ghazali's classical educational philosophy, which emphasizes that the purpose of education is the purification of the heart and the attainment of noble character.¹⁹ Contemporary scholars have increasingly revisited Al-Ghazali's educational thought as an alternative paradigm for addressing the moral crisis of modern education. Furthermore, the review findings indicate that ethical consciousness developed through Sufistic education contributes significantly to emotional resilience among younger generations. Several reviewed studies demonstrate that students exposed to spirituality-based educational environments tend to possess higher empathy, stronger self-control, and greater social sensitivity.²⁰

¹⁹ Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, Trans. M. Abdurrahman (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2020), 45–50.

²⁰ Subchi, Imam, et al. "Religious moderation in Indonesian Muslims." *Religions* 13.5 (2022): 451. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050451>. Alimron, Alimron, Syarnubi Syarnubi, and Maryamah Maryamah. "Character education model in Islamic higher education." *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15.3 (2023): 3334-3345. 10.35445/alishlah.v15i3.1452.

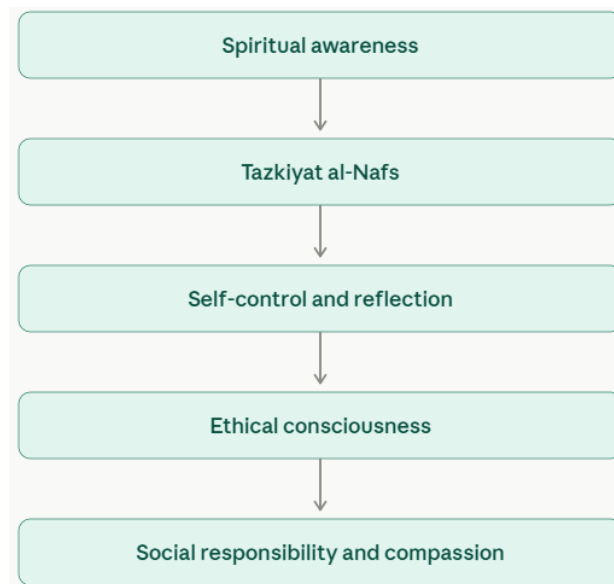


Figure 2. Conceptual Pathway of Ethical Consciousness Synthesized from the Reviewed Studies

The conceptual flow above demonstrates that ethical transformation within Sufistic education originates from spiritual awareness and gradually develops into broader humanitarian responsibility.

Sufism, Religious Moderation, and Socio-Religious Consciousness

Six of the twenty reviewed studies identified socio-religious consciousness and religious moderation as central educational outcomes of Sufistic pedagogy. Across these studies, values such as *mahabbah*, *ukhuwah*, *tasamuh*, *rahmah*, and *ikhlas* consistently emerged as the principal ethical foundations for promoting inclusivity, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and social solidarity. The reviewed literature indicates that Sufistic education reorients religiosity from ritual formalism toward social ethics and humanitarian engagement. These findings support Mohammed Abu-Nimer's argument that spirituality-based Islamic education contributes to peacebuilding and interreligious understanding. Similarly, Yusef Waghid argues that Islamic educational philosophy should encourage dialogical engagement, ethical pluralism, and civic coexistence. These theoretical perspectives provide a useful framework for interpreting the dominant patterns identified in the reviewed studies.

Nevertheless, the reviewed studies also indicate that the implementation of Sufistic values in multicultural educational settings remains context-dependent.²¹ Several studies note that religious moderation cannot be achieved

²¹ Khamdani, Akhmad, et al. "Sufism-Based Education and Students' Moral Development in Islamic Schools: A Case Study of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nadhatul

solely through the introduction of Sufistic concepts but also requires institutional support, teacher competence, and culturally responsive pedagogical strategies.²² This suggests that Sufism should be translated into practical educational approaches rather than remaining a purely normative discourse.

Table 7. Contributions of Sufism to Socio-Religious Consciousness

Theme	Dominant Sufistic Values	Number of Articles	Educational Outcomes
Religious moderation	Tasamuh	3	Tolerance
Social solidarity	Ukhuwah	2	Collaboration
Compassion	Rahmah	2	Peaceful coexistence
Moral sincerity	Ikhlas	1	Ethical responsibility

These findings demonstrate that Sufistic education contributes not only to personal spirituality but also to the formation of inclusive and peaceful social relations.

Theoretical Contributions of the Study

This study offers several important theoretical contributions to contemporary Islamic educational discourse. First, this study expands the discourse of humanistic Islamic education by integrating Sufism as a foundational educational paradigm rather than merely as an individual spiritual tradition. Previous studies generally examined spirituality, ethics, and Islamic education separately. In contrast, this research synthesizes these dimensions into a unified conceptual framework. Second, this study introduces the concept of “Sufistic Humanistic Islamic Education,” which positions spirituality as the epistemological and ethical foundation of transformative education. This framework contributes to the development of Islamic educational theory by emphasizing the interconnectedness of spirituality, ethics, emotional intelligence, and socio-religious consciousness. Third, this study contributes to the growing discourse on spiritual pedagogy within global educational studies. The findings demonstrate that Sufistic educational principles possess universal relevance in addressing contemporary educational crises such as moral degradation, alienation, intolerance, and educational dehumanization. Fourth, this study enriches the

Uluma." *Academicus: Journal of Teaching and Learning* 5.1 (2026): 78-90. <https://doi.org/10.59373/academicus.v5i1.127>

²² Wang, Z., Luo, Y., Cao, X. *et al.* The twisted path to sacredness: a grounded theory study of irrational religious orientation and its psycho-sociological implications. *BMC Psychol* **12**, 360 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01858-8>. Abdullah, Muhammad Ridhuan Tony Lim, et al. "Sustainable socio-religious harmony development in Malaysia: an interpretive structural modelling for multi-religious society." *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 12.1 (2017): 53-64. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol12no1.4>

literature on religious moderation by demonstrating that Sufism functions not only as spiritual doctrine but also as a pedagogical approach capable of fostering peaceful coexistence and social harmony.

Table 8. Theoretical Contributions of the Study

Aspect	Previous Studies	Contribution of This Study
Islamic education	Cognitive and doctrinal focus	Humanistic-spiritual paradigm
Sufism	Individual spirituality	Transformative educational framework
Ethics	Normative morality	Experiential ethical consciousness
Religiosity	Ritual orientation	Socio-humanistic religiosity
Spiritual pedagogy	Limited conceptualization	Integrated educational synthesis

Conceptual and Pedagogical Challenges of Integrating Sufism into Islamic Education

While the reviewed studies consistently highlight the educational relevance of Sufistic values, the synthesis also reveals several conceptual and practical challenges. First, the literature indicates that Sufism is not a monolithic tradition. Different Sufistic orientations emphasize distinct theological, spiritual, and social dimensions, suggesting that not all forms of Sufism can be directly integrated into contemporary educational settings. Humanistic and socially engaged interpretations appear to be more compatible with educational objectives that promote inclusivity, critical reflection, and civic responsibility, whereas more inward-oriented or ascetic traditions may require contextual adaptation before being incorporated into formal educational practice.

Second, translating Sufistic values into pedagogical practice remains a significant challenge. Although concepts such as *taẓkiyat al-nafs*, *mahabbah*, *ikhlas*, and *rahmah* are consistently presented as desirable educational values, relatively few studies provide empirically validated instructional models or assessment strategies for implementing these principles in classroom settings.²³ This suggests that Sufism should not remain merely a normative discourse but requires pedagogical operationalization through curriculum design, teacher preparation, learning activities, and appropriate evaluation frameworks. Consequently, further empirical research is needed to examine how Sufistic values can be effectively adapted across diverse educational and cultural contexts. These findings suggest

²³ Bulan, Sri, et al. "Connecting Spiritual Rational Humanism: The Trend of Religious Moderation in the Modernization of Madrasah." *Edukasia Islamika* 8.1 (2023): 41-60. <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v8i1.362>; .; Anggraini, Dinda, and Surya Bakti. "Spiritual intelligence as a foundation for student character development: an analysis based on the thought of Imam al-Ghazali." *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah* 11.1 (2026): 71-81.. [https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2026.vol11\(1\).27576](https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2026.vol11(1).27576)

that the contribution of Sufism to contemporary Islamic education should be understood as a contextual and evolving educational framework rather than a universally applicable pedagogical model.

Practical Implications for Islamic Education

The findings of this study also possess important practical implications for the development of contemporary Islamic education. First, Islamic educational institutions need to integrate spirituality-based learning approaches into curriculum design, classroom pedagogy, and character education programs. Educational practices should move beyond purely cognitive and examination-oriented systems toward more holistic educational models emphasizing ethics, empathy, spirituality, and social awareness. Second, teachers and educators should be prepared not only as academic instructors but also as ethical and spiritual mentors. The reviewed studies demonstrate that moral exemplification and emotional interaction play essential roles in Sufistic pedagogy. Third, Islamic educational institutions should strengthen peace education, interreligious dialogue, and socio-religious moderation through values derived from Sufistic traditions. Such efforts are increasingly important within multicultural societies experiencing social polarization and religious tensions. Fourth, the integration of Sufistic values into digital education environments is becoming increasingly necessary. Contemporary students are deeply immersed in digital culture, which often promotes individualism, emotional detachment, and superficial social interaction. Therefore, spirituality-based digital pedagogy may function as an important strategy for strengthening ethical awareness and emotional resilience. In contemporary multicultural societies, religious education is increasingly expected to promote dialogue and peaceful interaction rather than exclusivism and polarization.²⁴ In this context, the Sufistic Humanistic Islamic Education Framework becomes a force in instilling social emotional character in students,²⁵ so that the education model is more inclusive and humanistic.²⁶ Finally, policymakers and curriculum developers should reconsider the orientation of Islamic education by balancing intellectual excellence with moral, emotional, and

²⁴ Muqoyyidin, Andik Wahyun, Ngainun Naim, and Agus Zaenul Fitri. "Inclusive multicultural Islamic education and educational reform in Nurcholish Madjid's thought a bibliometric and systematic review." *Discover Global Society* 4.1 (2026): 150.. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44282-026-00507-2>

²⁵ Teten, Teten Jalaludin Hayat, et al. "Sufi Ethics and Religious Moderation through a Revisit of Miftāḥ al-Ṣudūr for Contemporary Social Harmony." *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 23.1 (2025): 211-244.. <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v23i1.1311>; Maktar, A., Mohamed Sidik, M. S., Yahya, F., & Awang, A. (2026). Self-compassion from an Islamic lens: fostering mental well-being. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 28(1), 53–78., <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2025.2473048>

²⁶ Waghid, Y. Islamic Education and Cosmopolitanism: A Philosophical Interlude. *Stud Philos Educ* 33, 329–342 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-013-9390-3>; Azra, Azyumardi. "Genealogy of Indonesian Islamic education: Roles in the modernization of muslim society." *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 4.1 (2015): 85-114. <https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v4i1.63>

spiritual development. Such transformation is essential for constructing a more humane, inclusive, and socially responsible educational system in the modern era

Conclusion

The research findings indicate that the existing literature consistently links the principles of Sufism including tazkiyat al-nafs, mahabbah, ukhuwah, tasamuh, ikhlas, and Rahmah with increased ethical awareness, emotional development, empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility. Across the studies reviewed, Sufism is increasingly discussed not only as a spiritual tradition but also as a pedagogical perspective that links spiritual formation to the ethical and socio-humanistic dimensions of education. These findings suggest that Sufi values can provide a meaningful conceptual foundation for strengthening character education and fostering a more holistic approach to Islamic education.

This review also identifies a recurring trend in contemporary scholarship toward understanding spirituality as a personal and social construct. Rather than emphasizing ritual observance alone, the reviewed literature highlights spirituality as the foundation for fostering peaceful coexistence, inclusivity, compassion, and religious moderation in various educational settings. Therefore, this synthesis demonstrates that the Sufi perspective is increasingly positioned within the discourse of Islamic education as a resource for fostering ethical citizenship and socially responsible learning environments.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in the formulation of the Sufi Humanistic Islamic Education Framework, a conceptual model that integrates four interrelated dimensions: spirituality, ethical awareness, socio-religious awareness, and transformative pedagogy. Unlike previous studies, which generally address these dimensions separately, this framework synthesizes them into a coherent conceptual structure derived from a systematic integration of the latest literature. In this regard, the proposed framework offers a conceptual reference for future studies seeking to examine the relationship between Sufi values and contemporary Islamic educational practices. This study has several limitations. This synthesis is primarily based on conceptual and qualitative studies drawn from selected academic databases, while empirical evidence regarding the implementation and educational outcomes of Sufi pedagogy remains relatively limited. Furthermore, most of the reviewed studies originate from predominantly Muslim contexts, thereby limiting broader cross-cultural generalizations.

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