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Islamic Spirituality in Everyday Life among Young Muslims: Morality, Divine Love, and Self-Awareness from a Sufi Perspective

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Abstract

This study examines Islamic spirituality in the everyday lives of Muslim youth by focusing on the interrelationship between akhlāq (moral conduct), maḥabbah (divine love), and self-awareness (murāqabah/muḥāsabah) within a Sufi perspective. The research is grounded in an epistemological tension between normative-textual approaches and lived religion, particularly in the context of modernity and digital transformation, which have reshaped patterns of religiosity among young Muslims. Using a qualitative approach with an interpretive ethnographic design, this study involves 20–25 participants selected purposively from university settings and digital religious communities. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and digital documentation, and analyzed using a thematic-reflective model. The findings reveal that Islamic spirituality among Muslim youth is not declining but undergoing fragmentation and reconfiguration. Akhlāq is often expressed in both substantive and performative forms influenced by digital visibility; maḥabbah emerges as a strong affective dimension but tends to be episodic; while self-awareness functions as the most stable and integrative mechanism that aligns ethical behavior with spiritual intentionality. These findings indicate a shift from integrated spirituality toward a more "modular" and disembodied form of religiosity. Theoretically, this study proposes the concept of embodied Sufi spirituality, which integrates tasawuf with Islamic anthropology by emphasizing spirituality as a lived,

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reflective, and practice-oriented process. This framework contributes to the development of a more contextual and practice-based approach to Qur'anic ethics and maqāṣidī tafsir. The study concludes that strengthening self-awareness is essential for reintegrating fragmented spiritual dimensions and fostering moral coherence among Muslim youth in the digital era.

Penelitian ini mengkaji spiritualitas Islam dalam kehidupan sehari-hari Muslim muda dengan menitikberatkan pada keterkaitan antara akhlāq (moralitas), maḥabbah (cinta ilahi), dan kesadaran diri (murāqabah/muḥāsabah) dalam perspektif tasawuf. Kajian ini berangkat dari ketegangan epistemologis antara pendekatan normatif-tekstual dan lived religion, khususnya dalam konteks modernitas dan transformasi digital yang telah membentuk ulang pola keberagamaan generasi muda. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain etnografi interpretatif, melibatkan 20–25 partisipan yang dipilih secara purposif dari lingkungan kampus dan komunitas keagamaan berbasis digital. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, serta dokumentasi digital, dan dianalisis menggunakan model tematik-reflektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa spiritualitas Islam di kalangan Muslim muda tidak mengalami kemunduran, tetapi mengalami fragmentasi dan rekonfigurasi. Akhlāq diekspresikan dalam bentuk substantif sekaligus performatif yang dipengaruhi oleh visibilitas digital; maḥabbah muncul sebagai dimensi afektif yang kuat namun cenderung episodik; sementara kesadaran diri menjadi dimensi paling stabil yang berfungsi sebagai mekanisme integratif antara perilaku etis dan kesadaran spiritual. Temuan ini mengindikasikan adanya pergeseran dari spiritualitas yang terintegrasi menuju bentuk religiositas yang lebih modular dan terfragmentasi. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini menawarkan konsep embodied Sufi spirituality, yaitu integrasi antara tasawuf dan antropologi Islam yang menekankan spiritualitas sebagai praktik yang dihidupi, reflektif, dan kontekstual. Kerangka ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian etika al-Qur'an dan tafsir maqāṣidī yang lebih praksis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan kesadaran diri menjadi kunci dalam mereintegrasikan dimensi spiritual yang terfragmentasi serta dalam membangun koherensi moral di kalangan Muslim muda di era digital.

Keywords: *Islamic Morality; Divine Love; Self-Awareness; Sufism; Islamic Law; Socio-Legal Studies.*

Introduction

The discussion of Islamic spirituality in the everyday lives of contemporary Muslim youth is situated within an epistemological tension between normative-textual approaches and the lived religion perspective that emphasizes practical experience. (Massoud & Moore, 2020, p. 796; Wasik et al., 2024)On the one hand, classical exegetical traditions and Islamic legal thought tend to position morality as a derivative of text-based normative commands, as reflected in the framework of Sharīʿah ethics that prioritizes obedience (ṭāʿah) and legal formalism(Ibrahim et al., 2024, p. 42; Jatmiko et al., 2023, p. 118). On the other hand, contemporary approaches in religious studies—particularly within Islamic anthropology—shift the focus toward the dimension of embodied Islamic knowledge, where spirituality is understood not merely as doctrine but as something lived, negotiated, and manifested in everyday practice(Larsen, 2021; Schaeublin, 2017; Yondrizal & Julhadi,

2025). In this context, the Sufi tradition offers an alternative framework that emphasizes inward dimensions such as maḥabbah (divine love), murāqabah (awareness of God's presence), and tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul), all of which are inherently practical and reflective.

However, the development of modernity and digitalization has reshaped the religious landscape among Muslim youth. Phenomena such as the rise of symbolic religiosity on social media, the commodification of religious identity, and the emergence of the "spiritual but not religious" trend indicate a shift in orientation from spiritual depth toward performative expression(Abdullah et al., 2024, p. 3; Luthfia & Yanuri, 2025; Murryam & Asad, 2024; Toyyib et al., 2026). This gives rise to a noticeable gap between the intensification of Islamic expression in visual and rhetorical forms and the depth of internal, reflective spiritual experience. Many young Muslims actively participate in religious practices, yet these are not always accompanied by deep internalization of moral values and divine consciousness(Murryam & Asad, 2024; Sulaeman et al., 2024). This condition reflects a disjunction between outward piety and inward spirituality.

A number of previous studies have attempted to bridge this tension, yet a significant research gap remains. Studies within the sociology of religion tend to focus on patterns of religious behavior and identity formation without deeply exploring affective and spiritual consciousness(Herzog & Beadle, 2018; Pearce et al., 2017, p. 379; Poll & Smith, 2003, p. 140; Wright et al., 2018, p. 2625). Meanwhile, studies on Sufism often remain at a conceptual-normative level, without adequately connecting these concepts to the lived realities of contemporary Muslim youth shaped by digital dynamics, popular culture, and the pressures of modernity(Azzahra et al., 2026; Mulya et al., 2021, p. 73; Sodik & Sujibto, 2023, p. 4; Waliyuddin, 2024; Wijaya et al., 2025). Even within Qur'anic ethics studies, greater attention is often given to the normative construction of ethics rather than to how these ethical values are internalized and lived as existential consciousness(Anggraini & Kamil, 2026; Klaina & Kmichou, 2025; Muwahidah & Waro, 2025; Ulya et al., 2025). Thus, there remains a critical gap in integrating the Sufi perspective with the lived Islam approach to understand how morality, divine love, and self-awareness are practiced in the everyday lives of Muslim youth.

Based on this background, this study aims to reconstruct the understanding of Islamic spirituality in the everyday lives of Muslim youth by focusing on three key dimensions: morality (akhlāq), divine love (maḥabbah), and self-awareness (murāqabah). This research not only seeks to identify emerging forms of spiritual practice but also to analyze how these values are negotiated within complex social, cultural, and digital contexts.Theoretically, this study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates Sufism with Islamic anthropology through the concept of "embodied Sufi spirituality." This framework asserts that spirituality is not merely a system of believed values but a lived practice expressed through the body, emotions,

and reflective consciousness in everyday life. Accordingly, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a more practice-oriented maqāṣidī tafsir, enrich the discourse of Qur'anic ethics with affective and existential dimensions, and open new avenues for understanding the dynamics of Islamic spirituality in the contemporary era, particularly among Muslim youth.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an interpretive ethnographic design to capture the practices of Islamic spirituality in the everyday lives of Muslim youth. The research sites were selected purposively across two primary contexts: university environments and digitally based religious communities (such as online study circles and popular daʿwah accounts on social media)(Himam et al., 2025; Sulaeman et al., 2024). Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, based on the following criteria: Muslims aged 18–30, actively engaged in religious practices (both offline and online), and involved in activities that represent spiritual expression (such as Sufi-oriented study sessions, reflective religious content, or practices of dhikr and self-reflection(Trimulyaningsih et al., 2024, p. 3)). The number of participants ranged from 20 to 25 in order to ensure depth and richness of data(Knox et al., 2005, p. 296). Data collection techniques included participant observation conducted over approximately three months, in-depth semi-structured interviews (60–90 minutes per participant), and documentation in the form of field notes and digital archives (such as social media posts, captions, and relevant comments).

Data analysis was conducted in a staged manner using a thematic-reflective model consisting of three phases: open coding to identify initial themes (such as practical morality, experiences of divine love, and self-awareness), axial coding to establish relationships among themes within the framework of lived spirituality, and selective coding to construct a coherent conceptual narrative(Jordan, 2022, p. 107). Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (interviews, observations, and digital documents), member checking, and peer debriefing(Breland-Noble et al., 2015, p. 334). The entire analytical process was guided by a Sufi conceptual framework—particularly the concepts of maḥabbah, murāqabah, and tazkiyat al-nafs—integrated with an Islamic anthropological approach (embodied Islamic knowledge) in order to produce interpretations that are both contextually grounded and reflexive.

Result and Discussion

Islamic Spirituality in Modern Contexts: Lived Islam and Digital Transformation

The literature on Islamic spirituality among Muslim youth has increasingly shifted from normative-theological discussions toward an emphasis on lived experience(Abitolkha et al., 2025; Himam et al., 2025; Mashudi & Hilman, 2024). A

central academic debate concerns whether modernity and digital culture have weakened spirituality or transformed it into new adaptive forms(Abdullah et al., 2024, p. 3; Abitolkha et al., 2025). Earlier perspectives often viewed modernization as a force of secularization that marginalizes religious depth(Lazzarino & Papadopoulos, 2023, p. 258). However, more recent studies in Islamic anthropology and sociology of religion argue that spirituality is not disappearing but being reconfigured within everyday life.

Within the framework of lived Islam, religiosity is understood as embedded in daily practices, emotional experiences, and social interactions rather than confined to doctrinal adherence. Studies on Muslim youth demonstrate that religious meaning is constructed through peer networks, urban culture, and informal learning environments(Kapinga & Hoven, 2020; Massoud & Moore, 2020, p. 797). This perspective challenges rigid distinctions between religious and secular domains by showing how Islamic values are negotiated in diverse life-worlds. It also introduces an important analytical shift toward embodiment, where religious knowledge is not merely cognitive but enacted through habitual and socially situated practices.

The emergence of digital Islam further complicates this landscape. Online platforms have expanded access to religious knowledge and created new forms of engagement, such as virtual Qur'anic recitations, online dhikr gatherings, and influencer-driven Islamic content. These developments democratize religious authority and allow youth to navigate multiple interpretations of Islam. At the same time, critical scholarship highlights the risks of commodification, fragmentation, and performative religiosity shaped by visibility and algorithmic logic(Bunt, 2024; Himam, 2025). Spirituality in digital spaces thus oscillates between accessibility and superficiality, offering both opportunities for engagement and challenges for depth and authenticity (Islamic Spirituality and Muslim Youth in Modern Digital Life, 2024).

Tasawuf as an Ethical-Spiritual Framework: Akhlāq, Maḥabbah, and Self-Awareness

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, tasawuf provides a comprehensive framework for understanding spirituality as an integration of ethical conduct, emotional experience, and inner consciousness(Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024, p. 333; Mannopov et al., 2025). Classical scholars have articulated these dimensions through interconnected concepts that remain highly relevant for contemporary analysis. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali emphasizes tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul) as the foundation of ethical life, where akhlāq becomes the outward manifestation of inner transformation(Al-Daghistani, 2024, p. 35; Shidiq et al., 2025; Syaffutra et al., 2025). In this view, spirituality is inseparable from moral discipline, as ethical behavior reflects the state of the heart.

Meanwhile, Ibn Arabi conceptualizes maḥabbah (divine love) as the ontological core of human existence, positioning love as both the origin and goal of spiritual

realization. This perspective shifts the focus of religiosity from obligation to relational intimacy with the Divine. In contrast, Ibn Taymiyyah underscores the importance of self-awareness through concepts such as murāqabah and muḥāsabah, highlighting inner accountability and the regulation of desire as essential for ethical consistency(Nurhakim & Rahman, 2025; Post, 2024; Shadiqin et al., 2025).

Contemporary scholarship has extended these classical insights into modern educational and psychological contexts. Studies on Sufi-based moral education demonstrate that practices such as dhikr, self-reflection, and spiritual habituation contribute to the formation of moral character, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being(Fatimah et al., 2025; Karimullah, 2023; Nasiruddin & Nurhasanah, 2025). In institutional settings such as pesantren, these practices are embedded in daily routines, shaping students' moral identity and sense of responsibility(Basri et al., 2026; Nurjanah et al., 2025). At the same time, interdisciplinary approaches link Sufi concepts with modern frameworks such as mindfulness and behavioral psychology, emphasizing their relevance in addressing contemporary moral and mental health challenges.

Despite these developments, a significant research gap remains. Existing studies tend to examine akhlāq, maḥabbah, and self-awareness as separate constructs rather than as an integrated system of embodied spirituality. Few studies explore how these dimensions interact within the everyday lives of Muslim youth, particularly in the context of digital modernity(Wasik et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2025). This gap highlights the need for an integrative, practice-oriented framework that connects normative Sufi concepts with lived realities. By positioning these three dimensions as mutually constitutive elements of embodied Islamic knowledge, this study seeks to advance a more holistic understanding of Islamic spirituality—one that captures the dynamic interplay between ethics, emotion, and consciousness in shaping the everyday religious life of Muslim youth.

Embodied Islamic Spirituality among Muslim Youth in Everyday Life

The findings of this study confirm that Islamic spirituality among Muslim youth is not eroding under the pressure of modernity; rather, it is being rearticulated through complex interactions between ethical practice, emotional experience, and reflexive consciousness in everyday life(Johns et al., 2015; Wasik et al., 2024). The integration of akhlāq, maḥabbah, and self-awareness emerges as a dynamic yet unevenly embodied system. This system does not operate in a linear or stable manner, but is continuously negotiated within shifting contexts such as digital environments, peer cultures, and institutional settings(Hanum et al., 2025; Sutarman et al., 2026). Consequently, spirituality among Muslim youth should be understood as a lived, processual phenomenon—one that oscillates between depth and superficiality, consistency and fragmentation.

Akhlāq, as the outward manifestation of spirituality, appears as the most immediately observable dimension. However, the findings reveal that its embodiment is often mediated by social expectations and digital visibility. Ethical conduct is not only practiced but also curated, particularly within social media environments where moral actions can become symbolic performances. This creates an ambivalence in moral intentionality, where sincerity (ikhlāṣ) is constantly negotiated against recognition (iʿtirāf al-ijtimāʿī). In this sense, akhlāq is no longer solely an inwardly grounded virtue, but also a socially constructed expression shaped by audience, platform, and context. This condition is articulated in the following extended testimony:

> "In my daily life, I try to practice good morals like being honest, respectful, and not hurting others, because that is what I was taught in Islam. But when I am on social media, things feel different. Sometimes I feel like people only appreciate you when you show your goodness publicly, like posting about charity or religious activities. It makes me question whether I am doing it sincerely or just following what others expect. There are moments when I want to do good quietly, but I also feel pressure to share it so that it is seen as something valuable. So, I think being moral today is not only about doing what is right, but also about how it is perceived by others. That is where it becomes challenging, because sincerity and appearance can easily mix without us realizing it. Sometimes I even delete posts because I feel they are not purely for Allah, but I am still unsure whether my intention is truly clean or just influenced by the environment around me" (Respondent 7).

Meanwhile, maḥabbah (divine love) functions as the affective core of spirituality, shaping the emotional and existential orientation of young Muslims. The findings suggest a significant shift from norm-based religiosity toward experience-based religiosity, where feelings of closeness to God, inner tranquility, and emotional resonance become central indicators of spiritual authenticity. However, this affective dimension is highly susceptible to fluctuation, particularly due to its mediation through digital religious content. Emotional engagement is often intense but temporary, creating what may be described as "episodic spirituality." This pattern is reflected in the following narrative:

> "For me, spirituality is when I feel close to Allah, like when I pray sincerely or listen to a lecture that touches my heart. Sometimes when I watch Islamic videos on YouTube or listen to short reminders on Instagram, I feel very emotional, like I want to change and become a better person. In those moments, I feel peaceful and motivated, even to the point that I promise myself to be more disciplined in worship. But the problem is, that feeling does not always last. After a few hours or days, I return to my normal routine, and the motivation slowly fades. I start to get busy with assignments, social media, or just entertainment, and that spiritual feeling disappears. It makes me realize that loving God is not just about feeling touched in certain moments, but about maintaining that connection consistently. I think this is where many of us

struggle—we feel spiritually strong at one moment, but we do not have enough discipline to sustain it in our everyday lives" (Respondent 15).

Self-awareness, operationalized through muḥāsabah and murāqabah, emerges as the pivotal integrative mechanism that connects akhlāq and maḥabbah. Unlike the other two dimensions, self-awareness functions internally and continuously, enabling individuals to evaluate their actions, regulate their desires, and maintain a sense of accountability before God. The findings indicate that respondents who cultivate reflective practices demonstrate greater ethical consistency and emotional stability. Self-awareness thus transforms spirituality from a reactive experience into a sustained mode of being. This integrative role is evident in the following excerpt:

> "I usually take time at night to reflect on what I have done during the day. I think about whether I hurt someone, whether I wasted my time, or whether I did something meaningful. This habit helps me become more aware of myself, because sometimes during the day we act without thinking. When I remember that Allah is always watching, I feel more responsible for my actions, even the small ones. It is not always easy, because sometimes I realize that I failed to live up to what I believe is right. But that reflection gives me the motivation to improve. Without that kind of awareness, I think it is very easy to just follow habits or social pressure without really thinking about our purpose as Muslims. It is like living on autopilot, and that is what I try to avoid" (Respondent 21).

To further systematize these findings, the following table summarizes the relationship between the three key dimensions of Islamic spirituality:

Dimension	**Core Meaning**	**Mode of Expression**	**Main Challenge**	**Empirical Insight**
Akhlāq	Ethical conduct and moral behavior	Daily actions, social interaction, digital behavior	Performative morality, social validation pressure	Often practiced but influenced by visibility and recognition
Maḥabbah	Divine love and emotional attachment	Feelings of closeness, spiritual motivation	Episodic spirituality, emotional inconsistency	Strong affective engagement but difficult to sustain
Self-awareness	Reflexive consciousness (murāqabah, muḥāsabah)	Reflection, self-evaluation, inner discipline	Lack of habit formation, inconsistency in practice	Key integrative mechanism for ethical-spiritual coherence

These findings collectively indicate that the central issue is not the absence of spirituality, but its fragmentation across different dimensions of experience. Many respondents possess ethical knowledge, emotional attachment to religion, and occasional self-reflection, yet these elements often operate independently rather than as an integrated system. This fragmentation produces what can be described as "disembodied spirituality," where religious values are known and felt but not consistently enacted. This condition is explicitly acknowledged by one respondent:

> "Sometimes I feel like I understand Islam quite well, I know what is right and what is wrong, but my actions do not always reflect that knowledge. It feels like there is a gap between what I believe and what I actually do. Maybe it is because of habits, environment, or even distractions from technology. That is why I think awareness is very important, because without it, knowledge alone is not enough to change behavior. I think many of us are like this—we know, we feel, but we do not always act accordingly" (Respondent 18).

In conclusion, the integration of akhlāq, maḥabbah, and self-awareness constitutes the foundation of what may be termed embodied Islamic spirituality. When these three dimensions are interconnected, they form a coherent ethical-spiritual framework that supports moral integrity, emotional resilience, and meaningful religious experience. Conversely, their disconnection results in superficial, performative, or unstable forms of religiosity. Therefore, the findings strongly suggest the need for an integrative, practice-oriented approach that emphasizes the cultivation of self-awareness as the central axis in aligning ethical conduct and divine love within the everyday lives of Muslim youth.

Toward an Integrative Reconstruction of Sufi Spirituality in Contemporary Youth Contexts

The findings of this study, when read in dialogue with the literature on lived Islam and digital religiosity, reveal a fundamental epistemological shift in how Islamic spirituality is constituted among Muslim youth. Rather than operating as a coherent, hierarchical system—as assumed in classical tasawuf—spirituality now appears as a fragmented, situational, and mediated assemblage of practices, emotions, and reflexive processes(Chowdury, 2026; Wijaya et al., 2025). This condition requires not only empirical description but also theoretical reconstruction, particularly by revisiting the classical Sufi framework of akhlāq, maḥabbah, and self-awareness in light of contemporary transformations(Teten et al., 2025; Wasik et al., 2024).

The literature review has demonstrated that Muslim youth religiosity today is deeply embedded in everyday practices and shaped by digital environments, peer cultures, and informal learning spaces(Wasik et al., 2024). This aligns with the empirical finding that spirituality is not absent but re-negotiated within hybrid spaces—both physical and virtual. However, this re-negotiation produces a disjunction between normative Islamic teachings and lived experience, which can

be analytically described as a shift from *integrated spirituality* to *modular spirituality*(Himam et al., 2025). In classical tasawuf, akhlāq, maḥabbah, and murāqabah/muḥāsabah are organically interconnected within the process of tazkiyat al-nafs. In contrast, the data show that these elements are often experienced as separate "modules" that are activated in different contexts: akhlāq in social interaction, maḥabbah in emotional-religious consumption, and self-awareness in moments of personal reflection(Bernhardt et al., 2018, p. 315; Wijaya et al., 2025).

From a Ghazalian perspective, as articulated by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, this fragmentation represents a disruption of the ethical-spiritual unity that underpins human perfection (kamāl al-insān)(Arroisi et al., 2023; Zunaidi, 2022, p. 99). Al-Ghazālī insists that akhlāq must be rooted in disciplined habituation (riyāḍah) and continuous purification, ensuring that ethical conduct flows naturally from an inwardly transformed soul. Yet, the phenomenon of performative akhlāq identified in this study indicates that ethical behavior is increasingly shaped by external visibility and social validation(Gillani & Khan, 2025, p. 4). This suggests a reorientation of niyyah from divine intentionality toward what may be termed *digital intentionality*, where actions are subconsciously calibrated for audience reception. In this sense, the crisis is not merely moral but epistemological: the source of ethical authority shifts from the inner self (al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinnah) to the external gaze (al-naẓar al-ijtimāʿī)(Ali et al., 2025, p. 18; Faruq et al., 2025; Fasas, 2025).

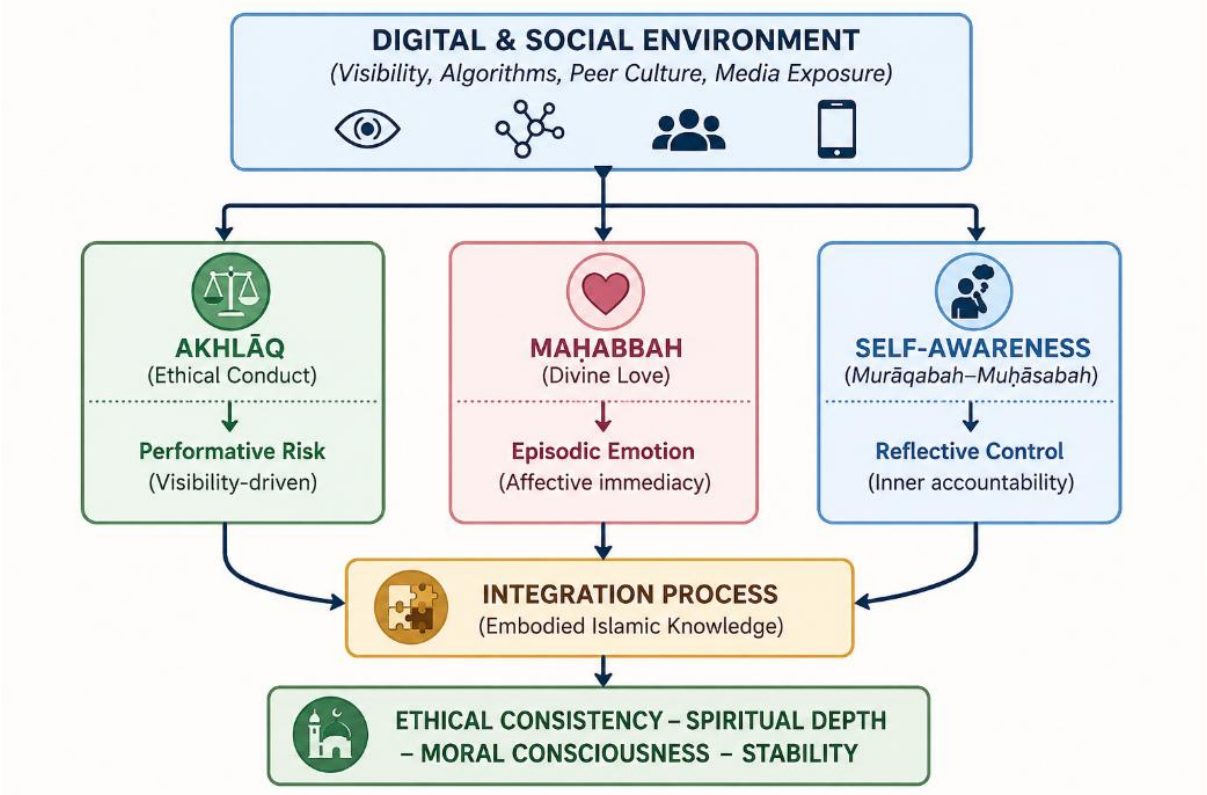
The concept of maḥabbah, as developed by Ibn Arabi, further illuminates the transformation of spirituality in contemporary contexts. For Ibn ʿArabī, divine love is an ontological condition that grounds human existence and culminates in maʿrifah (gnosis)(Halimi et al., 2026; Herawati, 2020; Ichwan et al., 2024, p. 667). Love, in this framework, is not episodic but constitutive—it reshapes perception, ethics, and being itself. However, the empirical findings reveal a form of *affective immediacy* in which maḥabbah is experienced as intense but transient emotional states, often triggered by digital religious content(Ale-Ebrahim, 2017; Marei, 2024, p. 158). This aligns with the literature on digital Islam, which highlights how algorithm-driven exposure produces rapid cycles of emotional engagement without sustained depth. Consequently, maḥabbah is displaced from its ontological grounding and reconstituted as a consumable affect, vulnerable to fluctuation and discontinuity(Wijaya et al., 2025; Zaprulkhan et al., 2025). This condition may be conceptualized as *aestheticized spirituality*, where the experience of love is prioritized over its transformative implications.

In contrast, the dimension of self-awareness—articulated through murāqabah and muḥāsabah—emerges as the most resilient and structurally significant element in both the findings and the literature. This aligns closely with the ethical emphasis of Ibn Taymiyyah, who foregrounds inner accountability and

continuous self-regulation as the foundation of moral integrity. Unlike akhlāq and maḥabbah, which are susceptible to external mediation, self-awareness operates as an internalized epistemic mechanism that re-centers the subject in relation to divine presence(Huda & Salem, 2022, p. 246; Inayati et al., 2026; Nurhakim & Rahman, 2025). In contemporary analytical terms, this can be understood as a form of *Islamic reflexivity*, which enables individuals to critically navigate the tensions between normative ideals and lived realities(Hussain, 2019, p. 211; Tambar, 2012). The findings indicate that when self-awareness is actively cultivated, it has the capacity to reintegrate fragmented dimensions of spirituality, aligning ethical conduct with emotional experience and intentionality.

This leads to a critical theoretical proposition: self-awareness functions as the *axis of reintegration* within the fragmented structure of contemporary spirituality. While classical tasawuf presents akhlāq, maḥabbah, and maʿrifah as a linear progression, the current study suggests a more circular and dynamic model, where self-awareness occupies a central, mediating position. This reconceptualization is consistent with the notion of "embodied Islamic knowledge," which emphasizes that religious knowledge becomes meaningful only when it is internalized, practiced, and reflected upon within everyday life contexts. To visualize this integrative reconstruction, the following conceptual map is proposed:

Figure 1. Conceptual Map: Embodied Islamic Spirituality in Contemporary Muslim Youth



This conceptualization highlights several key analytical insights. First, the digital and social environment acts as both an enabling and disruptive force, shaping

how each dimension of spirituality is experienced. Second, akhlāq and maḥabbah are particularly vulnerable to distortion under conditions of visibility and immediacy, leading to performative and episodic expressions. Third, self-awareness operates as a corrective mechanism that can potentially restore coherence by grounding actions and emotions in reflective consciousness.

Critically, this model also exposes a limitation in both classical and contemporary approaches. Classical tasawuf assumes the presence of stable structures of spiritual formation—such as the murshid–murīd relationship and disciplined communal practice—which are largely absent in the decentralized and digitally mediated lives of modern youth. Conversely, contemporary digital spirituality often prioritizes accessibility and emotional resonance at the expense of depth and continuity. The challenge, therefore, is not to choose between tradition and modernity, but to reconstruct a framework that integrates the ethical rigor of classical tasawuf with the lived realities of contemporary Muslim youth.

In conclusion, this study advances the argument that Islamic spirituality in the modern context must be understood as a process of ongoing negotiation between fragmentation and integration. By situating akhlāq, maḥabbah, and self-awareness within a unified yet dynamic framework of embodied Islamic knowledge, the discussion moves beyond descriptive analysis toward a theoretical synthesis. This synthesis not only bridges classical Sufi thought and contemporary lived experience but also offers a conceptual foundation for reimagining spiritual formation in the age of digital modernity.

Conclusion

This study shows that Islamic spirituality among Muslim youth is not declining, but being reconfigured within the dynamics of modernity and digital life. The integration of akhlāq (moral conduct), maḥabbah (divine love), and self-awareness forms a coherent yet often fragmented ethical-spiritual system. While classical Sufi thought—as developed by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, and Ibn Taymiyyah—emphasizes a unified and linear process of spiritual formation, the findings reveal a more situational and "modular" spirituality. Akhlāq tends to be influenced by social visibility and performative pressures, maḥabbah appears as an affective but often episodic experience, while self-awareness emerges as the most stable dimension that enables ethical and spiritual coherence. Theoretically, this study proposes the concept of embodied Sufi spirituality, highlighting that spirituality must be understood as a lived and reflexive practice integrating ethics, emotion, and consciousness. Empirically, it confirms that although Muslim youth possess adequate normative knowledge, its internalization is shaped by digital culture and social context, resulting in a gap between outward piety and inward spirituality. Therefore, strengthening self-awareness becomes crucial as the central axis of integration. This study recommends a shift toward more practice-oriented and

reflective models of Islamic education that incorporate Sufi-based practices to address moral fragmentation, while also encouraging future research to expand empirical scope and interdisciplinary engagement.

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