



## The Implementation of Sufism Values: An Effort to Improve Morality in Addressing Contemporary Juvenile Delinquency

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### ABSTRACT

The increasing phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and moral decline among adolescents highlights the urgent need for educational approaches that integrate spiritual and ethical development. This study aimed to examine the implementation of Sufism values in improving adolescent morality and to analyze their contribution to addressing contemporary juvenile delinquency. The research employed a qualitative library research design by analyzing relevant literature from books, scholarly journals, and academic documents related to Sufism, moral education, and youth behavior. Data were collected through systematic literature searches and analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis to identify conceptual patterns and relationships among variables. The findings revealed that Sufism values provide a holistic framework for moral development grounded in spiritual purification, ethical awareness, and behavioral transformation. Core values such as sincerity, patience, humility, spiritual consciousness, and compassion were found to strengthen adolescents' self-control, emotional regulation, and moral responsibility. The implementation of these values occurred through experiential spiritual practices, mentoring, communal religious activities, and role modeling within educational and social environments. Furthermore, Sufism values contributed to preventing juvenile delinquency by fostering moral identity, providing existential meaning and life purpose, and promoting positive peer relationships and social harmony. In conclusion, the integration of Sufism values into educational and community contexts offers a transformative approach to strengthening adolescent morality and addressing behavioral problems. This study contributes to the development of spirituality-based character education by emphasizing internal moral resilience rather than external behavioral control.

### INTRODUCTION

The existence of the younger generation is inseparable from the development of a civilized society and nation. Youth essentially represent a continuation of national history and a strategic pillar in strengthening future progress across various sectors. Their intellectual energy and innovative capacity place them at the forefront of social transformation and national advancement

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(Praid Hansyah, 2022). However, contemporary social dynamics present serious challenges, particularly the increasing phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, moral decline, and the weakening of spiritual awareness among adolescents. The lack of self-control in navigating modern influences often leads young people into destructive behaviors that threaten both individual and societal well-being (Abidin, 2023). This condition highlights the urgency of strengthening moral education through approaches that not only emphasize cognitive development but also cultivate spiritual and ethical awareness.

Moral formation is influenced by multiple factors, including family environment, educational institutions, and community engagement. Parental influence plays a crucial role in shaping children's future development, while limited religious awareness and social interaction can contribute to moral crises among youth. Effective moral cultivation therefore requires early leadership and collaboration among parents, community members, and religious leaders (Nuraeni et al., 2023). Similarly, moral education should not rely solely on schools but must continue within the family environment to create consistency between learning experiences at school and daily life at home (Prayitno, 2024). Educational environments that prioritize religious values and positive social interaction can significantly contribute to shaping good character (Dwi Nurhayati et al., 2023). In this context, teachers also play a central role in guiding students' development, as they are responsible for planning, implementing, and supervising learning processes that integrate intellectual and moral growth (Sobirin, 2024).

Religious institutions and community-based activities also contribute to adolescent moral development. Mosques, for instance, historically function not only as centers of worship but also as hubs for social interaction and community empowerment, although such educational roles are increasingly difficult to find today (Frasetia et al., 2024). Community religious activities such as Qur'anic recitation, Yasinan, and Tahlilan conducted regularly under the guidance of religious leaders can strengthen adolescents' religious identity and spiritual awareness while fostering communal bonds (Anggraini, 2023). Moreover, Islamic boarding school environments provide structured supervision that protects youth from negative external influences while promoting positive peer interaction and learning motivation (Latifah, 2015). These findings indicate that moral development requires holistic support systems integrating educational, familial, and community dimensions.

One of the most relevant approaches for addressing moral degradation among adolescents is the integration of Sufism (tasawuf) values into education. Moral education in Islam is closely related to the concept of *tazkiyat an-nafs*, which emphasizes purification and development of the soul toward a better life, encompassing both spiritual cleansing (*tathir an-nafs*) and spiritual growth (*tanmiyat an-nafs*) (Ridwanulloh, 2023). Sufism aims to cultivate virtues such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), humility, patience, spiritual awareness (*muraqabah*), and love (*mahabbah*), which foster a sense of closeness to God and encourage consistent adherence to Islamic teachings in daily life (Nashrullah, 2022; Wahyudi, 2025). From a broader perspective, Sufism represents a spiritual discipline that seeks inner purification and moral excellence through practices designed to achieve spiritual perfection and closeness to the Creator (Sihombing, 2024). It also promotes balance between physical and spiritual dimensions, worldly and hereafter orientation, as well as individual and social responsibilities (Restu et al., 2023).

The implementation of Sufism values in Islamic education has been recognized as an important factor in character formation. As a spiritual discipline, Sufism emphasizes inner purification and noble character development, making it highly relevant for addressing moral crises

among students (Qamara, 2025). In contemporary contexts, Sufism offers a transformative educational approach by focusing on self-control, sincerity, humility, and spiritual awareness, which are essential for shaping strong moral character (Nur et al., 2025). Experiential learning strategies incorporating spiritual practices such as remembrance (*dhikr*), self-reflection (*mubasabah*), and spiritual awareness have been shown to improve students' psychological resilience, inner peace, and ability to cope with social and academic pressures (Rahmat et al., 2025). Furthermore, spiritual guidance delivered through gentle advice (*maw'izhab hasanah*) can penetrate the human heart more effectively than harsh methods, promoting moral acceptance and behavioral change (Nafilah Sulfa, 2025).

Sufism values also emphasize sincerity as a foundation for ethical behavior and responsibility. Sincerity reflected in actions contributes to strong work ethics, honesty, trustworthiness, and accountability, which are essential components of moral character (Sari, 2022). Spiritual education traditions, including classical texts such as *Nashāihul 'Ibād*, also contain moral and spiritual teachings that support character development, particularly in Islamic boarding school contexts (Khaerulfaqih, 2018). The ultimate goal of spiritual education within Sufism is achieving *ma'rifat*—deep knowledge of God—through disciplined practice, sincerity, and moral integrity, which ultimately shapes individuals into responsible and ethical members of society (Dewi, 2021).

Despite the recognized importance of spiritual education, many contemporary educational practices still prioritize cognitive achievement over moral and spiritual development, creating a gap between knowledge acquisition and character formation. Previous studies have explored moral education, religious activities, and Sufism concepts independently; however, limited research specifically examines the implementation of Sufism values as a structured approach to addressing juvenile delinquency in modern contexts. This study therefore offers novelty by integrating Sufism-based moral education with practical community and educational strategies aimed at improving adolescent morality.

Based on this background, the research questions of this study are: (1) How are Sufism values implemented in efforts to improve adolescent morality? and (2) How does the implementation of Sufism values contribute to addressing contemporary juvenile delinquency? Accordingly, the objectives of this research are to analyze the implementation of Sufism values in moral development and to examine their effectiveness in overcoming juvenile delinquency among adolescents.

This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic educational thought, particularly in integrating spiritual approaches into character education, and practically to provide guidance for educators, parents, and communities in addressing moral challenges among youth through Sufism-based interventions.

## **METHODS**

### **1. Research Approach and Design**

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research (literature-based research) as the primary design. Library research focuses on collecting and analyzing data derived from written sources such as books, scientific journal articles, research reports, and other relevant academic documents. This approach was considered appropriate because the research aimed to explore theoretical concepts, philosophical perspectives, and empirical findings related to Sufism values and moral education in addressing juvenile delinquency. Library research enables researchers to synthesize knowledge systematically and construct new conceptual understandings from existing

literature (Snyder, 2019). Furthermore, qualitative literature-based research allows for interpretative analysis to generate comprehensive insights into complex social and educational phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

## **2. Data Sources**

The data sources in this research consisted of primary and secondary literature related to Sufism, moral education, Islamic education, and juvenile delinquency. Primary sources included scholarly journal articles, classical and contemporary books on Sufism, and empirical studies discussing character education and adolescent behavior. Secondary sources included supporting academic publications, conference proceedings, and credible online scientific databases. The selection of literature prioritized publications from the last ten years to ensure relevance and currency, although seminal works were also included where necessary. Using multiple academic sources strengthened the comprehensiveness and reliability of literature-based research findings (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

## **3. Research Instruments**

In library research, the researcher functioned as the primary instrument responsible for identifying, selecting, interpreting, and synthesizing relevant literature. Supporting instruments included literature review matrices, note-taking formats, and data extraction sheets to organize key findings systematically. The researcher critically evaluated sources to ensure credibility, relevance, and academic quality. Critical appraisal is essential in literature research to avoid bias and ensure that conclusions are based on valid and reliable evidence (Booth et al., 2016).

## **4. Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature searching and documentation techniques. The researcher identified relevant sources using academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus-indexed journals, and institutional repositories with keywords related to Sufism values, moral education, Islamic character formation, and juvenile delinquency. After identifying potential sources, the researcher applied inclusion and exclusion criteria based on relevance, publication year, and academic credibility. Selected literature was then reviewed, categorized, and documented for analysis. A systematic search process improves transparency and reduces the risk of selection bias in literature-based studies (Snyder, 2019).

## **5. Data Analysis Techniques**

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process involved several stages: data reduction, categorization, theme identification, interpretation, and synthesis. First, relevant information from selected literature was extracted and organized. Second, the data were categorized based on key themes such as Sufism values, moral development, and strategies for addressing juvenile delinquency. Third, thematic patterns were identified to construct conceptual relationships among variables. Finally, interpretations were developed to produce comprehensive conclusions aligned with the research objectives. Content analysis in qualitative research enables systematic interpretation of textual data to identify patterns and meanings across literature sources (Elo et al., 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

## **6. Trustworthiness**

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transparency were applied. Credibility was achieved by using reputable academic sources and cross-referencing multiple studies. Dependability was maintained through clear documentation of research procedures and analysis stages. Confirmability was ensured by presenting findings based on evidence from the literature rather than researcher bias. Transparency was achieved by

providing detailed methodological descriptions to enable replication. Ensuring methodological rigor is essential in qualitative research to enhance validity and reliability of findings (Nowell et al., 2017).

## RESULTS

### 1. Implementation of Sufism Values in Efforts to Improve Adolescent Morality

#### a. Conceptual Foundation of Sufism Values in Moral Education

The findings of this study revealed that the conceptual foundation of Sufism values constitutes a holistic framework for adolescent moral development, integrating spiritual purification, ethical awareness, and behavioral transformation. Sufism (tasawuf) was not merely conceptualized as a mystical tradition but as a systematic approach to character formation grounded in the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the cultivation of virtuous character (*akhlak al-karimah*). This perspective aligns with the broader philosophical orientation of Islamic education, which emphasizes balanced human development encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Moral education rooted in spirituality tends to foster internal moral regulation rather than external compliance, thereby producing more sustainable behavioral change among adolescents.

Core Sufism values identified in the literature included sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), humility (*tawadhu'*), spiritual awareness (*muraqabah*), and divine love (*mahabbah*). These values were found to contribute significantly to adolescents' moral consciousness by strengthening self-awareness, emotional control, and ethical responsibility. Sincerity encourages intrinsic motivation for good deeds, patience promotes resilience in facing social pressures, and humility supports interpersonal harmony. Meanwhile, *muraqabah* fosters continuous self-monitoring through awareness of divine presence, which functions as an internal moral compass. The integration of these virtues contributes to the formation of moral identity and prosocial behavior among adolescents navigating complex modern environments.

The findings also demonstrated that Sufism values are closely associated with psychological and moral well-being through the process of inner purification. Spiritual practices such as reflection, remembrance (*dhikr*), and self-evaluation (*muhasabah*) enable adolescents to develop self-regulation and emotional stability, which are crucial in preventing deviant behavior. Empirical studies have shown that spirituality-based educational approaches can significantly influence moral development and psychological resilience among youth by strengthening meaning-making processes and ethical awareness (Huda et al., 2019). Similarly, integrating spiritual intelligence into educational contexts contributes to adolescents' moral reasoning and responsible decision-making, particularly when facing social challenges (Ismail et al., 2021). These findings confirm that spirituality-oriented education provides an internalized moral framework that supports behavioral consistency.

Furthermore, the relationship between Sufism and character education was reflected in its experiential orientation. Unlike purely cognitive moral instruction, Sufism emphasizes lived spiritual experience through continuous practice and reflection. Experiential spirituality facilitates deeper internalization of values because it engages cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains simultaneously. Previous research has indicated that spirituality contributes to moral identity formation and prosocial engagement when individuals perceive moral values as personally meaningful and spiritually grounded (Keshavarzi & Haight, 2020). This supports the argument that Sufism-based education offers a transformative approach capable of addressing moral crises among adolescents.

From a theoretical perspective, classical and contemporary scholarship on Sufism also reinforces the centrality of character purification as the foundation of ethical behavior. Sufism aims to transform the human personality by removing negative traits such as arrogance, greed, and anger while nurturing virtues such as sincerity, compassion, and trustworthiness. Spiritual training is therefore viewed as a process of psychological refinement that leads to moral excellence and closeness to God. As explained by Knysh (2017), Sufism historically developed as a discipline focused on inner transformation and ethical perfection through spiritual practices and moral discipline. Similarly, Sahin (2018) emphasized that Islamic spiritual pedagogy promotes holistic human development by integrating faith, morality, and reflective self-awareness within educational processes.

Overall, the findings suggested that the conceptual foundation of Sufism values provides a comprehensive moral education paradigm capable of addressing contemporary adolescent challenges. By integrating spiritual awareness, emotional regulation, and ethical conduct, Sufism offers a multidimensional approach that strengthens internal moral resilience and promotes sustainable character development. This conceptual framework is particularly relevant in the context of increasing moral degradation and juvenile delinquency, where adolescents require not only behavioral control but also meaningful spiritual guidance to navigate complex social realities.

#### **b. Forms of Implementation of Sufism Values in Adolescent Life**

The findings of this study indicated that the implementation of Sufism values in adolescent life occurred through structured spiritual practices, moral guidance, religious learning activities, and role modeling from significant figures within educational and social environments. These forms of implementation emphasized experiential engagement rather than purely theoretical instruction, allowing adolescents to internalize moral values through repeated practice and reflection. The literature analysis demonstrated that spiritual habituation plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' behavior because consistent engagement with religious practices strengthens self-regulation and moral awareness.

One of the primary forms of implementation identified was the integration of spiritual practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), regular prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and *mubasabah* (self-reflection). These practices functioned as mechanisms for emotional regulation and self-control, helping adolescents develop inner calmness and awareness of their actions. Spiritual routines also fostered discipline and responsibility, which are essential components of moral character. Previous research has shown that regular engagement in spiritual practices contributes to psychological well-being, emotional stability, and reduced behavioral problems among adolescents (Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2015). Similarly, experiential religious activities have been found to strengthen adolescents' moral identity by connecting ethical behavior with meaningful spiritual experiences (King & Boyatzis, 2015).

Another important form of implementation involved moral guidance through advice (*maw'izhab hasanah*), mentoring, and counseling provided by teachers, parents, and religious leaders. Gentle advice rooted in compassion and wisdom was found to be more effective in influencing adolescents' attitudes compared to authoritarian approaches. Mentoring relationships created opportunities for adolescents to discuss personal challenges and receive guidance aligned with spiritual values. This interpersonal dimension of Sufism education reflects the traditional teacher–student relationship in Islamic spirituality, where moral transformation occurs through companionship and example. Educational psychology literature also supports the importance of

mentoring relationships in promoting positive youth development, particularly when guidance is delivered within supportive and trusting environments (Rhodes, 2020).

Religious learning activities and community-based programs were also identified as significant forms of implementation. Collective worship, study circles, and community religious gatherings provided social reinforcement for moral behavior and strengthened adolescents' sense of belonging. Participation in communal spiritual activities encouraged cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility, which are essential for moral maturity. Social learning theory suggests that behavior is strongly influenced by environmental interaction and observation of others, meaning that community-based religious environments can significantly shape adolescents' moral conduct (Bandura, 2018). Empirical research further confirms that adolescents involved in religious communities tend to demonstrate higher levels of prosocial behavior and lower engagement in risky activities due to supportive social norms and moral expectations (Hardy et al., 2019).

Role modeling by teachers, parents, and religious leaders emerged as another critical form of implementation. Adolescents often imitate behaviors observed in respected authority figures, making exemplary conduct a powerful educational tool. When adults consistently demonstrated sincerity, patience, humility, and compassion, adolescents were more likely to internalize these values. This finding aligns with character education theory, which emphasizes the importance of modeling as a fundamental method for moral learning because individuals learn ethical behavior through observation and imitation of credible role models (Lickona, 2018).

Overall, the findings suggested that the implementation of Sufism values in adolescent life was most effective when it combined spiritual practices, interpersonal guidance, communal engagement, and exemplary behavior. This multidimensional approach allowed adolescents to experience moral values cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally, leading to deeper internalization. Such experiential implementation is particularly relevant in contemporary contexts where adolescents face complex moral challenges and require not only knowledge but also lived spiritual experiences to guide their behavior.

### **c. Educational Strategies for Internalizing Sufism Values**

The findings of this study revealed that the internalization of Sufism values among adolescents required systematic educational strategies that integrate cognitive understanding, emotional engagement, and behavioral practice. The literature analysis indicated that effective moral transformation does not occur solely through theoretical instruction but through continuous experiential learning processes that allow adolescents to personally experience spiritual values in their daily lives. Educational strategies grounded in Sufism were found to emphasize habituation, reflective practice, environmental reinforcement, and holistic integration within formal and informal educational contexts.

One of the primary strategies identified was experiential spiritual learning, which involved engaging adolescents directly in spiritual practices such as *dhikr*, contemplation, moral reflection (*muhasabah*), and service-oriented activities. Experiential learning enabled students to connect abstract moral concepts with personal experiences, thereby strengthening internalization. This approach aligns with experiential learning theory, which suggests that knowledge becomes meaningful when learners actively participate in reflective experiences that integrate thought, emotion, and action (Kolb, 2015). Empirical research has also demonstrated that spiritually oriented experiential programs can enhance adolescents' emotional regulation, resilience, and ethical awareness by fostering deeper self-understanding and purpose in life (Pandya, 2021).

Habituation and character-building programs were also found to be essential strategies for embedding Sufism values into adolescents' behavior. Regular routines such as collective prayers, spiritual reflection sessions, moral discussions, and disciplined daily activities gradually shaped positive behavioral patterns. Habit formation plays a significant role in character education because repeated actions reinforce neural and psychological pathways associated with moral conduct. According to Lickona (2018), consistent moral practice is fundamental in developing virtuous character, as values become internalized through repetition and reinforcement rather than isolated instruction. Supporting this perspective, recent studies indicate that structured character education programs that combine moral knowledge, emotional engagement, and habitual practice produce stronger and more sustainable behavioral outcomes among adolescents (Berkowitz & Bier, 2016).

Another important strategy involved integrating Sufism values into both formal and informal educational systems. In formal education, spiritual values were incorporated into curricula, teaching methods, and classroom interactions, while informal settings such as family environments, peer groups, and community activities reinforced these values through daily social experiences. This integration created continuity between learning environments, which strengthened moral consistency among adolescents. Educational research suggests that character development is most effective when moral values are consistently reinforced across multiple ecological contexts, including family, school, and community environments (Nucci et al., 2017).

Environmental support and collaboration among stakeholders also emerged as a critical strategy for internalizing Sufism values. The cooperation between educators, parents, religious leaders, and community institutions created a supportive moral ecosystem that encouraged adolescents to practice ethical behavior. Adolescents are more likely to adopt positive values when they observe consistent expectations and supportive guidance across their social environments. Social-ecological theories of development emphasize that individual behavior is shaped by interactions between personal factors and environmental influences, highlighting the importance of collaborative educational efforts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Contemporary research further confirms that family involvement and community engagement significantly enhance the effectiveness of moral and spiritual education programs among youth (Good & Willoughby, 2016).

Overall, the findings suggested that educational strategies for internalizing Sufism values were most effective when they combined experiential learning, habituation, curricular integration, and environmental collaboration. This multidimensional strategy facilitated deeper moral internalization by addressing adolescents' cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual needs simultaneously. Such comprehensive approaches are particularly relevant in contemporary contexts, where adolescents face complex moral challenges that require not only knowledge acquisition but also meaningful spiritual engagement and supportive social environments.

#### **d. Impact of Sufism Values on Adolescent Moral Development**

The findings of this study demonstrated that the implementation of Sufism values had a substantial impact on adolescent moral development, particularly in strengthening self-control, emotional regulation, ethical awareness, and social responsibility. The literature analysis indicated that spiritual values rooted in Sufism contributed to the formation of internal moral regulation mechanisms, enabling adolescents to manage impulses, evaluate their behavior critically, and make responsible decisions. This internalization process is crucial in adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration, emotional instability, and susceptibility to external influences.

One of the most significant impacts identified was the improvement of self-control and emotional regulation. Spiritual practices such as remembrance (*dhikr*), reflection (*mubasabah*), and

mindfulness of divine presence (*muraqabah*) were found to enhance adolescents' capacity to regulate emotions and reduce impulsive behavior. These practices fostered inner calmness, patience, and psychological resilience, which are essential for navigating social pressures and conflicts. Empirical research supports this finding, indicating that spiritual engagement is positively associated with emotional regulation and lower levels of risky behavior among adolescents (Pandya, 2021). Similarly, studies on spirituality and youth development suggest that spiritual awareness promotes adaptive coping strategies and psychological well-being, thereby reducing vulnerability to deviant behavior (Hardy et al., 2019).

Another important impact was the development of ethical behavior and social responsibility. Sufism values emphasize compassion, humility, honesty, and empathy, which directly influence interpersonal relationships and prosocial conduct. Adolescents exposed to these values were more likely to demonstrate cooperative behavior, respect for others, and a sense of responsibility toward their communities. Moral development theories also emphasize that ethical behavior emerges when individuals integrate moral cognition with emotional empathy and social awareness. According to Narvaez and Lapsley (2014), character formation involves the integration of moral identity, emotional engagement, and habitual action, all of which are supported by spirituality-based education.

The findings also revealed that Sufism values strengthened spiritual awareness and religious commitment among adolescents. Spiritual awareness encouraged adolescents to perceive their actions as meaningful and accountable, which fostered intrinsic motivation for moral conduct. This internal motivation differs from externally imposed discipline because it is grounded in personal conviction and spiritual consciousness. Educational research indicates that intrinsic religiosity is associated with higher moral commitment and lower engagement in delinquent behavior, as individuals perceive ethical conduct as part of their identity rather than external obligation (King & Boyatzis, 2015).

Furthermore, the formation of positive character traits such as discipline, honesty, perseverance, and humility emerged as a long-term impact of Sufism value implementation. Continuous exposure to spiritual practices and moral guidance contributed to personality development that was resilient against negative environmental influences. From a psychological perspective, character development involves the gradual stabilization of behavioral patterns through repeated moral experiences and reflective learning. Berkowitz and Bier (2016) emphasized that sustainable character formation occurs when educational programs address cognitive understanding, emotional engagement, and behavioral practice simultaneously—an approach consistent with Sufism-based moral education.

From an Islamic educational perspective, spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) functions as a transformative process that removes negative traits while cultivating virtuous dispositions. Contemporary scholarship also recognizes that Sufism provides a framework for holistic human development by integrating spiritual consciousness with ethical action and psychological well-being. As explained by Sahin (2018), Islamic spiritual pedagogy supports identity formation and moral maturity by nurturing reflective self-awareness and moral responsibility within educational contexts.

Overall, the findings suggested that the implementation of Sufism values produced multidimensional impacts on adolescent moral development, including psychological stability, ethical behavior, spiritual awareness, and positive character formation. These outcomes highlight the relevance of Sufism-based approaches in addressing contemporary moral challenges among

youth, as they promote internal moral resilience rather than relying solely on external behavioral control. Consequently, Sufism values can serve as a transformative framework for strengthening adolescent morality in modern social contexts characterized by rapid cultural and technological changes.

## **2. The Contribution of the Implementation of Sufism Values in Addressing Contemporary Juvenile Delinquency**

### **a. Strengthening Self-Control and Emotional Regulation**

The findings indicate that the internalization of Sufism values significantly contributes to strengthening adolescents' self-control, particularly through practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), muraqabah (self-awareness before God), and muhasabah (self-reflection). These spiritual disciplines cultivate emotional regulation and reduce impulsive behavior, which are often associated with juvenile delinquency. From a psychological perspective, spirituality-based interventions are known to enhance self-regulation and decrease risk-taking behaviors among youth. Empirical research suggests that religious and spiritual engagement can function as protective factors against deviant conduct by fostering internal moral restraints and meaning-oriented coping mechanisms (King & Boyatzis, 2015).

Classical Sufism literature also emphasizes the purification of the heart as a pathway to behavioral reform. According to Al-Ghazali, moral transformation begins with controlling desires (nafs) through disciplined spiritual training, which ultimately leads to virtuous conduct (Al-Ghazali, 2017). This concept aligns with modern developmental psychology theories asserting that self-regulation is a key determinant in preventing antisocial behavior during adolescence.

### **b. Developing Moral Awareness and Ethical Responsibility**

Another important contribution identified in this study is the role of Sufism values in cultivating moral awareness and ethical responsibility. Core virtues such as sincerity (ikhlas), patience (sabr), humility (tawadu'), and honesty (sidq) serve as ethical foundations that guide adolescents' decision-making processes. These virtues help adolescents evaluate actions not only based on external consequences but also on internal moral accountability.

Contemporary research supports the argument that value-based education rooted in spirituality enhances adolescents' prosocial behavior and reduces aggression. For instance, studies on character education demonstrate that integrating spiritual or religious values into youth development programs can significantly improve empathy, cooperation, and moral reasoning (Berkowitz & Bier, 2018).

From an Islamic ethical perspective, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya explains that morality is the outward manifestation of inner spiritual states; therefore, correcting the heart naturally leads to the correction of behavior (Ibn Qayyim, 2018). This theoretical framework supports the finding that Sufism-based moral education can serve as a preventive approach to juvenile misconduct.

### **c. Providing Meaning, Purpose, and Identity Formation**

Adolescence is a critical period for identity formation, and the absence of meaning or purpose often contributes to deviant behavior. The study finds that Sufism values provide adolescents with existential meaning, life direction, and a sense of belonging to a moral-spiritual framework. Concepts such as closeness to God (qurb), trust in divine destiny (tawakkul), and gratitude (shukr) help adolescents cope with stress, frustration, and social pressure without resorting to delinquent activities.

Modern psychological research confirms that meaning-making and spirituality are strongly associated with resilience and lower levels of behavioral problems among youth (Damon, Menon,

& Bronk, 2019). When adolescents perceive their lives as purposeful, they are less likely to engage in destructive or risky behaviors.

#### **d. Creating Social Harmony and Positive Peer Influence**

The implementation of Sufism values also contributes to improving adolescents' social relationships. Teachings emphasizing compassion (*rahmah*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and service to others encourage cooperative behavior and reduce tendencies toward violence or conflict. Sufism-based educational environments often promote supportive peer communities, which function as protective social networks against delinquency.

Sociological research highlights that positive peer environments grounded in shared moral values significantly reduce youth involvement in crime and deviance (Hardy et al., 2020). Therefore, Sufism values not only shape individual morality but also create collective moral ecosystems that discourage harmful behavior.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of Sufism values contributes to addressing contemporary juvenile delinquency through multidimensional mechanisms: strengthening self-control, enhancing moral awareness, providing existential meaning, and fostering positive social environments. These results confirm that spirituality-based moral education can function as both preventive and rehabilitative strategies for adolescent behavioral problems.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Analysis of Results**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of Sufism values constitutes a multidimensional approach to improving adolescent morality and addressing contemporary juvenile delinquency. The results indicate that Sufism-based moral education operates through interconnected mechanisms, including spiritual purification, emotional regulation, ethical awareness, identity formation, and social reinforcement. These mechanisms directly respond to the research questions concerning how Sufism values are implemented and how they contribute to overcoming juvenile delinquency among adolescents. The conceptual foundation identified in this study confirms that Sufism is not merely a mystical tradition but a systematic educational framework rooted in *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) and character formation. This interpretation supports earlier arguments that moral education grounded in spirituality fosters internal moral regulation rather than external behavioral compliance, resulting in more sustainable character development among youth (Ridwanulloh, 2023; Nashrullah, 2022).

The analysis also reveals that the effectiveness of Sufism values lies in their experiential nature. Spiritual practices such as *dhikr*, *mubasabah*, and *muraqabah* function as psychological and moral training that strengthens adolescents' self-control and emotional stability. These findings align with developmental perspectives suggesting that adolescence is characterized by emotional instability and susceptibility to external influences, thereby requiring internal regulatory mechanisms to prevent deviant behavior. The results further indicate that moral transformation occurs when adolescents internalize values through repeated practice, reflection, and meaningful spiritual experiences rather than through purely cognitive instruction. This supports the notion that experiential spirituality can enhance adolescents' resilience, psychological well-being, and ethical awareness (Rahmat et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the study highlights that Sufism values contribute significantly to identity formation and existential meaning among adolescents. Concepts such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, and trust in divine destiny provide adolescents with a moral orientation and life purpose

that reduce vulnerability to delinquent behavior. This finding reinforces previous claims that the absence of spiritual meaning and self-control is one of the factors contributing to moral crises among contemporary youth (Abidin, 2023). By strengthening spiritual consciousness and moral identity, Sufism-based education offers preventive mechanisms against risky behavior and moral decline.

Another important analytical insight concerns the social dimension of Sufism implementation. The results show that the integration of spiritual practices within educational institutions, families, and communities creates a supportive moral ecosystem that reinforces ethical behavior. Role modeling by teachers, parents, and religious leaders, as well as participation in communal religious activities, contributes to adolescents' moral internalization through observational learning and social interaction. This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing that moral development requires collaborative involvement of family, educational institutions, and community environments to ensure consistency between values taught and values practiced (Nuraeni et al., 2023; Prayitno, 2024).

## 2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study were largely consistent with the concerns raised in the introduction regarding the increasing moral crisis among adolescents in the modern era, particularly those associated with rapid technological change, weakening social control, and declining spiritual awareness. Previous studies have emphasized that the erosion of moral values among youth is often linked to insufficient internalization of religious and spiritual principles, resulting in vulnerability to delinquent behavior such as aggression, substance abuse, and social misconduct (Frasetia et al., 2024; Nuraeni et al., 2023). The present study corroborated these arguments by demonstrating that the implementation of Sufism values—such as sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), self-control (*mujāhadah al-nafs*), humility (*tawāḍu'*), and spiritual awareness (*murāqabah*)—can function as an internal moral regulator that strengthens adolescents' ethical consciousness and behavioral discipline.

Furthermore, the results aligned with previous empirical research indicating that spirituality-based educational approaches contribute significantly to adolescents' psychological resilience, emotional regulation, and moral identity formation. For instance, spiritual intelligence and religious engagement have been shown to positively influence moral development and reduce maladaptive behavior among adolescents (Ismail et al., 2021; Pandya, 2021). Similarly, research on Sufism education highlighted that practices such as *dhikr*, reflection, and character habituation foster inner purification and self-awareness, which subsequently encourage positive behavioral transformation (Huda et al., 2019). The present findings extended this perspective by demonstrating that Sufism values not only strengthen individual spirituality but also contribute to social behavior regulation through structured educational and community-based implementation.

From the perspective of Islamic educational theory, the results also supported the classical view that moral excellence originates from internal spiritual transformation rather than external coercion. Contemporary Islamic education scholars emphasize that character formation becomes effective when spiritual awareness, moral cognition, and behavioral habituation are integrated into the learning process (Sahin, 2018). This theoretical position was reflected in the findings, which showed that adolescents exposed to Sufism-oriented moral guidance developed intrinsic motivation to behave ethically, rather than merely complying with external rules. Such findings were also consistent with character education theory, which asserts that moral development occurs through the integration of cognitive understanding, emotional engagement, and consistent behavioral practice (Lickona, 2018).

However, this study also offered a distinctive contribution compared with previous literature. While earlier studies have often examined moral education, religious instruction, or spirituality independently, the present research integrated Sufism values with practical preventive

strategies aimed specifically at addressing contemporary juvenile delinquency. This integrative approach provided a more comprehensive framework by combining spiritual formation, moral education, and psychosocial development within a single conceptual model. Consequently, the findings contributed to expanding existing knowledge by positioning Sufism not only as a spiritual doctrine but also as an applicable educational intervention capable of addressing modern adolescent behavioral challenges in a holistic manner.

### **3. Implications of Findings**

The findings of this study have significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study contributes to the field of Islamic education and moral psychology by proposing Sufism values as a holistic framework for character education that integrates spirituality, emotional development, and social responsibility. It expands existing discourse by demonstrating that moral crises among adolescents cannot be effectively addressed through cognitive or disciplinary approaches alone but require internal spiritual transformation.

Practically, the findings suggest that educators, parents, and community leaders should incorporate Sufism-based strategies into youth development programs. Educational institutions may integrate reflective practices, spiritual mentoring, and character habituation activities within curricula, while families and communities can reinforce these values through daily interactions and communal religious programs. The results also imply that preventive approaches grounded in spirituality may be more sustainable than punitive measures in addressing juvenile delinquency, as they strengthen adolescents' internal moral resilience rather than relying solely on external control.

### **4. Limitations of the Study**

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research employed a library research design, relying on secondary data and theoretical analysis rather than empirical field observations. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture contextual variations across different cultural or educational settings. Second, the interpretation of Sufism values was influenced by the selected literature sources, which may introduce interpretive bias. Third, the absence of quantitative measurement limits the ability to determine the magnitude of the impact of Sufism-based interventions on adolescent behavior. Future studies are therefore recommended to employ empirical methods, such as experimental or mixed-method approaches, to validate the effectiveness of Sufism-based educational programs in real-world contexts.

Based on the discussion, it can be partially concluded that the implementation of Sufism values offers a comprehensive and transformative approach to improving adolescent morality and addressing juvenile delinquency. By integrating spiritual awareness, emotional regulation, ethical responsibility, and social support systems, Sufism-based education strengthens adolescents' internal moral resilience and reduces susceptibility to deviant behavior. These findings reinforce the argument that spirituality plays a central role in moral development and should be integrated into contemporary educational strategies. The discussion thus provides a conceptual foundation for the final conclusions presented in the subsequent section.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined the implementation of Sufism values as an effort to improve adolescent morality and address contemporary juvenile delinquency through a library research approach. The findings demonstrate that Sufism values provide a comprehensive moral education framework grounded in spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), ethical awareness, and behavioral transformation. The implementation of core virtues such as sincerity, patience, humility, spiritual awareness, and compassion was found to strengthen adolescents' internal moral regulation,

emotional stability, and ethical responsibility. These values were effectively internalized through experiential spiritual practices, mentoring relationships, communal religious activities, and role modeling within family, educational, and community environments. Consequently, Sufism-based approaches contributed to improving self-control, fostering moral identity, providing existential meaning, and promoting positive social interactions, all of which function as preventive mechanisms against juvenile delinquency.

The results also indicate that the effectiveness of Sufism values lies in their multidimensional nature, integrating cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects of adolescent development. By emphasizing internal transformation rather than external behavioral control, Sufism-based moral education offers a sustainable approach to character formation that is particularly relevant in contemporary contexts characterized by rapid social change and moral challenges among youth. These findings contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic educational thought by positioning Sufism as a holistic paradigm for character education and moral psychology. Practically, the study provides guidance for educators, parents, and community leaders to integrate spirituality-based strategies into youth development programs, highlighting the importance of collaborative support systems across educational and social environments.

However, this research was limited by its reliance on secondary literature sources without empirical field validation. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ qualitative field studies, experimental designs, or mixed-method approaches to examine the effectiveness of Sufism-based interventions in real educational contexts and diverse sociocultural settings. Longitudinal studies may also provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of spiritual education on adolescent behavior and character development.

In conclusion, the implementation of Sufism values represents a transformative and holistic approach to strengthening adolescent morality and addressing juvenile delinquency. By nurturing spiritual consciousness, ethical integrity, and social responsibility, Sufism-based education offers a meaningful pathway for developing morally resilient youth capable of navigating the complexities of modern life. This study underscores the importance of integrating spiritual dimensions into contemporary educational frameworks as a strategic effort to promote sustainable character development and social harmony.

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