

Internalization of Sufi Values in Moral Education for Generation Alpha

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the internalization of Sufi values in moral education for Generation Alpha. The study is based on the strong influence of digital culture on students' mindsets, behavior, and social relations. Generation Alpha grows up in an environment closely connected to the internet, social media, and screen-based technology. Therefore, they need moral education that is not only cognitive but also able to strengthen spiritual awareness and self-control. This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. Data were collected from books, journal articles, and academic documents related to moral education, Sufism, value internalization, and the characteristics of Generation Alpha. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The findings show that Sufi values such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, contentment, humility, self-reflection, God-consciousness, and purification of the soul are relevant to shaping the morality of Generation Alpha. These values can be internalized through understanding, role modeling, habituation, self-reflection, religious practice, and the integration of digital learning. Sufism-based moral education can serve as an alternative model of Islamic character education that emphasizes both outward behavior and inner moral awareness. Thus, Sufism plays an important role in developing students' spiritual awareness, self-control, digital ethics, and social morality.

Keywords: *Moral Education, Sufism, Generation Alpha, Value Internalization, Islamic Education*

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Introduction

Islamic education currently faces new challenges with the emergence of Generation Alpha as a group of learners growing up in a digital environment. Generation Alpha is generally understood as the generation born around 2010 to 2024, a generation that has interacted with the internet, gadgets, social media, short videos, digital games, and screen-based technologies since early childhood. (McCrindle & Fell, 2020) explain that Generation Alpha is the generation born between 2010 and 2024 and is highly exposed to technological change from the beginning of life.

The Indonesian context shows that digital life has become a strong part of people's daily lives. APJII recorded that the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2024 reached 221,563,479 people out of a total population of 278,696,200, with an internet penetration rate of 79.5%. Data from (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023) also show that in 2024, 72.78% of Indonesians had accessed the internet, an increase from 69.21% in 2023. In addition, 68.65% of Indonesians owned mobile phones in 2024. These data indicate that moral education cannot be separated from the digital reality that shapes learners' ways of thinking, behavior, and social relations.

The closeness of Generation Alpha to the digital world brings both opportunities and problems. On the one hand, technology helps learners obtain religious information, participate in interactive learning, and access learning resources quickly. On the other hand, uncontrolled digital exposure can affect concentration, communication manners, empathy, self-control, and moral formation. (UNICEF Indonesia, 2025) reported that only 37.5% of children had ever received information on how to stay safe online. The same report also shows that 42% of children had felt uncomfortable or afraid because of online experiences, and 50.3% had seen sexual images on social media. These findings indicate that moral education needs to function as a process of nurturing the inner self, behavior, and ethical awareness in both real-life and digital spaces (Jariyah & Mujab, 2025).

In the context of Islamic Religious Education, moral learning occupies an important position because it is directly related to the formation of learners' personalities. Moral education should not be understood merely as the delivery of material about right and wrong. It needs to be directed toward habituation, value appreciation, self-control, and character formation that appears in everyday behavior. (Aulia & Makrufi, 2025) show that the characteristics of Generation Alpha, who are close to digital technology, influence the effectiveness of implementing Islamic Religious Education. Learners understand material more easily through interactive digital learning methods, but teachers continue to face challenges in maintaining students' focus so that the use of technology remains aligned with the goals of religious education.

The main problem that arises is that moral education often remains oriented toward cognitive aspects, such as memorizing scriptural evidence, definitions of morality, and normative knowledge. In fact, Generation Alpha needs an approach that more directly touches inner awareness and real behavior. Moral education needs to strengthen learners' ability to restrain themselves, manage desires, maintain digital manners, respect others, and build an awareness that good behavior is part of closeness to Allah. In this regard, Sufism can serve as an important foundation because it emphasizes purification of the soul, control of the lower self, awareness of Allah's supervision, and the formation of noble character.

Sufism in moral education can be understood as a spiritual approach that instills values such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, contentment, reliance on Allah, detachment from excessive worldly attachment, muraqabah, muhasabah, and tazkiyatun nafs. These values are relevant to the needs of Generation Alpha, who live in a fast, instant, competitive, and highly visual culture. (Qamara, 2025) explains that the implementation of Sufi morality in Islamic education can strengthen the formation of learners' noble character and help them face moral

challenges in the era of globalization. Thus, Sufism can be positioned as an educational approach that forms morality from the inner dimension, not merely from outward behavior.

Recent research also shows a relationship between Sufi values and digital well-being. (Muhlisa, 2025) found that the internalization of Sufi values can increase self-awareness, regulate digital behavior proportionally, and foster moral and emotional balance in online activities. This finding is important because the problem of Generation Alpha is not only related to a lack of religious knowledge, but also to weak self-control, dependence on digital validation, and limited ethical awareness when interacting in virtual spaces (Shalehah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, character education for Generation Alpha requires exemplary conduct and habituation. (Salman & Emawati, 2025) found that the character education model for Generation Alpha in Islamic boarding schools is implemented through exemplary conduct, habituation of noble character, reinforcement of classical Islamic texts, and structured religious activities. This model shapes students to become disciplined, morally grounded, and spiritually strong in facing the challenges of the digital era. This finding strengthens the view that the internalization of moral values requires a consistent educational environment, exemplary figures, and repeated religious practice (Amalia et al., 2025).

Based on the above discussion, research on the internalization of Sufi values in moral education for Generation Alpha is important to conduct. This study is needed to formulate how Sufi values can be integrated into moral education in a way that is relevant to the characteristics of Generation Alpha. The focus of this study is not only to view Sufism as a theoretical discourse, but also as a source of educational values that can shape learners' spiritual awareness, self-control, digital ethics, and social morality.

Therefore, this study has both academic and practical urgency. Academically, it can enrich the study of Islamic Religious Education, especially on moral education based on Sufism in the context of the digital generation. Practically, it can provide direction for Islamic Religious Education teachers, Islamic educational institutions, and parents in nurturing the morality of Generation Alpha through a more spiritual, reflective, and applicable approach. This study is expected to address the need for moral education that does not stop at moral instruction, but moves toward the process of value internalization in learners' lives.

Literature Review 1. Moral Education in Islamic Education

Moral education is a core part of Islamic education. Islamic education does not only aim to develop learners' thinking abilities, but also to shape personality, spiritual awareness, and behavior in accordance with Islamic values (M. H. Rahman, 2019). In the context of national education, the formation of human beings who are faithful, pious, and noble in character is also an important educational direction. This is consistent with the national education goal, which emphasizes the formation of human beings who are faithful, pious, noble in character, independent, and responsible.

Conceptually, *akhlak* does not merely refer to outward behavior, but also to an inner condition that encourages a person to perform good deeds consciously and consistently (Nasution et al., 2024). Therefore, moral education cannot be carried out only through the delivery of theories about right and wrong. It must be directed toward habituation, exemplary conduct, value appreciation, self-control, and the formation of moral awareness in everyday life (Nareswari, 2024). In Islamic Religious Education, moral education has a strategic position because it functions to shape learners' religious behavior. Islamic Religious Education is not only a subject that teaches religious knowledge, but also a means of nurturing Islamic character. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education needs to strengthen three main dimensions: religious knowledge, value appreciation, and moral practice in social life.

2. The Concept of Sufism in Moral Education

Sufism is the spiritual dimension of Islam that emphasizes purification of the soul, control of the lower self, closeness to Allah, and the formation of noble character. In the educational

context, Sufism can serve as an approach to moral development because it does not only assess outward behavior, but also pays attention to purity of heart, intention, self-awareness, and the quality of human relationships with Allah and with others. (Jariyah & Mujab, 2025) explain that Sufi moral education offers a spiritual solution to the modern moral crisis through values such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, detachment from excessive worldly attachment, humility, and piety. These values are directed toward purifying the soul, or *tazkiyatun nafs*, and building self-control (Muhammad Yunan Harahap et al., 2023).

In the Sufi tradition, moral formation can be carried out through three main stages: *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli* (M. R. Rahman et al., 2026). *Takhalli* means cleansing oneself of blameworthy traits. *Tahalli* means adorning oneself with praiseworthy traits. *Tajalli* means the emergence of noble character as the result of the process of soul purification. These stages show that Sufism-based moral education is gradual, deep, and emphasizes transformation from within the learner. Thus, Sufism in moral education can be understood as an approach that nurtures learners so that they possess spiritual awareness, inner honesty, self-control, patience, humility, and moral responsibility. These values are highly relevant for shaping the character of Generation Alpha, who live in a digital, fast, open, and distraction-filled environment.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research design. Library research was selected because this study aims to examine the concept of internalizing Sufi values in moral education for Generation Alpha based on relevant written sources. Research data were obtained from books, classical texts, journal articles, research findings, and academic documents that discuss moral education, Sufism, value internalization, and the characteristics of Generation Alpha. The main sources in this study are literature directly related to Sufi values such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, humility, contentment, *muhasabah*, *muraqabah*, and *tazkiyatun nafs*. Meanwhile, supporting sources are used to strengthen the analysis of Islamic education, character education, and the moral challenges faced by learners in the digital era.

Data were collected through documentation, namely by tracing, reading, recording, and grouping various sources of literature according to the research focus. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis by selecting relevant data, presenting them systematically, and drawing conclusions based on the literature review. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing various references so that the findings would not depend on a single source. Through this method, the study is expected to formulate the concept of internalizing Sufi values in moral education for Generation Alpha in a systematic, critical, and relevant manner in relation to the needs of contemporary Islamic education.

Results

Based on the literature review, it was found that the internalization of Sufi values in moral education for Generation Alpha has strong relevance to the current needs of Islamic education. Generation Alpha grows up in a highly open digital environment. BPS data show that in 2024, 72.78% of Indonesians had accessed the internet and 68.65% owned mobile phones. This condition indicates that today's learners live in a social space shaped not only by family, school, and society, but also by digital media. Therefore, moral education should not be directed only toward behavior in the real world, but also needs to address ethics, self-awareness, and moral control in digital spaces.

The review also shows that Generation Alpha has learning characteristics that are fast, visual, practical, and very close to technology. (Aulia & Makrufi, 2025) found that Generation Alpha's closeness to digital technology affects the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education learning. Students understand material more easily when learning is delivered through interactive digital media. However, the same study also confirms that teachers continue to face

challenges in maintaining students' focus so that technology use does not deviate from the goals of religious education.

Other findings show that digital spaces carry moral risks for children. UNICEF Indonesia reported that only 37.5% of children had ever received information on how to stay safe online. In addition, 42% of children had felt uncomfortable or afraid because of online experiences, and 50.3% had seen sexual images on social media. These data indicate that Generation Alpha needs moral education capable of forming self-control, spiritual awareness, and the ability to judge right and wrong in the use of technology.

In this context, Sufi values become important to internalize in moral education. Values such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, contentment, humility, muhasabah, muraqabah, and tazkiyatun nafs function to shape learners' inner awareness. (Nata, 2022) emphasizes that Sufi values are relevant and urgent to apply amid a moral crisis because they can form individuals with integrity, strengthen social solidarity, and balance intellectual intelligence with moral integrity.

This library research found that Sufi values can serve as the foundation of moral education for Generation Alpha through three main processes: value recognition, value appreciation, and value practice. Value recognition is carried out by providing an understanding of the meaning of Sufism and morality. Value appreciation is carried out through reflection, habituation, exemplary conduct, and spiritual training. Value practice becomes visible when learners begin to show honest, patient, humble, non-ostentatious, self-controlled, and responsible behavior in both real and digital life.

The review also shows that strategies for value internalization cannot rely only on lectures. (Husain et al., 2025) found that character and moral formation for Generation Alpha in Islamic Religious Education requires more contextual strategies, such as religious project-based learning, teacher exemplary conduct, the use of Islamic digital media, and learning connected to students' daily lives. These strategies are considered able to instill religious values, discipline, responsibility, and honesty.

In addition, (Muhlisa, 2025) shows that the internalization of Sufi values in Qur'anic learning can increase learners' intrinsic motivation. This improvement is reflected in learning enthusiasm, reflective engagement, and the awareness that learning the Qur'an is part of a spiritual journey to draw closer to Allah. This finding reinforces the view that Sufi values do not only function to form morality, but can also strengthen the spiritual meaning of the learning process.

Thus, the findings of this study affirm that moral education for Generation Alpha needs to be directed toward the formation of both outward and inward morality. Outward morality appears in polite, honest, disciplined, and responsible behavior. Inward morality appears in sincere intention, self-awareness, the ability to control desire, and the feeling of being under Allah's supervision. Sufi values become a bridge between religious knowledge and learners' real behavior.

1. Moral Education for Generation Alpha Requires a Spiritual Approach

Generation Alpha is a generation living in a rapid flow of information. They can easily obtain religious knowledge through the internet, short videos, learning applications, and social media. However, abundant information does not always correspond to strong moral character. Learners may know teachings about right and wrong, but may not necessarily be able to control themselves in real actions.

Under these conditions, moral education cannot merely add religious knowledge. It must touch the inner dimension. This is where Sufism has an important position. Sufism emphasizes purification of the soul, awareness of Allah, control of the lower self, and habituation of noble character. This approach can help learners not only understand religious values, but also experience them as a need in life. Sufism-based moral education can shift the orientation of education from merely moral knowing to moral being. This means that learners do not only

know that patience, honesty, and humility are good, but also strive to make them part of their personality. This is important because the moral crisis in the digital era often does not occur because of a lack of information, but because of weak self-control and inner awareness.

2. Sufi Values Are Relevant to Digital Moral Problems

Sufi values have direct relevance to the moral problems of Generation Alpha. The value of sincerity can be used to reduce the tendency to seek excessive validation on social media. The value of patience can train learners not to become easily angry, reactive, or hasty in responding to information. The value of gratitude can help learners avoid excessive comparison between themselves and the lives of others in the digital world.

The value of contentment is important for controlling a consumptive lifestyle often shaped by advertisements and social media content. The value of humility can prevent arrogance, the tendency to belittle others, and excessive self-display. The value of muhasabah can habituate learners to evaluate their speech, actions, and digital activities. The value of muraqabah can form the awareness that Allah always watches human beings, including when they are in digital spaces that are not directly visible to teachers or parents. Thus, Sufism can serve as the basis of Islamic digital ethics. Learners are not only taught prohibitions and rules, but are also guided to develop inner awareness before acting. This awareness strengthens moral education because moral control does not only come from outside, but grows from within the learner.

3. The Internalization of Sufi Values Must Be Gradual

The internalization of Sufi values cannot be carried out instantly. This process requires consistent stages. The first stage is value transformation, in which teachers or educators introduce Sufi values to learners. At this stage, learners are given an understanding of the meanings of sincerity, patience, gratitude, contentment, humility, muhasabah, muraqabah, and tazkiyatun nafs.

The second stage is value transaction, namely the process of interaction between teachers and learners through examples, dialogue, habituation, and learning experiences. At this stage, values are not only delivered, but also practiced. Teachers need to become models of patience, honesty, discipline, and humility. Learners also need space to practice values through classroom activities, worship, group work, social activities, and self-reflection.

The third stage is transinternalization, namely the condition in which values have become part of learners' personalities. At this stage, learners no longer do good merely because they fear punishment, but because they have moral and spiritual awareness. For example, learners do not cheat not because they are being watched by the teacher, but because they realize that honesty is part of morality toward Allah and toward other human beings.

4. Sufism-Based Moral Education Requires Teacher Exemplarity

The review shows that teacher exemplarity is an important factor in value internalization. Sufi values are difficult to instill if they remain only as lesson content. Learners need to see real examples from teachers, parents, and the school environment. Islamic Religious Education teachers do not only act as transmitters of material, but also as models of morality.

Teacher exemplarity is reflected in how teachers speak, reprimand, appreciate students, use digital media, and solve problems. If a teacher teaches patience but easily becomes angry, the value of patience will be difficult to internalize. If a teacher teaches humility but treats students condescendingly, the value of humility loses its educational force. Therefore, Sufism-based moral education requires alignment between material, methods, and the educator's personality. Teachers need to represent the values they teach. When learners see Sufi values present in teacher behavior, the process of internalization becomes easier.

5. Habituation and Self-Reflection Are Key to Moral Education

In addition to exemplarity, habituation is an important strategy in Sufism-based moral education. Moral character cannot be formed through one or two lessons. It is formed through continuous practice. In the context of Sufism, this habituation is in line with the concepts of *riyadhah* and *mujahadah*, namely spiritual training and earnest effort to resist negative impulses.

Habituation can be carried out through simple activities, such as reciting prayers before learning, maintaining proper speech manners, greeting others, practicing queuing, apologizing, expressing gratitude, avoiding mockery, and maintaining cleanliness. In the digital context, habituation can include pausing before commenting, not spreading unverified information, not insulting others, and not using social media to show off or belittle others.

Self-reflection is also important. Learners can be invited to create a daily or weekly *muhasabah* journal. The journal may contain simple questions such as: “What good did I do today?”, “What mistakes do I need to correct?”, “Did I use my gadget beneficially?”, and “Did my words hurt others?” Such activities help learners connect Sufi values with everyday life experiences.

6. Tazkiyatun Nafs as the Core of Moral Education

This discussion finds that *tazkiyatun nafs* is the core of Sufism-based moral education. *Tazkiyatun nafs* means the purification of the soul from negative traits and the strengthening of good qualities. Moral education does not only improve outward behavior, but also addresses the source of behavior: the heart, intention, and inner impulses.

In the education of Generation Alpha, *tazkiyatun nafs* is highly relevant because many digital moral problems begin with uncontrolled inner impulses. For example, the desire to be praised can lead to ostentatious behavior. Anger can lead to harsh comments. Uncontrolled curiosity can lead learners to negative content. The tendency to compare oneself with others can produce envy, inferiority, or ingratitude. Through *tazkiyatun nafs*, learners are guided to recognize these impulses, control them, and replace them with better moral character. This process makes moral education deeper because it does not only regulate actions, but also forms inner awareness.

Islamic Religious Education learning for Generation Alpha still needs to utilize technology. However, technology must function as a means, not as the goal. Digital media can be used to deliver exemplary stories, reflective videos, moral case simulations, interactive quizzes, and discussions on digital ethics. Nevertheless, all of these media must be directed toward value reinforcement, not merely toward making learning appear modern.

The integration of Sufism and technology can be carried out in several ways. First, teachers can use short videos about stories of patience, sincerity, or the exemplary conduct of scholars. Second, teachers can present case studies on digital behavior and relate them to the values of *muhasabah* and *muraqabah*. Third, learners can be asked to create positive digital projects, such as moral posters, anti-hoax campaigns, or short content about manners in social media use. Fourth, teachers can use digital reflection journals to monitor the development of learners' moral awareness. With this model, technology is not rejected, but directed to become a medium for value internalization. Generation Alpha continues to learn in ways that suit their world, but without losing their spiritual foundation.

This study has several important implications. First, Islamic Religious Education teachers need to develop more reflective moral learning. Moral content should not merely be delivered as concepts, but must be connected to learners' life experiences, including their experiences in the digital world.

Second, schools need to build a consistent moral culture. Sufi values such as patience, humility, gratitude, and *muhasabah* need to be present in the school culture, not only in lesson content. School culture can be developed through worship habituation, communication manners, social activities, and teacher exemplarity.

Third, parents need to be involved in digital moral education. Children should not only be guided at school, but also need support at home. Parents need to understand digital risks and build healthy communication with their children. Fourth, Sufism-based moral education can become an alternative model of Islamic character education. This model is powerful because it forms behavior from its inner roots. Sufi values help learners develop spiritual awareness, not merely formal obedience.

Conclusion

The internalization of Sufi values in moral education for Generation Alpha is an important need in contemporary Islamic education. Generation Alpha requires education that is appropriate to their digital characteristics while remaining rooted in Islamic spiritual values. Sufism offers a strong foundation for moral development because it emphasizes purification of the soul, self-awareness, control of the lower self, and closeness to Allah. Sufi values such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, contentment, humility, muhasabah, muraqabah, and tazkiyatun nafs can serve as the foundation of moral education. These values can be internalized through understanding, exemplary conduct, habituation, reflection, worship practice, and integration with digital learning. Thus, Sufism-based moral education does not only shape learners who know moral teachings, but also learners who possess spiritual awareness and the ability to practice morality in both real and digital life.

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