Sufi Ethics for the Digital Age: Developing Virtual Awareness, Moral Conduct, and Self-Control in Online Engagement

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Abstract	Technology has become an inseparable part of human life, exerting a significant influence on patterns of living and social behavior. Social media often gives rise to various ethical and moral concerns, including a decline in self-awareness, weakened self-control, and erosion of moral values. Sufism and technology can be integrated to maintain a balance between digital advancement and the spiritual depth of human beings. This article examines the implementation of Sufi teachings in the digital era, focusing on three key aspects: the development of virtual awareness, ethical conduct in digital engagement, and the cultivation of self-control. The study employs a literature-based approach, utilizing descriptive-analytical analysis and drawing on primary and secondary sources, including classical Sufi texts, contemporary literature on digital ethics, and scholarly articles. Its epistemological position is prescriptive, as it not only describes ethical phenomena in the digital sphere but also formulates normative principles based on Sufi teachings to reinforce digital ethics.The findings indicate that Sufism offers a value-based foundation for addressing digital challenges. Virtual awareness can be cultivated through the practices of dhikr, muhasabah, and muraqabah, which position technology as a medium for drawing closer to God. Digital ethics from a Sufi perspective emphasizes the importance of politeness, honesty, and a focus on the public good in every online interaction. Meanwhile, self-control can be exercised through disciplined use of technology, avoidance of negative content, and restraint from excessive digital desires. The implementation of Sufism in the digital era can serve as an effective strategy for maintaining equilibrium between technological utilization and spiritual needs, while simultaneously contributing to the development of a morally refined society.
Keywords	Sufism, Virtual Awareness, Media Ethics, Self-Control

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1. INTRODUCTION

A key framework often employed in contemporary Islamic studies is the dichotomy between Sufism and Salafism. The definition and interpretation of this dichotomy are diverse: the two ends of the spectrum are commonly contrasted through notions such as esoteric belief versus outward ritual, innovation versus adherence to tradition, heterodoxy versus orthodoxy, egalitarianism versus hierarchical structure, or tolerance versus strictness. (Shamsy, 2022). The digital era and the emergence of digital Sufism have shifted the dynamics and patterns of dissemination of both movements.

The current wave of digital transformation has brought a highly significant impact on various aspects of human life. The virtual space is no longer merely a means of communication, but has become the primary arena for social interaction, information distribution, and economic activities. Nevertheless, this massive change not only presents opportunities but also poses new challenges related to spiritual balance and ethical use of digital media (Wahid & Maskhuroh, 2023). The excessive use of social media, which can be detrimental, affects not only physical health but also mental health (Nurani et al., 2025). The phenomenon of social media addiction, the rise of unaccountable information

distribution, and the decline of quality, in-depth interaction have become serious issues in the digital era. This demand existence approach, with its conceptual and practical capabilities, helps individuals maintain harmony between their spiritual life and daily digital activities (Nurani et al., 2025).

Most previous studies on Sufism remain normative and have not deeply addressed the systematic relationship between the core teachings of Sufism and the complex challenges of digital ethics. Existing research often stops at the level of general moral discourse without explaining how principles such as *dhikr*, *muraqabah*, or *muhasabah* can be applied in the context of digital technology use. This gap highlights the need for a new approach that positions Sufism as a paradigm of spiritual transformation, one that is relevant to digital life. This study not only examines Sufism from historical and theological perspectives but also situates it within contemporary discussions on media ethics, virtual awareness, and self-control in an increasingly digitalized world.

The model for implementing Sufi values in addressing moral and spiritual crises caused by technological dominance is based on the understanding that Sufism is not merely an individual religious practice but a system of consciousness that harmoniously organizes human relations with oneself, others, and God. This model aims to transform core Sufi values, including dhikr, muraqabah, muhasabah, and tazkiyat al-nafs, into a framework of digital ethics applicable to modern life. In this context, technology is not viewed as a spiritual threat but as a medium for cultivating awareness and spiritual presence within virtual spaces. Sufism plays a significant role in modern society because it serves as a stabilizing force for humanity, which is often eroded by the current rapid modernization , causing deviations in values. Through Sufism , humans are directed to reach moral excellence at the same time find balance and tranquility inner. A critical examination of Sufism as a teaching classic and its perceived irrelevance in modernity is often linked to the role of the tarekat, which is formal, empirical, and tends to be insufficiently rational (Falach, 2021).

Sufism needs to move beyond the traditional issues that constrain it by integrating modern social sciences as a foundation of thought, alongside the Qur'an and Hadith, in order to address contemporary challenges. Within this framework, processes of formulation, reformulation, and evaluation of various doctrines and teachings are required, for example, through engagement with philosophy. Through such an approach, Sufism is no longer confined to a transcendental and speculative nature, but can deepen its scientific formulations and meet widely accepted academic standards. Ultimately, what is intended is a contextualized form of Sufism—humanistic and sociological in character, oriented toward social well-being, yet without abandoning its spiritual essence (Falach, 2021). In this context, Sufism, as a branch of Islamic spiritual tradition, offers relevant conceptual teachings. Sufism, through practice, controls the self, dhikr, and introspection, providing individuals with the means to build awareness of a better self, cultivate strength, control lust, and maintain proximity with God amidst the hustle and bustle of the digital world (Azis, 2017).

The growing public enthusiasm for fulfilling spiritual needs is evident in the increasing prevalence of religious gatherings designed to address inner emptiness and spiritual challenges. Sufism has once again gained a special position, with many orders emerging, particularly in urban areas. Nevertheless, Sufism has also transformed in response to the global challenges of the modern era. Its adaptive capacity has given rise to a new phenomenon known as neo-Sufism (Muvid, 2020). Sufism is part of religious teachings that not only emphasize the connection between man with God, but also contain teachings about values and ethics in life . As a discipline in science, Sufism also emphasizes the importance of guarding social harmony. If previously Sufism focused more on aspects of personal and physical relationships, now the need is being implemented in the context of the digital world. Sufism emerges not merely as a mystical or ritualistic teaching but as an ethical and conscious system capable of guiding humans to embody transcendental values within the digital realm. The integration of Sufism and technology is crucial in bridging the gap between rapid technological advancements and humanity's enduring need for inner depth.

The development of studies on the digital era has so far been largely focused on social, psychological, and technological aspects, such as the impact of social media addiction, the influence of

algorithms on user behavior, and digital ethics in general. However, discussions on how spiritual values, particularly Sufism, can be implemented to address digital challenges remain very limited.

Various religious and philosophical traditions have formulated digital ethics as a response to global technological transformation. Christian digital theology, as articulated by Antonio Spadaro's concept of cybertheology (Spadaro, 2014), emphasizes personal and communal relationships as the foundation of online ethics, whereas Buddhist ethics foregrounds mindfulness as a mechanism for regulating awareness in interaction. Beyond these, contemporary secular ethics generally rely on utilitarian and deontological frameworks in regulating social media. Within this landscape, Sufism presents an epistemological distinction through its orientation toward *tawhid* and *tazkiyat al-nafs* as the basis of ethical rationality, asserting that digital morality is not merely normative-behavioral, but rooted in the establishment of transcendental awareness that guides the use of technology.

2. METHODS

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative approach with a library research design. The study focuses on tracing, analyzing, and interpreting literature relevant to the themes of Sufism, digital media, and modern communication ethics. The primary sources of data are drawn from literature on Sufism, Qur'anic exegesis, and works of contemporary scholars discussing *tazkiyatun nafs*, media ethics, and self-control. Secondary data are obtained from scholarly journals, academic books, articles, and research reports that examine the phenomenon of media ethics and its impact on the spiritual life of modern society. Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation and systematic note-taking from various sources that have been verified for their validity.

The data analysis in this study applies a descriptive-analytical method with a thematic approach. All collected data are classified according to major themes, namely virtual awareness, media ethics, and self-control from the perspective of Sufism. Subsequently, the data are analyzed to identify the relevance between classical Sufi concepts and the realities of contemporary digital life. The analytical process is conducted inductively, emphasizing the understanding of meanings, values, and Sufi principles that can be implemented within the context of digital media. To ensure validity, source triangulation was conducted by comparing various scholars' perspectives with modern theories of digital ethics, followed by conceptual verification through critical and interpretive reading. The analysis was carried out in three stages: first, theme identification to map the main Sufi concepts relevant to the digital world; second, thematic classification based on the aspects of virtual awareness, media ethics, and self-control; and third, conceptual interpretation that connects spiritual values with ethical behavior in the digital sphere.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
3.1 The Concept of Sufism in the Digital Era

The term *tasawwuf* was not yet known during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Caliphs. This term only emerged in the 3rd century Hijri when Abu Hasyim al-Kufy (d. 250 H) added the title *al-Sufi* to his name. Nicholson, as quoted by Amin Syukur, explains that although before Abu Hasyim there had already been figures who practiced *zuhd*, *tawakkal*, and *mahabbah*, they never used or attributed the term *al-Sufi*. Therefore, Abu Hasyim is regarded as the first person to introduce this term (M. Amin Syukur, 2002). Sufism, as the spiritual dimension of Islam, has deep historical roots dating back to the early centuries of Islam. In the classical period, Sufism was mainly expressed through the practices of dhikr, suluk, and direct instruction from a murshid to a disciple. This tradition was passed down from generation to generation, with an emphasis on the closeness between teacher and student as well as face-to-face interaction.

The concept of Sufism teaches that the spiritual journey of a salik toward Allah takes place through two important dimensions*: maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl*. *Maqāmāt* are stages that must be traversed with effort and perseverance, such as repentance (*tawba*h), asceticism (*zuhd*), patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and trust in God (*tawakkal*); they are more permanent in nature because they result from

continuous spiritual discipline. Meanwhile, aḥwāl are spiritual states granted by Allah to a salik, such as longing (*shawq*), love (*maḥabbah*), closeness (*qurb*), and tranquility of the heart (*ṭuma'nīnah*); they are bestowed as divine gifts and are subject to change (Jamaludin & Zulkifli, 2018). As time progressed, Sufism adapted to ever-changing social contexts. In the modern era, when print media and television became the primary channels of communication, Sufi practices began to be introduced through books, magazines, radio broadcasts, and television programs. These media helped broaden the dissemination of Sufi teachings to a wider audience, free from the constraints of specific time and place.

A major shift occurred when the internet began to develop in the late 20th century. Sufis and scholars of Sufism have begun using digital media, including websites, discussion forums, and blogs, to convey spiritual ideas. This phenomenon marked the beginning of what is known as "digital Sufism," a phase in which Sufi teachings were articulated and practiced through digital platforms. With the rise of social media, the spread of Sufism became even more extensive. Various ṭarīqas established YouTube channels, WhatsApp groups, Instagram accounts, and even podcasts that served as spaces for sharing knowledge and spiritual experiences. Through these platforms, Sufism has reached younger generations who may have been previously less familiar with traditional Sufi practices.

The history of Sufism in the digital era demonstrates the continuity between classical Sufi traditions and technological advancements. It does not replace the essence of Sufism but rather expands the scope of its outreach. This also demonstrates that Sufism is a tradition highly adaptive to the changes of time without losing its spiritual essence. The concept of digital Sufism emerged from the need to reinterpret Sufi values so that they remain relevant in the dynamics of virtual life. Digital sufism can be understood as the application of Islamic spiritual principles in the digital sphere, where technology is not only used as a tool of communication but also as a medium for drawing closer to Allah. Theoretically, digital sufism is closely linked to the sociology of religion, which examines how religion transforms within modern society. The presence of digital Sufism affirms the role of religion in addressing contemporary challenges, including secularization and digital distractions. This theory helps explain that religion, particularly Sufism, possesses a strong capacity for adaptation to social and technological change.

In addition, digital sufism can also be explained through the theory of the *mediatization of religion*, which posits a multidimensional transformation within religion that affects religious texts, practices, and social relations, and ultimately influences the character of belief in modern society. Mediatization gives rise to a new social condition in which Sufism is not only understood as a personal spiritual practice or one limited to small groups, but also as a popular cultural phenomenon consumed by the masses. Spiritual awareness is now cultivated not only through *khalwah* (seclusion), but also through digital interaction, online communities, and media representation.

The mediatization of religion is not a universal phenomenon present in all cultures and societies. This trend became increasingly evident in the twentieth century, as industrialization, modernization, and Westernization spread across various layers of society. These developments demanded transformations within three dimensions of religious life. First, the media began to serve as a primary source for addressing religious issues. Mass media, both as producers and distributors of religious experience, provided a space for individuals to express their faith. Second, religious representations were adapted to the forms and styles of popular media, where religious symbols were reinterpreted as part of narratives blending the secular and the sacred. Third, social media gradually took over many of the social and cultural functions traditionally performed by institutionalized religion, such as spiritual guidance, moral instruction, and the cultivation of ethical values. Within the theory of mediatization, media are seen as having become integrated into nearly all social institutions simultaneously, illustrating how media act as agents of change in shaping modern human experiences and expressions of religiosity.(Arafah et al., 2023)

3.2 Virtual Awareness in the Digital Era

Sufism, as the spiritual dimension of Islam, is primarily oriented toward the purification of the soul, the control of desires, and the cultivation of transcendental awareness of Allah. These values of Sufism remain highly relevant in confronting the virtual reality of the digital era, where people often become trapped in distraction, illusion, and the overwhelming speed of information. Thus, Sufism can serve as a guide to cultivating a more ethical, reflective, and meaningful virtual awareness. Virtual awareness requires the ability to filter information, maintain the integrity of one's digital identity, and regulate behavior in cyberspace. Sufi principles such as *muhāsabah* (self-introspection), *zuhd* (simplicity), and *wara'* (cautiousness) can function as an ethical-spiritual framework for digital interaction. For example, the practice of muhāsabah encourages individuals to continually evaluate their online activities, ensuring they do not fall into consumptive or destructive behaviors.

Amid the vast digital flow, many individuals experience dependence on social media, which leads to a decline in the quality of real-life and spiritual interactions. In this context, Sufism offers solutions through the concepts of *mujāhadah* (striving earnestly against base desires) and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah). Digital activities framed by dhikr can redirect negative tendencies into avenues for spiritual strengthening for instance, by using virtual spaces to share knowledge, spread religious teachings (*da'wah*), and disseminate positive content. The connection between Sufism and virtual awareness is also evident in the dimension of media ethics. The digital era has given rise to phenomena such as hoaxes, hate speech, and privacy violations that disrupt social order. Sufism, with its emphasis on akhlāq al-karīmah (noble character), can provide a foundation for digital ethics, enabling individuals to safeguard their speech and actions, even in the form of text or visual expression, in cyberspace. Virtual awareness rooted in Sufi teachings will guide individuals toward more courteous, honest, and responsible behavior in the digital realm.

In addition, Sufism emphasizes the importance of hudhur ma'a Allah (being present with Allah) in every human activity. This principle is highly relevant to building virtual awareness, where individuals are reminded to maintain their connection to spiritual values even when engaging in digital interactions. In other words, Sufism can help individuals bring a sense of sacredness into virtual activities, so that the digital world is not merely a space for entertainment or consumption, but also a means of strengthening faith and righteous deeds. The concept of virtual awareness in Sufism refers to an individual's ability to maintain spiritual consciousness even within the virtual or digital world. The presence of technology and social media often diverts human attention from spiritual values, and Sufism reaffirms the importance of keeping the heart constantly mindful of Allah in every space, including the virtual one. With such awareness, digital activities are not merely technical interactions, but can also carry the value of worship when performed with the right intention and ethics.

The implementation of virtual awareness in Sufism can be realized through the practices of *ihsān* and *murāqabah* in daily digital activities. For example, social media users are encouraged to always filter information before sharing, spread goodness through positive content, and maintain proper etiquette in online interactions. Furthermore, this virtual awareness can also be embodied through the use of technology for *da'wah* and the dissemination of spiritual values that bring peace. Thus, Sufism is not only relevant in real life, but also serves as a guide for building a healthy and meaningful digital ecosystem. Sufism plays a significant role in shaping spiritual awareness in the digital era. It not only provides a spiritual foundation to confront the distractions and temptations of cyberspace, but also offers an ethical framework that guides digital behavior, remaining aligned with religious values. Through the integration of Sufism and virtual awareness, technology can be harnessed positively, not merely for worldly purposes, but also as a path toward enhancing spirituality and achieving balance in modern human life.

In the digital era, characterized by the rapid flow of information and virtual interaction, the concept of virtual awareness serves as an essential bridge between Sufi spirituality and the dynamics of digital life. Sufism, which emphasizes inner awareness and spiritual presence (*hudlur al-qalb*), offers an alternative paradigm for technology users to avoid being swept away by the fast-paced and

superficial nature of the digital world. However, applying Sufi ethics in the online sphere faces major challenges, particularly due to the anonymity that defines digital spaces. Anonymity allows individuals to present personas different from their true identities, blurring the line between sincerity and pretense. In this context, muhasabah (self-introspection) becomes the key to guiding individuals to constantly monitor their intentions and behaviors behind every post, comment, and online interaction.

Beyond anonymity, the influence of algorithms presents a subtler yet powerful challenge. Algorithms act as a kind of "new spiritual compass," often unnoticed by users, shaping their preferences, emotions, and even moral perspectives. Within the framework of Sufism, this phenomenon can be seen as a form of *ghaflah* (heedlessness), where humans lose awareness of who truly governs their attention. Dhikr, the remembrance of God, can function as a form of "spiritual anti-algorithm," a discipline of awareness that helps individuals realign their focus so that they are not entirely dominated by the logic of machines and the seductions of digital allure.

The mechanism of virtual awareness transformation can occur through three stages. First is the reflective stage, in which individuals recognize both the potential and the dangers of the digital world through a spiritual lens a form of muraqabah (self-vigilance) toward their own online activities. Second is the applicative stage, when Sufi values such as honesty, patience, and compassion are applied in everyday digital behavior for instance, by sharing positive content or refraining from hate speech. Third is the transformative stage, where individual awareness evolves into collective consciousness: digital communities begin to build shared ethics rooted in spiritual values. At this stage, Sufism is no longer understood merely as a solitary individual path, but as a social force that shapes a more ethical, empathetic, and meaningful digital culture.

3.3 Teaching Sufism in Social Media Ethics

Media ethics also becomes a crucial problem in digital (Turnip & Siahaan, 2021). The widespread practices of spreading hoaxes, engaging in cyberbullying, and violating privacy underscore the urgent need for strong media ethics. The values of Sufism, such as honesty, simplicity, and compassion, can serve as a moral foundation for building a more civilized media ethic. Social media has a significant impact on individual life, which requires wisdom in its use so as not to neglect real-world obligations. Maintaining proper etiquette in social media interaction is equally important, ensuring that its benefits are positive, whether as a source of entertainment or as a reliable source of information. The rapid development of technology and the strong currents of globalization have contributed to the erosion of Eastern cultural norms and politeness.

As a result, ethics and morals in society have declined, with interactions that should be conducted in courteous language shifting instead to physical violence such as street fighting (Dewi, 2019). From an Islamic perspective, communication functions not only as a vertical relationship with Allah (SWT) but also as a horizontal interaction with fellow human beings. The relationship with Allah is manifested through the observance of obligatory acts of worship, such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage, whose purpose is to cultivate piety. Meanwhile, communication with other human beings is expressed in the practice of *mu'āmalah*, or social interaction, which covers various aspects of life, including culture, politics, economics, and the arts. In this process of communication, word choice is highly significant, ensuring that the intended message aligns with the speaker's or writer's purpose. Poor word choice can reduce the effectiveness of communication, rendering the message vague or poorly conveyed (Dewi, 2019).

The Qur'an provides guidance on communication ethics that covers various aspects, including speaking truthfully (*qaulan sadīdan*), using words that touch the heart (*qaulan balīghan*), speaking kindly (*qaulan ma'rūfan*), speaking honorably (*qaulan karīman*), speaking gently (*qaulan layyinan*), and speaking in a way that is easy to understand (*qaulan maysūran*). In Islamic teaching, one of the most important ethics of communication is to begin a conversation with greetings of peace (salām), which is regarded as the entry point to ethical communication. By offering greetings, a Muslim demonstrates

respect and honors the person with whom they are interacting. Such a pattern of communication can foster calmness in the listener while also bolstering the speaker's confidence. Moreover, greetings and polite speech reflect that the ultimate purpose of communication is to convey a message with gentleness and good intentions (Ihsani & Febriyanti, 2021).

The concept of *tabayyun* in Islam, as emphasized in QS. Al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 6 teaches the importance of verifying and clarifying every piece of information received before disseminating it (My Love Faizah Putri et al., 2024). This principle arises from the awareness that false or unverified information can lead to slander, harm, and even division within society. Tabayyun is not only an ethical obligation but also a form of social worship that reflects a Muslim's commitment to upholding truth, justice, and communal harmony. In the context of social media, tabayyun becomes increasingly relevant given the overwhelming flow of information that circulates without spatial or temporal boundaries. Hoaxes, hate speech, and slander can easily spread with just a single click. Therefore, the teaching of tabayyun instructs Muslims not to rush in sharing information, but rather to check sources, consider the consequences, and ensure the benefit of what is disseminated. By practicing tabayyun, social media can serve as a medium for da'wah and fostering bonds of brotherhood, rather than becoming a space of conflict and misunderstanding.

The shared principle between Information Literacy and Tabayyun lies in the necessity for individuals to verify and investigate the information they encounter. While information evaluation represents only one aspect of the broader framework of information literacy, it stands as one of the most essential components. By practicing Tabayyun, or the careful examination of received information, technology and social media users are encouraged to be more discerning in selecting and assessing the content they disseminate, particularly on social media platforms (Riza, 2021). Sufism emphasizes the purification of the heart and the control of desires. This teaching is highly relevant to the use of social media, as the digital world often becomes a space prone to nurturing arrogance (*riyā'*), self-conceit (*'ujb*), envy, and even hostility. A Sufi is taught to always be mindful of Allah in every activity, and therefore engagement in social media should also be directed by good intentions not merely the pursuit of popularity or worldly satisfaction.

By applying social media ethics grounded in Sufi values, users not only strive to avoid negative behaviors in the digital realm but also cultivate spiritual character in accordance with Islamic principles. Values such as sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), asceticism (*zuhd*), and self-reflection (*muhāsabah*) transform social media interactions into a form of self-discipline and heart purification. In a digital environment often dominated by narcissism, provocation, and unproductive debates, Sufi values help individuals remain calm, wise, and meaningful in their approach to managing and responding to information.Ultimately, the application of social media ethics from a Sufi perspective can create a healthier, more harmonious digital environment that is oriented toward collective goodness (Nurani et al., 2025). The world of social media, characterized by anonymity and freedom of expression, often creates tension with these values. Anonymity, for instance, allows individuals to hide behind virtual identities, making it easy for them to engage in unethical behavior, such as spreading hate speech or hoaxes, without a sense of accountability. In the context of Sufism, anonymity should be approached through muraqabah the awareness that even though one's digital identity may be invisible to others, it always remains under Allah's supervision. This principle of inner vigilance serves as a spiritual filter, guiding users to remain honest and responsible in the online sphere.

Meanwhile, the phenomenon of performative piety, religious expression driven more by self-image in the digital public space, presents another challenge to the application of Sufi ethics. The value of ikhlāṣ (sincerity) requires that good deeds be performed solely for the sake of Allah, not to gain social validation in the form of "likes" or "followers." Within this framework, Sufism encourages social media users to view the digital world as a field of dhikr (remembrance of God), rather than as a stage for the ego. This means that every post, comment, and interaction should be an expression of sincerity rather than a display of self-promotion.

The practical implications of Sufi ethics extend not only to individuals but also to digital

institutions. Social media platforms, educational institutions, and online communities can incorporate Sufi values into their policies and system designs, for instance, by promoting information verification (*tabayyun*), reducing algorithms that amplify emotional polarization, and providing spaces for reflection and the dissemination of meaningful content. Sufi ethics can thus serve as a spiritual model guiding both individuals and institutions toward a more honest, ethical, and human-centered digital ecosystem.

3.4 Self-Control in the Digital Era

In the digital era, humans are confronted with both diverse conveniences and new challenges that can significantly influence spiritual life. Social media, the rapid flow of information, and limitless entertainment often lead individuals to become absorbed in momentary pleasures, causing them to lose sight of transcendent values. In this context, Sufi teachings on self-control are highly relevant as a guiding principle for maintaining balance between worldly needs and spiritual demands. From the perspective of Sufism, self-control is a crucial element in maintaining inner balance and behavior to attain the station of piety (*maqām al-taqwā*) (Bara & Andy, 2025). In the digital context, the ability to restrain oneself from impulsive behaviors such as excessive consumption of information or engaging in hate speech serves as an important indicator of the successful implementation of Sufi values.

According to al-Ghazālī, self-control is achieved through spiritual training and discipline, both physically and spiritually. He emphasized the importance of consistently performing acts of worship, such as fasting, rising at night for prayer, and regulating one's diet, as means of subduing worldly desires. In addition, he highlighted the need to control negative thoughts, cultivate gratitude, and regularly engage in *muhāsabah* (self-reflection) in order to preserve the purity of the heart (Tomi Saputra, 2020). One of the methods of self-control taught in Sufism is *mujāhadah al-nafs*, the struggle against one's lower desires, which entails practicing good deeds and avoiding evil (Zuhaili, 1997). This practice can be applied in the digital era by limiting technology use to essential needs, avoiding content that corrupts the heart, and utilizing online time in productive and beneficial ways. The awareness that every activity will be held accountable before Allah serves as the primary motivation for being more selective and mindful in engaging with the virtual world.

Self-control in the digital era can begin by limiting technology use according to one's needs. Individuals need to set aside specific time for accessing social media, entertainment, or news, thereby avoiding the consumption of excessive energy and attention on less beneficial things. Discipline in managing online time helps maintain the balance among digital activities, worship, work, and direct interaction with family and the environment.

Allah says in QS. Ash-Shams [91]: 9–10

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰىهَاۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰىهَاۗ

9. Successful indeed is the one who purifies it (the soul), and failed indeed is the one who corrupts it.

Self-control in the digital era represents a concrete manifestation of *tazkiyat al-nafs* as taught in this verse. Guarding one's gaze from unbeneficial content, regulating time to avoid excessive online activities, and refraining from self-exhibition constitute essential efforts of soul purification. By cultivating spiritual awareness in digital interactions, a Muslim can transform technology into a means of virtue rather than negligence, thereby attaining the true success promised by Allah. In the pursuit of self-control through social media engagement, it is crucial to maintain inner purity by avoiding harmful or destructive content, such as misinformation, hate speech, and excessive entertainment that can distance one from spiritual values. Cultivating habits of self-reflection, remembrance of God (*dhikr*), or recitation of the Qur'an can serve as counterbalances, keeping the mind focused on matters that lead to goodness. In this way, the digital realm ceases to be a source of negligence and instead becomes a medium for strengthening faith.

Another effective approach is to cultivate the attitudes of *qanā'ah* (contentment) and gratitude in the use of technology. The digital era often encourages individuals to compare themselves with

others through social media, potentially fostering envy or excessive ambition. By practicing contentment with what one has and fostering gratitude, individuals can avoid the pressures of digital social comparison and use technology more wisely for learning, sharing, and engaging in charitable deeds. Self-control in the digital age may also begin with setting limits on technology use according to necessity. One should designate specific times for accessing social media, entertainment, or news to avoid overconsumption of energy and attention on unbeneficial matters. Discipline in regulating online time helps maintain balance between digital activities, worship, professional responsibilities, and direct interactions with family and community.

The concepts of *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli* represent three stages in Sufism aimed at attaining spiritual purification (Pradana & Zahra, 2025). *Takhalli* refers to emptying oneself of blameworthy traits; *tahalli* is the process of filling oneself with praiseworthy qualities; and *tajalli* is the unveiling of the Divine presence within the heart, or the attainment of the highest spiritual experience. (Education et al., 2024). The concept of *takhalli* within the framework of digital ethics refers to the process of liberating oneself from negative behavioral tendencies that emerge in online interactions. This stage requires individuals to restrain impulsive urges generated by the dynamics of technology, such as the inclination to express hate speech, disseminate unverified information, engage in excessive self-presentation for public validation, or develop emotional attachment to digital popularity. Such self-purification serves as the foundation for the development of self-control, as individuals eliminate destructive traits, thereby building moral resilience against the digital stream that is saturated with provocation, existential competition, and virtual hedonism.

The stage of *tahalli* functions as an ethical reconstruction process, in which individuals consciously internalize and implement moral values in their digital activities. Self-control is no longer merely defensive but is manifested in constructive actions such as cultivating polite communication, distributing information based on honesty and accuracy, respecting privacy and personal data, and managing differences of opinion through dignified dialogue. The habituation of these values affirms the orientation of technology utilization as a medium for promoting public good, so that the digital world is not only a space for expression but also a medium for character formation and social contribution. The peak of digital ethical development is realized in the stage of *tajalli*, a condition in which spiritual and moral values have been deeply integrated with the behavior of technology users. At this phase, individuals perceive digital activities as part of both ethical and spiritual responsibility, allowing transcendental awareness to be present in every online interaction. Technology users are no longer motivated to act ethically solely due to social expectations, but also because of the awareness that their digital footprint is simultaneously a spiritual footprint that will be held accountable. Thus, tajalli represents spiritual maturity within the digital ecosystem, where technology is utilized to generate peace, benefit, and inspiration—positioning Sufism not only as a shaper of personal morality but also as a conceptual framework for strengthening the ethics of digital civilization.

4. CONCLUSION

Sufism holds significant relevance in addressing the challenges of the digital era through three foundational pillars: spiritual awareness, media ethics, and self-regulation, which collectively form a value framework aimed at maintaining balance between spiritual needs and technological engagement. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the development of the Digital Sufism Framework, which expands the scope of digital ethics by integrating spirituality as a crucial element in shaping virtual consciousness and ethical media behavior among Muslim users. Practically, this study offers tangible implications for various stakeholders: digital platform designers may incorporate spiritual reflection–based digital well-being features; religious educators are encouraged to construct digital literacy curricula grounded in Sufi etiquette (adab tasawuf); Muslim social media users are guided to implement digital self-regulation practices such as muhasabah and media fasting; while policymakers can formulate ethical guidelines for digital spaces rooted in the principles of public benefit (maslahah) and human values. Nevertheless, this study has limitations, as it remains centered on a normative

approach and has yet to empirically investigate the internalization of Sufi values in digital behavior, nor has it examined the dynamics of religious authority in determining the authenticity of Sufi practices within virtual spaces. Therefore, further research should adopt empirical and interdisciplinary approaches, focusing on how Sufi values influence self-regulation in the use of social media. Overall, this study aims to highlight its contribution to strengthening the position of Sufism as a paradigm of digital ethics and spirituality, which is relevant to the development of Islamic studies and contemporary scholarship on digital ethics.

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