

RESEARCH

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From Legal Guidance to Spiritual Pedagogical Transformation: Exploring the Dimensions of Sufi Education in the Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwa on Interaction on Social Media

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Abstract

The phenomenon of conflict among Muslims as social media users presents ethical challenges that require both a legalistic and an educational approach. This study aims to explore the values of Sufi education in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) fatwa on Guidelines for Interaction on Social Media. This qualitative study, conducted in the format of a normative-philosophical study of Islamic law, employs content analysis and a prescriptive approach. The primary data consists of a description of the general provisions regarding social interaction in MUI Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 on Social Interaction on Social Media. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various relevant scholarly sources. The trilogy of Sufi educational values tazkiyat al-nafs, tahdzib al-akhlak, and tahqiq al-ihsan served as the foundation for this study's perspective. The results of the study on the dimensions of Sufi educational values in the MUI fatwa regarding guidelines for muamalah on social media include, among others, the value of tahqiq al-ihsan in the guidelines, which promotes a humanistic and public-interest-oriented digital civilization. Next is the value of tahdzib al-akhlak in guidelines for strengthening communication ethics through the control of negative behavior on social media. Following that is the value of tazkiyat al-nafs in guidelines that emphasize verification and moderation in a pluralistic society. These findings confirm that socio-religious fatwas serve not only as legal norms but also as instruments of Sufi-based character education in fostering social media ethics.

Keywords: Fatwa; MUI; Social Media; Sufi Education,

Introduction

The phenomenon of practical problems in social interaction on social media platforms shows that advances in digital technology are not always accompanied by an improvement in the quality of relationships among individual users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This is because social media, which initially served as a space for communication and the exchange of information, has in practice now also become an arena for the spread of misinformation, hate speech, cyberbullying, political polarization, and the "echo chamber" phenomenon which narrows the space for dialogue and reinforces intergroup prejudices. Furthermore, user anonymity and platform algorithms encourage aggressive behavior, dehumanization, and a decline in communication ethics, resulting

in social interactions that are more often based on emotion than on rationality. These conditions lead to weakened social cohesion, increased horizontal conflicts, and diminished public trust in information circulating in the digital space (Cinelli et al., 2021).

In response to the various forms of social interaction (muamalah) issues on social media as described above, it is important to have guidelines based on social, cultural, national, and religious norms for the use of social media. For Muslims, for example, there is a need for guidelines based on Islamic law (fiqh) that regulate and shape the character of the Muslim community's diversity in their social interactions on social media (Abdillah & Kurdi, 2022). In this context, fiqh guidelines are not merely normative guidelines; rather, they are expected to serve as a foundation for the dissemination of humanistic and persuasive Islamic values through social media (Islamy et al., 2024). Given that social media can serve as a medium for Islamic da'wah in conveying the values of critical education as a response to the challenges of modernity (Mastori et al., 2026). These circumstances call for a da'wah strategy that adapts to advances in science and technology (Assya'bana et al., 2026). In other words, a da'wah strategy that disseminates Islamic values in a persuasive and contextual manner (Aini et al., 2026).

The need for guidelines on fiqh muamalah in the realm of social media has become increasingly urgent as digital interactions grow more complex, involving ethical, legal, and religious dimensions. Therefore, the issuance of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 on the Law and Guidelines for Muamalah in Social Media a normative instrument of strategic significance serving as an ethical reference for Muslims in conducting digital activities deserves appreciation and support. Although, legally speaking, fatwas do not have the same binding legal force as laws and regulations, their existence can serve as a strategic guide in fostering legal awareness and shaping the legal opinions of Muslims regarding various socio-religious issues that arise in the digital sphere (Widigdo & Hamid, 2018).

Furthermore, MUI Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 establishes three general guidelines for social media interactions that reflect the integration of the principles of fiqh muamalah with the ethics of digital communication. First, social media is positioned as a means to foster constructive social interaction and support the dissemination of information, da'wah, education, entertainment, and various positive activities in the religious, political, economic, social, and cultural spheres that are oriented toward the public good. Second, all forms of interaction and communication in the digital space must be conducted within the bounds of religious norms and national laws, so that social media does not become a medium for the dissemination of content that contradicts Sharia values or statutory regulations. Third, every social media user is required to apply the principle of tabayyun and ethical consideration before responding to or publishing information, taking into account the validity, usefulness, and appropriateness of its dissemination. This principle emphasizes that not all information deemed good is factually true, not all truths always lead to the public good, and not all information that is true and beneficial is worthy of publication if it has the potential to cause greater harm. Thus, these guidelines establish moral responsibility, prudence, and a focus on the public good as the primary foundations of ethical conduct within the social media ecosystem (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2017).

Upon closer examination, the various guidelines for social interaction outlined above can be said to embody an educational (tarbiyah) value orientation aimed at shaping the understanding and attitudes of Muslims to ensure positive social interaction on social media. From the perspective of various schools of Islamic thought, this orientation can be said to run parallel to the teachings of Sufism, which emphasize spiritual and social-moral development (Nur & Irham, 2023). Therefore, the dissemination of Sufi values can serve as an effective means of fostering religious character

among Muslims (Cuanton et al., 2026). Based on this, this study puts forward the initial argument that there are dimensions of Sufi educational values that can be explored within the general guidelines for social interaction set forth in the MUI fatwa on guidelines for muamalah on social media. In this study, the fatwa is not positioned as a pedagogical tool but rather as a normative source with educational potential. Character education theory explains that norms can contribute to character development through moral knowledge, the internalization of values, and behavioral practices. Meanwhile, social learning theory emphasizes the importance of understanding, modeling, reinforcement, and habituation in the learning process. Internalization occurs when compliance with norms develops into an internal commitment. In this context, the Sufi educational values contained in the fatwa have the potential to shape moral awareness and digital ethics.

The focus of this qualitative study is to explore the dimensions of Sufi education in the MUI fatwa regarding guidelines for muamalah in social media. Through an analysis of the fatwa's substance, this study seeks to explain the contribution of the MUI fatwa not only as a normative legal guideline but also as an educational instrument in fostering responsible and adaptive religious behavior among Muslims in their use of social media in the digital space. Given the tide of globalization, with its diverse technological advancements and associated challenges, Islamic education is called upon to be both adaptive and solution-oriented (Kamila & Jannah, 2026). It is in this context that the substantive values of Islamic education are expected to be reflected in responses to the challenges of globalization (Anamisari et al., 2026).

Various previous studies, including a study by Ikhwanuddin, which states that considerations of the public interest serve as the guiding principle for MUI fatwas on muamalah on social media (Harahap, 2017). The study was also supported by Islamy, who stated that the MUI fatwa on muamalah emphasizes the well-being of both individuals and society in a diverse social context (Islamy, 2019). Furthermore, a study by Safar, Hadiati, and Islamy states that the fatwa is based on a holistic perspective of Islamic law (Safar et al., 2021). A'yun and Istiani's study also states that the fatwa is based on the principles of idealism and realism in Islamic law (A'yun & Istiani, 2021).

In contrast to the various studies mentioned above, which focus more on epistemological aspects, the study by Shuhufi, Fatmawati, Qadaruddin, Basyir, Yunus, and Nainunis examines the MUI fatwa on muamalah on social media from a sociological perspective of law. The study concludes that, in practice, the MUI fatwa on muamalah on social media is intended to foster harmonious social interactions (Shuhufi et al., 2022). Meanwhile, a study by Arisandy, Asmuni, and Nasution actually concludes that the fatwa is not consistent with human rights in a democratic country (Arisandy et al., 2022). Furthermore, Vani Wirawan's study also criticizes the fatwa, stating that it is merely a moral guideline that depends on individual awareness, and thus its impact may be limited (Wirawan, 2024).

Unlike previous studies, which have focused more on MUI Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 from the perspectives of the public interest, the epistemology of Islamic law, the sociology of law, and human rights, the novelty of this study lies in offering a new perspective by exploring the dimension of Sufi education within the general guidelines for social interaction contained in the fatwa. The novelty of this research lies in the use of the trilogy of values—*tazkiyat al-nafs*, *tahdzib al-akhlak*, and *tahqiq al-ihsan*—as an analytical framework to identify spiritual, moral, and humanistic orientations in digital interactions. The urgency of this research is increasingly relevant amid the potential for conflict, disinformation, hate speech, and polarization in the digital space.

Method

This study aims to explore the dimensions of Sufi education contained in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 on the Laws and Guidelines for Social Media Interactions as a normative framework that not only regulates religious legal aspects but also represents moral and spiritual educational values within the digital communication ecosystem. The research focuses on identifying and interpreting the Sufi educational values internalized through the three general guidelines for social media interactions as formulated in the fatwa. To achieve this objective, this study employs a qualitative approach using a normative-philosophical Islamic legal research design, which seeks to examine the text of the fatwa not merely as a legal product but as a representation of Islamic ethical constructs containing educational and transformative dimensions. A content analysis approach was applied to examine the normative structure, substantive meaning, and value orientation contained in each provision of the fatwa, thereby enabling the identification of both implicit and explicit educational messages.

The primary data source for this study is the official text of MUI Fatwa No. 24 of 2017, specifically the section containing the three general guidelines for muamalah on social media along with their explanations, while secondary data was obtained through a critical review of various relevant academic literature, including articles from reputable journals, scholarly books, previous research findings, and policy documents discussing digital ethics, contemporary fiqh of muamalah, character education, and Sufi education. Data analysis was based on the perspective of the trilogy of Sufi educational values, which includes *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), *tahdzib al-akhlak* (cultivation of character), and *tahqiq al-ihsan* (actualization of spiritual awareness toward moral perfection). These three concepts serve as an interpretive framework for constructing the educational meaning embedded in the substance of the fatwas while explaining their relevance in shaping social media ethics grounded in spiritual awareness, moral responsibility, and social welfare.

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques, while the analysis process followed an interactive analysis model that included data reduction, data presentation, and the iterative drawing and verification of conclusions. This analytical model enables the establishment of systematic relationships between normative texts, the theoretical framework of Sufi education, and the context of contemporary digital communication, thereby yielding valid and comprehensive interpretations, and makes a conceptual contribution to the development of studies in Islamic education, digital ethics, and *fiqh muamalah* in the age of social media.

Result and Discussion

The Trilogy of Sufi Educational Values: *Tazkiyat al-Nafs*, *Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, and *Tahqiq al-Ihsan*

Sufi education is an Islamic educational paradigm oriented toward the formation of the perfect human being (*insān kāmil*) through the process of purifying the soul, cultivating moral character, and achieving deep spiritual awareness. Unlike education that emphasizes only cognitive aspects, Sufi education views the success of education as being realized through inner transformation, behavioral change, and a person's existential closeness to Allah the Almighty. In the context of modern society, which faces a moral crisis, hedonism, individualism, and spiritual disorientation, Sufi education offers an integrative approach that combines intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions, thereby fostering individuals who are both knowledgeable and of noble character (Solihin, 2015).

The first concept in the Sufi educational trilogy is *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul). Terminologically, *tazkiyah* refers to the process of cleansing the heart of various spiritual ailments such as *riya'*, *hasad*, *takabur*, *ujub*, greed, and excessive love of the world. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of the purification of the soul, as Allah states in Surah al-Shams [91]: 9–10, "Indeed, successful is the one who purifies his soul, and indeed, failed is the one who defiles it." These verses indicate that the success of human life depends heavily on the purity of one's inner self. From an educational perspective, *tazkiyat al-nafs* serves as the foundation for the development of positive character, as a pure heart is the source of good behavior. Various studies also indicate that spiritual practices such as *dhikr*, *muraqabah*, *muhasabah*, and *taubat* have a significant impact on students' self-control and mental health (Mujib, 2018).

The implementation of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in education is carried out through the cultivation of religious practices, training in the control of desires, the strengthening of self-awareness, and ongoing spiritual reflection. In Sufi education, teachers serve not only as conveyors of knowledge (*mu'allim*) but also as spiritual guides (*murabbi*) who set a moral example for their students. Through this process, students are guided to recognize their own weaknesses, engage in self-evaluation (*muhasabah*), and develop spiritual discipline aimed at fostering a balanced personality that harmonizes physical and spiritual needs. Thus, *tazkiyat al-nafs* serves as the primary foundation for the development of an authentic religious character.

The second concept is *tahdzib al-akhlaq*, which is the process of cultivating and refining one's character so that a person is able to put Islamic moral values into practice in daily life. From a Sufi perspective, character is not merely outward behavior, but a manifestation of the state of the heart that has undergone a process of purification. Therefore, the relationship between *tazkiyat al-nafs* and *tahdzib al-akhlaq* is causal; the purer a person's soul, the better their character. Sufi education views character as an indicator of educational success because knowledge that does not give rise to character will only produce intelligence without wisdom (Atabik, 2015).

Character development in Sufi education is carried out through spiritual exercises (*riyāḍah*), habit formation (*ta'wīd*), setting a good example (*uswah hasanah*), and continuous spiritual guidance. Values such as honesty (*ṣidq*), trustworthiness, humility, patience, gratitude, compassion, and responsibility are instilled through real-life experiences, not merely through normative lectures. Various studies in the field of Islamic education show that the internalization of Sufi values can enhance moral intelligence and social empathy, as well as reduce aggressive and intolerant behavior in educational settings. Thus, *tahdzib al-akhlaq* serves as a vital means of fostering a humanistic and civilized educational culture (Nurjanah, 2020).

The third concept is *tahqiq al-ihsan*, which is the process of attaining the highest level of spiritual awareness in the form of an inner realization of the value of *ihsan*. According to the Hadith of Jibril, *ihsan* is "to worship Allah as if you were seeing Him; if you are unable to see Him, then indeed He is seeing you." In Sufi education, *tahqiq al-ihsan* is the ultimate goal of the entire educational process because, at this stage, students no longer practice religious teachings merely out of a sense of formal obligation, but because of a deep inner awareness of Allah's presence in all aspects of their lives. This awareness gives rise to high moral integrity, social responsibility, and consistency between words, actions, and beliefs (Mujib, 2020). The implementation of *tahqiq al-ihsan* in the field of education is realized through continuous spiritual guidance, the fostering of a culture of reflection, the development of emotional and spiritual intelligence, and learning that integrates intellectual dimensions with religious experience. Education is no longer understood as merely a process of knowledge transfer, but rather as a journey of self-transformation toward spiritual maturity. Students are encouraged to embody the value of *ihsan* in their academic

activities, social relationships, leadership, and community service so that all aspects of their lives become a form of worship to Allah SWT.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the trilogy of Sufi educational values consists of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *tahdzib al-akhlaq*, and *tahqiq al-ihsan*. These three form a unified whole that complements one another. *Tazkiyat al-nafs* serves to purify the inner dimension of the human being; *tahdzib al-akhlaq* channels the results of this purification into tangible moral behavior; while *tahqiq al-ihsan* leads the human being toward the highest spiritual quality, reflected in the awareness of Allah's presence in all aspects of life. These three values are highly relevant for addressing the challenges of contemporary education, which faces a crisis of character, moral degradation, and spiritual disorientation. Therefore, the integration of Sufi education into the Islamic education system is a crucial strategy for shaping a generation that is intellectually superior, emotionally mature, morally noble, and spiritually strong.

The Role of Fatwas Issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council in the Social Life of Muslims in Indonesia

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) is a religious institution that plays a strategic role in guiding the lives of Muslims in Indonesia. One of the MUI's primary tools is the fatwa an Islamic legal opinion issued by ulema based on the Qur'an, hadith, *ijma'*, and *ijtihad* regarding various issues arising in society. Although MUI fatwas are not legally binding under positive law, they exert a significant influence on the social, cultural, economic, and religious lives of Muslims. In this context, MUI fatwas serve as both a moral guide and a religious reference for Indonesia's Muslim community as they navigate the dynamics of modern life (Ansor & Ulumuddin, 2020).

In the development of Muslim social civilization in Indonesia, MUI fatwas serve as instruments of social engineering. Fatwas not only clarify the legal ruling on an issue but also guide changes in public behavior to align with Islamic values. Various fatwas on topics ranging from family matters and Islamic economics to health and community life demonstrate that the MUI seeks to address contemporary challenges through a contextual approach to Islamic law. Thus, fatwas serve as a means to foster social order, strengthen public ethics, and safeguard the welfare of the Muslim community amid ongoing social change (Setiyanto, 2018).

Furthermore, MUI fatwas play a vital role in maintaining unity and stability among the Muslim community. As a country with a diverse population, Indonesia requires religious guidelines capable of minimizing conflicts arising from differing viewpoints. Through its fatwas, the MUI seeks to provide religious legal certainty regarding various issues that spark debate within society. Fatwas also serve as a medium for dialogue between Islamic teachings and social realities, thereby strengthening social harmony and reinforcing the values of religious moderation in the life of the nation and state (Boy ZTF, 2012).

In the economic sphere, MUI fatwas have made a significant contribution to the development of the Islamic finance industry in Indonesia. Various fatwas issued by the National Sharia Council (DSN-MUI) serve as the operational foundation for Islamic banking, Islamic insurance, the Islamic capital market, and other financial institutions. These fatwas provide legal certainty under Sharia law for business operators while also enhancing public confidence in the Islamic economic system. The rapid growth of the Islamic economy demonstrates that MUI fatwas not only serve as religious legal instruments but also play a vital role in the economic development and cultural advancement of the Muslim community in Indonesia (Hamzah, 2018).

In the digital age, the role of MUI fatwas faces increasingly complex challenges. Advances in information technology have led the public to obtain various religious references from social media and a diverse range of religious figures, thereby frequently testing the authority of MUI fatwas.

Nevertheless, the MUI retains its legitimacy as an official institution that brings together scholars from various Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Therefore, the MUI is called upon to continue strengthening the quality of its research, expanding digital literacy, and communicating fatwas in a way that remains relevant to the needs of modern society without neglecting the principles of Islamic law (Zuhri, 2022).

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the fatwas issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) play a very important role in shaping the social civilization of the Muslim community in Indonesia. Fatwas not only serve as guidelines for religious law but also function as instruments of social change, strengthen community unity, drive the development of the Islamic economy, and provide solutions to various contemporary issues. By adhering to moderate and contextual Islamic values, MUI fatwas are expected to continue making positive contributions toward the creation of a religious, harmonious, just, and civilized Indonesian society.

The Dimensions of Sufi Education in the MUI Fatwa on Guidelines for Social Interaction on Social Media

For the digital and global community, social media has become a platform for social interaction both in terms of communication and information across all aspects of life. However, in practice, the use of social media is often counterproductive to the importance of fostering harmonious social interaction (*muamalah*) (Islamy, 2021). This problem is no exception when it comes to da'wah activities on social media (Akmaliah, 2020).

The various issues mentioned above, coupled with the significant amount of Islamic religious activity on social media, have sparked social and religious controversies within the community (Islamy et al., 2024). Moreover, the emergence of artificial intelligence also presents various challenges for Muslims in using social media responsibly in the digital space (Utami et al., 2026). In fact, the emergence of AI has opened up new avenues for approaches in Islamic studies related to digital research (Adinugraha et al., 2026). In practice, such circumstances require a set of norms that can shape the understanding and attitudes regarding the use of social media in *muamalah*, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 on the Laws and Guidelines for *Muamalah* Through Social Media.

The results of this study conclude that there is a dimension of Sufi educational values in the MUI fatwa regarding guidelines for social interactions on social media. A further elaboration is as follows:

The Value of Tahqiq al-Ihsan in Guidelines for Building a Humanistic Social Civilization

Social conflict on social media is a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly complex as the intensity of digital interactions rises and information spreads more easily without adequate verification. The open, fast-paced, and algorithm-driven nature of social media often reinforces the polarization of opinions through the formation of echo chambers and filter bubbles, causing users to be exposed primarily to information that aligns with their own views and to tend to reject differing perspectives. These conditions fuel the rise of hate speech, the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, and identity-based conflicts such as those rooted in religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation. Furthermore, user anonymity and low digital literacy also increase the likelihood of aggressive behavior and dehumanization in online communication, so that conflicts arising from differences of opinion can escalate into widespread social strife that threatens societal cohesion. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy, communication ethics, and critical thinking skills is a strategic step toward building a social media space that is more dialogic, inclusive, and oriented toward constructive conflict resolution (Cinelli et al., 2021). In this context, the transmission of

humanistic and transformative Islamic educational values in building a civilization of social interaction among Muslims has become a matter of urgency (Bisri et al., 2026).

The MUI fatwa on guidelines for social media interactions, among other things, emphasizes that social media should be used as a medium to foster a positive society, whether in terms of social relations, the dissemination of information, da'wah, education, entertainment, politics, economics, culture, or other areas (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2017). These guidelines emphasize the importance of fostering an open and humanistic character among Muslims. They can also be said to align with the Sufi educational value of *tahqiq al-ihsan*. This conclusion stems from the fact that, from a Sufi perspective, the concept of *tahqiq al-ihsan* fosters spiritual development that encourages individuals to always be cautious, responsible, and focused on doing good in every action. In the context of social media use, the concept of *tahqiq al-ihsan*, in practice, shifts the orientation of social media users so that they do not merely use it as a means of digital communication but also as a medium for disseminating Islamic values that benefit both themselves and society.

The dimension of *tahqiq al-ihsan* in practical guidelines for social media use does not merely encourage users to be consumers of information who avoid negative behavior; rather, it calls on them to be agents of goodness who actively produce content that is educational, inspirational, and beneficial to the social life of the broader community. Based on this explanation, it can be understood that the dimension of *tahqiq al-ihsan* can serve as a holistic framework for digital ethics one that guides the use of social media not merely toward avoiding negative aspects, but also toward actively fostering the common good. This paradigm reinforces the idea that every digital activity can serve as a means of expressing devotion while simultaneously fulfilling social responsibility. Therefore, the existence of social media is not only evaluated from a technological perspective but, above all, by the extent to which it can serve as a vehicle for fostering spiritual values, humanity, and benefits for communal life.

It is imperative for Indonesia's Muslim community to develop a paradigmatic awareness of the values of "*tahqiq al-ihsan*" as outlined in the MUI fatwa regarding guidelines for social interactions on social media. Moreover, as a large religious community in Indonesia, Muslims play a strategic role in mainstreaming humanistic and moderate religious values as catalysts in actively contributing to the common good amid social diversity in the digital space (Hamdani et al., 2023). In this context, it is imperative that social media users be mindful of respecting cultural diversity, given the pluralism that characterizes all aspects of social life (Hutabarat, 2023).

The inclusion of the Sufi educational value of *tahqiq al-ihsan* in the MUI fatwa on guidelines for social media interactions demonstrates that the MUI, through its fatwa authority, can serve as a platform for disseminating the religious attitudes of Muslims in order to foster harmonious interactions and promote the common good in the social media sphere. This finding reinforces the study by Shuhufi, Fatmawati, Qadaruddin, Basyir, Yunus, and Nainunis, which states that the MUI fatwa on social media interactions is, in practice, intended to foster harmonious social interactions.

The Value of Tahdzib al-Akhlak in Guidelines for Maintaining the Integration of Religious and Civic Life
The phenomenon of disintegration in civic and social life on social media is one of the consequences of increasing fragmentation in digital communication, characterized by political polarization, the spread of disinformation, hate speech, and the rise of identity politics. Social media algorithms, which tend to display content based on user preferences, reinforce the formation of echo chambers and filter bubbles, causing society to become increasingly compartmentalized into ideologically homogeneous groups and making it increasingly difficult to engage in rational dialogue with groups

holding differing viewpoints. As a result, differences of opinion—which should be a natural part of democratic dynamics have instead escalated into social conflicts that erode public trust, weaken national solidarity, and threaten national integration. Furthermore, the massive spread of hoaxes and digital propaganda also accelerates the process of delegitimizing state institutions and diminishes the quality of citizens' democratic participation. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy, digital citizenship education, and fostering ethics in public communication have become strategic priorities for maintaining social cohesion and reinforcing unity in national life during the digital age (Cinelli et al., 2021).

In response to the above issue, the second general guideline in the MUI fatwa on muamalah on social media emphasizes that Muslims should not engage in actions that contradict religious and state norms (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2017). These guidelines call for Muslims to demonstrate a character and social attitude that adheres to religious and state norms in their interactions on social media. This can be said to be in line with the Sufi educational value known as *tahdzib al-akhlak*.

Given the dimension of *tahdzib al-akhlāq* (the cultivation and purification of moral character) in the MUI fatwa regarding guidelines for social media interactions, in practice this calls on Muslims to use social media as a means of character development, so that interactions on social media are not merely understood as a space for freedom of expression where individual users can voice their opinions, but also as an ethical space that entails moral responsibility toward the rights, dignity, and honor of others. In this context, the practical dimension of *tahdzib al-akhlāq* can also serve as the basis for a paradigm of communication ethics that is not only normative but also transformative. Thus, the measure of the effectiveness of social media use is not merely compliance with legal regulations or social media platform rules, but also the extent to which such behavior demonstrates Islamic moral values that have been internalized by social media users.

The above discussion shows that the MUI fatwa regarding guidelines for muamalah on social media can also shape digital communication ethics based on Islamic morality by establishing moral values as the primary foundation of social interaction in the digital media space. This indicates that ideal digital behavior stems from moral awareness rooted in moral education, not merely from the existence of legal sanctions. It is here that the dimension of Sufi education within the guidelines for muamalah in the context of digital society leads to the development of digital character (digital character education) that is, the cultivation of individuals capable of integrating digital intelligence with spiritual maturity, ethics, and social responsibility. In this context, the manifestation of moderate Islamic religiosity in social interactions on digital media becomes urgent, as it not only strengthens an inclusive religious identity but also reinforces nationalism amid the nation's social pluralism in social interactions within the digital space (Nuralik et al., 2026). Moreover, the concept of moderate Islam is not a new phenomenon; rather, it is deeply rooted in the history of Islamic civilization (Putri & Winarto, 2026).

The inclusion of the Sufi educational value of *tahdzib al-akhlāq* in the MUI fatwa on guidelines for muamalah on social media indicates that the MUI, through its fatwa authority, seeks to foster a religious attitude among Muslims that upholds and safeguards national integration in their muamalah activities on social media. This finding reinforces the study by Ikhwanuddin and Islamy, which states that the MUI fatwa on social interactions contains an orientation toward the public interest of integrating individuals and society into a pluralistic social life.

The Value of Tazkiyat al-Nafs in Guidelines for Maintaining Social Pluralistic Harmony

Low information literacy on social media has become one of the fundamental problems in digital society, as many users lack the adequate skills to access, evaluate, verify, and use information critically. This situation leaves the public vulnerable to hoaxes, disinformation, misinformation, propaganda, and various forms of opinion manipulation that are spread on a massive scale through social media. The rapid spread of information, unchecked by critical thinking skills, encourages users to share content based on emotional appeal rather than the validity of the source, thereby accelerating the spread of misleading information and increasing the potential for social conflict. Furthermore, low information literacy reinforces the phenomenon of confirmation bias the tendency for individuals to accept only information that aligns with their beliefs while disregarding conflicting facts thereby hindering the creation of a rational and inclusive public discourse. Therefore, strengthening information literacy, digital literacy, and fact-checking skills must become an integral part of public education so that social media users can become critical, responsible, and ethical digital citizens in managing information (West & Bergstrom, 2021).

Regarding the issue mentioned above, the third guideline in the MUI fatwa on muamalah on social media states that it is important for social media users to exercise discretion when responding to content (information) in the social media sphere. First, content (information) may be true or false. Second, good content (information) is not necessarily true. Third, content (information) that is true is not necessarily beneficial. Fourth, content (information) that is beneficial is not necessarily appropriate for publication. Fifth, not all content (information) that is true is appropriate for publication (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2017).

The various considerations regarding content verification outlined above indicate that these guidelines for social media interactions call on Muslims to prioritize tolerance and discernment when engaging with diverse information (content) in the social media sphere. Such guidelines can be said to be in harmony with the Sufi educational value of *tazkiyat al-nafs*.

The dimension of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in fatwas regarding guidelines for muamalah on social media can be seen in various recommendations that encourage social media users to exercise caution and self-control in both receiving and disseminating information. The principle of *tabayyun* (verification of information) is one of the key teachings that guides social media users to first verify the accuracy of information before believing or sharing it. This approach not only prevents the spread of false information but also fosters intellectual discipline and spiritual maturity in responding to the flow of information in the digital age. Furthermore, the fatwa on social media conduct also prohibits various behaviors stemming from spiritual impurities, such *su'u al-zann* (malicious suspicion), *ghibah* (backbiting), *namimah* (sowing discord), the spread of hoaxes, and hate speech. When viewed from a Sufi educational perspective, these behaviors are not only seen as violations of social norms but also as manifestations of a soul that is not yet pure and unable to control its desires. Therefore, this prohibition holds educational significance, aimed at guiding social media users to purify their hearts of reprehensible traits (*akhlāq al-madhmūmah*). Thus, the use of social media should not be understood merely as a technical activity such as reading, uploading, or sharing content but also as an ongoing process of spiritual education that shapes one's character. Every decision to accept, reject, verify, or disseminate information is a form of self-control exercise that reflects the user's level of spiritual maturity. In this context, social media serves as a means to cultivate patience, prudence, honesty, and moral responsibility in communication.

Furthermore, the value of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, as outlined in the MUI fatwa regarding muamalah on social media, is realized through self-control before one produces or disseminates information. This approach indicates that the root of the problem of social media misuse does not lie solely in

technology or weak regulations, but rather in the inner state of social media users. Therefore, the solutions offered consist not only of legal regulations but also of spiritual guidance aimed at character transformation.

Based on the above discussion, it can be understood that the dimension of Sufi education specifically the value of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in the MUI fatwa on guidelines for social media conduct indicates that the fatwa not only regulates the exoteric behavior of social media users through normative provisions but also addresses the esoteric dimension as the source of such behavior. Thus, social media is positioned as a space for the formation of religious character oriented toward purity of heart, spiritual maturity, and moral responsibility in digital society.

The inclusion of the Sufi educational value of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in the MUI fatwa on guidelines for *muamalah* on social media indicates that the MUI, through its fatwa authority, seeks to foster a religious attitude among Muslims that respects social diversity in their *muamalah* activities on social media. These findings offer an alternative perspective to the study by Arisandy, Asmuni, and Nasution, which criticized the fatwa on the grounds that it had the potential to restrict freedom of expression on social media. This is because the findings of this study indicate that certain restrictions in the fatwa can also be understood as instruments for fostering ethics, self-control, and social harmony from a Sufi educational perspective.

Conclusion

The main findings of this study conclude that Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) not only serves as a normative instrument for regulating *muamalah* on social media but also contains a Sufi educational dimension that shapes the ethics of digital interaction. The value of *tahqiq al-ihsan* is reflected in principles that promote the realization of a humanistic, responsible, and public-interest-oriented digital civilization through the dissemination of accurate information, respect for human dignity, and the strengthening of social solidarity. The value of *tahdzib al-akhlak* is embodied in guidelines for regulating communicative behavior such as prohibitions against spreading hate speech, slander, backbiting, hoaxes, and incitement which serve to strengthen the integration of social, religious, and national life. Meanwhile, the value of *tazkiyat al-nafs* is reflected in the cultivation of spiritual awareness to control one's desires, prioritize the verification of information (*tabayyun*), and foster moderation and tolerance in maintaining harmony within a pluralistic society.

This study contributes to affirming that socio-religious fatwas not only produce regulatory legal norms but also serve as instruments of Sufi-based character education in shaping social media ethics. However, this study has limitations because the subject of the study is focused solely on MUI Fatwa No. 24 of 2017, using a normative-philosophical approach based on content analysis. This focus does not yet cover the implementation of Sufi values in social media practices, the dynamics of public acceptance of the fatwa, or a comparison with fatwas or digital ethics guidelines issued by religious authorities in other countries. Therefore, future research is recommended to adopt an empirical approach through surveys, interviews, or digital ethnographic studies to examine the effectiveness of the internalization of Sufi values in the behavior of social media users.

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