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Tarbiyah Ruhiyah as Islamic Pedagogy: Spiritual Mechanism and Moral Formation in Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Al-Ahmadi

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Abstract. *This study examines the role of the Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Al-Ahmadi (TNA) tarekat in shaping pious behavior in Malang, East Java. Employing a qualitative case study design with a phenomenological orientation, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 6 participants (including the current murshid, spiritual seekers, and pesantren administrators), participant observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal three interconnected mechanisms of pious behavior formation: formal initiation (bai'at) establishing spiritual bonds between the seeker and murshid; quantified spiritual disciplines including targeted zikr and Rajab fasting with ethical guidelines; and material symbols, particularly written talismans of the tahlil formula that serve as spiritual reminders. The spiritual formation process unfolds across three hierarchical phases, orientation and initiation, basic spiritual exercises, and intensive ritual practice, characterized by a gradual shift from external compliance to internalized commitment and demonstrating remarkable adaptability from strict systems to more flexible approaches. The practices yield transformative impacts across three integrated dimensions: spiritually, followers achieve inner tranquility and experience profound states of ecstasy and spiritual unveiling; morally, documented cases show radical transformation of individuals with histories of addiction and criminal behavior; and socially, the community exhibits strong solidarity and professionalized organization. It contributes to theoretical discussions on character education by revealing how ritual discipline, authoritative guidance, and material symbols collectively construct pious subjectivity, while also challenging linear evolutionary models by showing the coexistence of theological, metaphysical, and positive rationalities within a single educational institution.*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Al-Ahmadi (TNA) dalam membentuk perilaku saleh di Malang, Jawa Timur. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif berorientasi fenomenologi, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan 6 partisipan (termasuk mursyid saat ini,

pencari spiritual, dan pengurus pesantren), observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan mengungkap tiga mekanisme yang saling terkait dalam pembentukan perilaku saleh: inisiasi formal (*bai'at*) yang membangun ikatan spiritual antara pencari dan mursyid; disiplin spiritual terukur yang mencakup zikir dengan target tertentu dan puasa Rajab dengan panduan etis; serta simbol material, khususnya jimat tulisan tahlil yang berfungsi sebagai pengingat spiritual. Proses pembinaan spiritual berlangsung dalam tiga fase hierarkis, orientasi dan inisiasi, latihan dasar spiritual, dan praktik ritual intensif, yang ditandai dengan pergeseran bertahap dari kepatuhan eksternal menuju komitmen yang terinternalisasi, serta menunjukkan kemampuan adaptasi yang luar biasa dari sistem yang ketat menuju pendekatan yang lebih fleksibel. Praktik-praktik ini menghasilkan dampak transformatif pada tiga dimensi yang terintegrasi: secara spiritual, para pengamal mencapai ketenangan batin dan mengalami keadaan ekstasi serta tersingkapnya tabir gaib; secara moral, kasus-kasus terdokumentasi menunjukkan transformasi radikal pada individu dengan riwayat kecanduan dan perilaku kriminal; dan secara sosial, komunitas menunjukkan solidaritas yang kuat dan organisasi yang profesional. Hal ini berkontribusi pada diskursus teoretis mengenai pendidikan karakter dengan mengungkap bagaimana disiplin ritual, bimbingan yang otoritatif, dan simbol-simbol material secara bersama-sama membentuk subjektivitas yang saleh, sekaligus menantang model evolusioner linear dengan memperlihatkan koeksistensi rasionalitas teologis, metafisis, dan positif dalam satu institusi pendidikan.

A. INTRODUCTION

The increasing emphasis on cognitive and juridical approaches in contemporary Islamic education has created a significant pedagogical gap: the systematic cultivation of embodied morality and spiritual consciousness remains largely underdeveloped in formal educational settings. While Islamic schools effectively transmit doctrinal knowledge and ritual obligations, they often struggle to foster the internalization of moral dispositions that translate knowledge into virtuous action (Ahmad Fahrowi 2023; Toisuta et al., 2024). This gap becomes particularly evident in the context of widespread moral challenges, including declining ethical awareness, the rise of religious radicalism, and the erosion of traditional value systems, which demand educational models that address not only what Muslims should know but also who they should become (Khasani, 2020; Rubaidi et al., 2023; Susilawati et al., 2026). Within the Islamic tradition, Sufism (*tasawwuf*) has historically functioned as the primary vehicle for this deeper moral and spiritual cultivation, emphasizing the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) as the foundation for righteous conduct and the integration of knowledge with ethical practice (Al Turki et al., 2025; Khasani, 2020; Nolan-Arañez & Ludvik, 2018).

Unlike purely doctrinal or juridical approaches to Islamic education, Sufi pedagogy privileges direct experiential engagement with the Divine through practices such as *zikr* (remembrance of God), *muraqabah* (spiritual vigilance), and the disciplined guidance of a spiritual master (*murshid*) (Yurnalis et al. 2022; Zamzami et al. 2022). This educational

model, rooted in the Prophetic tradition of *ihsan* (worshipping God as if one sees Him) offers a holistic framework that integrates cognitive understanding, emotional disposition, and embodied practice into a coherent pathway toward moral excellence (Armstrong, 2001; Rubaidi et al., 2023). Despite its historical significance and contemporary relevance, the pedagogical processes through which tarekat communities systematically cultivate moral character and spiritual consciousness remain insufficiently studied, creating a critical gap in Islamic education scholarship that this research seeks to address.

The literature on Sufi orders (*ṭarīqah*) and moral education in Indonesia has largely focused on claims concerning religious moderation, social cohesion, and the integration of *sharīʿah* and Sufism as foundations for character formation (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Subchi et al., 2022; Umar et al., 2024). The prevailing consensus suggests that Sufi traditions do not merely cultivate individual piety but also foster social ethics such as tolerance, *khidmah* (service), and non-violence, which are internalized through habituation, institutional culture, the exemplary conduct of *kiai*, and social engagement rather than through doctrinal instruction alone (Hasibuan et al., 2025; Jusubaidi et al., 2024; Mashuri et al., 2024; Rivauzi et al., 2025). *Zikr, muraqabah*, and *khidmah* repeatedly emerge as mechanisms of self-cultivation and the development of social relationships, while the authority of the *kiai* or *murshid* is understood as a primary mediator in the internalization of values through personal example and direct guidance (Ahmad et al., 2021; Mashuri et al., 2024; Maslani et al., 2025). The integration of *sharīʿah* and Sufism is generally regarded as a foundation for cultivating moderate Muslim identities rather than as two separate domains that must be kept apart (Ahmad et al., 2021; Rivauzi et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, disagreements arise not over whether Sufism exerts an influence, but rather over the form that influence takes and the potential social and political costs associated with it (Rubaidi et al., 2023; Sodik & Sujibto, 2023). Some studies portray Sufi orders as a counterweight to legalistic formalism and radicalism, whereas others demonstrate that a strengthening of *sharīʿah*-oriented approaches may also erode the spiritual dimensions that were previously more flexible and inclusive (Ahmad et al., 2021; Rubaidi et al., 2023). Urban Sufism in Yogyakarta, for instance, rejects *Salafi* formalism while simultaneously criticizing internal exclusivism within *Sufi* orders, whereas the authority of the *murshid* may function both as a source of moral formation and as a site of political contestation and fragmentation (Sodik & Sujibto, 2023; Yusuf, 2020; Zamzami et al., 2022b). The most conspicuous gap concerns the disproportionate density of evidence on normative outcomes, such as moderation and tolerance, compared with the limited attention given to the micro-level processes through which values are cultivated through *baiʿat, talqīn, rābiṭah, sulūk*, and routine spiritual disciplines that ultimately shape everyday conduct (Chanifah et al., 2021; Muhammad et al., 2024).

Even studies that come closest to examining the mechanisms of Sufi practice, such as research on *khalwat* within the Naqshbandiyah Khalidiyah order in Ponorogo, remain predominantly phenomenological or descriptive and have yet to formulate these practices into a systematic pedagogical model (Yusuf, 2020). The corpus is also uneven, with considerably greater attention devoted to pesantren and Islamic higher education than to Sufi communities as autonomous educational settings, while studies of religious authority more often approach the issue through the lenses of politics or charisma than through pedagogical evaluation of when *murshid* authority deepens moral development and when it may instead reinforce problematic hierarchies (Chanifah et al., 2021; Jusubaidi et al., 2024; Muhlis et al., 2025; Zamzami et al., 2022b). This study addresses these gaps by positioning the TNA Order as a model of moral-spiritual education that can be systematically mapped, shifting the analytical focus from broad normative outcomes to the concrete mechanisms through which followers' moral dispositions are transformed through *baiʿat, talqīn*,

disciplined *zikr*, and the *murshid*–disciple relationship (Muhammad et al., 2024; Yusuf, 2020).

This study distinguishes the TNA from other Naqsyabandiyah branches lies primarily in its distinct lineage, institutionalized educational integration, and systematic ritual pedagogy. The TNA traces its authority through a specific chain of transmission from Syekh Maulana Muhammad Mudzar Al-Ahmadi, introduced to Indonesia through Syekh Abd Azim in Bangkalan, Madura, in the 19th century, distinguishing it from branches like Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah or TQN (Rohimat, 2021; Yusuf, 2020). This lineage is institutionalized through the mandatory *bai'at* for all students at Pondok Pesantren Raudlatul Ulum 2, embedding the *tarekat's* teachings within a formal pesantren curriculum and creating an immersive environment where spiritual formation is systematically integrated with character education. The ritual curriculum itself is systematic and progressive, beginning with *dzikir nafi itsbat* (negation and affirmation of God's oneness), advancing to *muroqobah* stages including *muroqobah ahadiyyah* (contemplation of oneness) and *muroqobah ma'iyyah* (contemplation of God's accompaniment), and culminating in *dzikir ismud dzāt* (repetition of the Divine Name "Allah") (TNA 2010). These practices are further refined through *wuquf qalbi* (presence of heart) and *wuquf adadi* (maintaining odd counts), with students progressing only after mastering preceding stages. This structured, step-by-step pedagogical approach, combining an unbroken chain of *murshid* authority, institutionalized ritual discipline within a pesantren setting, and a clearly sequenced curriculum of spiritual practices, constitutes the distinctive educational mechanism of the TNA branch that this study examines.

Thus, this study aims to examine the pedagogical mechanisms through which the TNA tarekat systematically cultivates pious behavior, focusing on initiation rituals (*bai'at*), quantified spiritual disciplines (*zikr* targets and fasting regimens), and material symbols (written talismans) as vehicles for spiritual conditioning; to analyze the phased process of spiritual formation (*tarbiyah ruhiyah*) tracing the progression from orientation and initiation through basic spiritual exercises to intensive ritual practice (*khalwat* and *tawajjuhan*); and to assess the transformative outcomes of these practices on followers' spiritual consciousness, moral character, and social engagement, examining how these three dimensions are integrated and mutually reinforcing through a qualitative phenomenological case study of the TNA community in Putukrejo Village, Gondanglegi, Malang, East Java (Priyana et al., 2024).

The discourse of TNA can contribute to the broader discourse on Islamic education and spirituality in several significant ways. First, it provides empirical evidence that Sufi orders function not merely as esoteric fraternities but as comprehensive pedagogical institutions that systematically cultivate moral character through structured spiritual disciplines (Arroisi et al., 2025; Husaeni, 2023). Second, it demonstrates the continued relevance and adaptability of traditional Sufi education in addressing contemporary moral challenges, including addiction, social fragmentation, and the search for meaning in an age of material excess (Rosidi, 2024; Siswoyo & Fahrurrozi, 2023). Third, by examining the specific case of the TNA tarekat, it illuminates the distinctive educational contribution of the Naqsyabandiyah tradition within the Indonesian Islamic landscape, particularly its integration of *shari'ah* observance with spiritual cultivation (Priyana et al., 2024; Rosidi, 2024; Siswoyo & Fahrurrozi, 2023). The findings also can offer practical insights for educators and policymakers seeking to develop holistic character education models that integrate spiritual formation, moral development, and social responsibility within both religious and secular educational contexts (Adnan, 2022; An et al., 2024; Islamic et al., 2024).

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The research employs a qualitative case study design with a phenomenological orientation (Creswell 2014; Miles, Huberman et al. 2014). The primary design is a case study, bounded by the TNA tarekat community in Putukrejo Village, Gondanglegi, Malang, examined within its natural context to understand the contemporary phenomenon of spiritual education (Yin., 2009). However, because the research also aims to capture participants' lived experiences, subjective meanings, and intersubjective interpretations of spiritual practices and moral transformation, a phenomenological orientation is employed as an analytical lens (Husserl, 1990; Schütz & Wagner, 1975). Specifically, the study adopts Spiegelberg and Schuhmann (1994) procedures such as, "bracketing", "intuiting", "analyzing", and "describing", to explore how *salik* or *murid* experience and internalize the tarekat's pedagogical practices.

This study employed an integrated case study–phenomenological approach because the research questions required both contextual analysis of the Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Al-Ahmadi (TNA) as a bounded institution and exploration of followers' lived spiritual experiences (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). The approach was appropriate because institutionalized practices such as *bai'at*, *zikr*, and *khalwat* required contextual documentation, while experiences such as *jabdzah*, *mukasyafah*, and *sakinah* required phenomenological interpretation (Husserl, 1990; Moustakas, 2009). The case was bounded geographically in Putukrejo Village, Gondanglegi, Malang; institutionally within Pondok Pesantren Raudlatul Ulum 2; and temporally after 2010 under KH Yusqi Qosim. The unit of analysis comprised the interaction between institutional educational practices and followers' lived experiences of spiritual and moral transformation across institutional, interactional, and individual dimensions (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Schütz & Wagner, 1975).

Participants were selected purposively and subsequently through snowball sampling, resulting in six participants: four *salik* or *murid*, one *murshid*, and one *pesantren* administrator. Participants had practiced the *tarekat* for at least one year, with the sample determined by data saturation (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation of three ritual events, and analysis of the *Khojakan* prayer manual. Thematic analysis employed open and focused coding and was interpreted through phenomenological and social constructionist perspectives, particularly Berger and Luckmann's concepts of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation, respondent validation, and reflexive journaling, while informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw were maintained throughout the study.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Mechanisms of Pious Behavior Formation in TNA

The findings indicate that pious behavior in TNA emerges through three interconnected mechanisms: institutional initiation, quantified spiritual discipline, and materialized religious symbols. Murid 2 stated that new students are required to undertake *bai'at*, while Murid 4 associated it with *rabithah* and access to *barakah* through the *sanad*, indicating that initiation establishes both institutional commitment and spiritual authority. This finding extends Pinto's (2016, 2019) account of Sufi initiation as a process of subjectification through authority and spiritual power by showing that, in TNA, such subjectification (Schütz & Wagner, 1975) is embedded within the formal pesantren structure. From Berger and Luckmann (1991) perspective, repeated and socially typified practices acquire institutional character and become experienced as normative patterns of action. Thus, *bai'at* functions not merely as an entrance ritual but as the institutional

starting point for constructing the religious subject.

The second mechanism is "quantified spiritual discipline", evidenced by KH Yusqi Qosim's instruction to recite *tahlil* 100,000 times and Al-Ikhlas 12,000 times within 27 days, accompanied by fasting and prohibitions against backbiting, tale-bearing, and discussing others' faults. These practices were reflected in Murid 3's account that repeated fasting encouraged him to pause and reflect before speaking, while Murid 1 linked completing the daily *tahlil* count with a responsibility to act consistently with what had been recited. The finding therefore extends studies that primarily associate *zikr* with psychological well-being, self-control, and social effects (Observation 2025; Saúde et al., 2026; Muttaqin et al., 2025; Sufya, 2025) by demonstrating quantification and repetition as pedagogical mechanisms of moral internalization. In Berger and Luckmann's terms, repeated practices can become habitualized patterns that are subsequently internalized as part of subjective reality, thereby explaining how externally prescribed religious routines may develop into relatively durable dispositions (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

The third mechanism concerns "materialized spiritual practice", particularly the written *tahlil*. KH Yusqi Qosim instructed followers to write *lā ilāha illallāh* 100,000 times and retain the writing as a talisman, while Murid 3 explained that the object continually reminds its owner of sacred and moral dimensions and encourages prayer and avoidance of sin. This finding extends previous scholarship, which has discussed Sufi symbols and religious authority but has given comparatively limited attention to how material symbols directly participate in behavioral regulation (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Rosidi, 2024; Subchi et al., 2022). Theoretically, the written *tahlil* can be understood through Berger and Luckmann's (1991) dialectical movement of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, whereby religious meanings become embodied in an objective symbolic form and subsequently reproduced within everyday consciousness. Accordingly, the talisman is not merely a representation of spirituality but a material mediator through which religious meaning remains continuously available for everyday self-regulation.

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates a sequential yet mutually reinforcing process: institutional initiation establishes commitment (Observation 2025; Ahmad et al. 2021), quantified discipline habituates conduct (Chittick, 2022; Dodi & Abitolkha, 2022), and material symbols reinforce spiritual consciousness (Murid and Murshid TNA 2026). This interpretation integrates the accounts of Murid 2 and Murid 4 concerning *bai'at*, the instructions of KH Yusqi Qosim and experiences reported by Murid 1 and Murid 3 concerning disciplined practice, and Murid 3's account of the continuing function of the written *tahlil*. Whereas previous studies have generally examined initiation, *zikr*, authority, and symbols as relatively distinct dimensions, the present findings connect them within a single mechanism of pious-subject formation. Theoretically, this supports the Berger–Luckmann (1991) proposition that institutionalized patterns can move dialectically from socially produced practices toward objective norms and subsequently into subjective consciousness. The contribution of the TNA case therefore lies in explaining how religious practices become internalized as pious dispositions rather than merely demonstrating *that* tarekat practices are associated with religious or moral behavior.

Table C.1 Processes of Developing Pious Behavior within the TNA

Categorization	Key Findings
Spiritual Initiation	*Bai'at* establishes spiritual commitment, *rabithah*, and attachment to the *murshid* and *sanad* (Murid 2; Murid 4).
Spiritual Discipline	Quantified *dhikr*, fasting, and ethical restrictions cultivate discipline and self-control (KH Yusqi Qosim; Murid 1; Murid 3).
Moral	Repeated practices foster reflection, behavioral restraint, and the

Internalization	internalization of moral values (Murid 1; Murid 3).
Material Reinforcement	Written *tahlil* serves as a continuing reminder of spiritual obligations and encourages pious conduct (KH Yusqi Qosim; Murid 3).
Pious Transformation	Sustained spiritual practices contribute to stable spiritual awareness, moral conduct, and everyday self-regulation.

Source: Interview, Observation, and Documentation (2025).

2. The Process of Spiritual Formation (*Tarbiyah Ruhiyah*)

The foundational phase begins with the cultivation of *niyyah* and the orientation toward *taqarrub ilallah*, which KH Yusqi Qosim describes as the ultimate purpose of every human capacity and provision, indicating that spiritual formation begins by restructuring the meaning of everyday existence around proximity to God. From Husserl's (1990) phenomenological perspective, this orientation reflects intentionality, whereby consciousness is directed toward a transcendent object of meaning, while Abdalla (2025) conceptualizes *tarbiyah* as a holistic and gradual process aimed at forming the whole person rather than merely transmitting knowledge. This orientation is reinforced through formal initiation into the order. The Arabic prayer read during this phase articulates the comprehensive spiritual aspiration:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي وَأَوْلَادِي وَزَوْجِي وَتلَامِيذِي وَجَمَاعَتِي وَأَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ، وَأَهْلِ الْعِبَادَةِ، وَأَهْلِ بِرِّ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَأَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَأَهْلِ الْقُرْآنِ، وَأَهْلِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَأَهْلِ الِاسْتِغْفَارِ، وَأَهْلِ الصَّدَقَةِ، وَأَهْلِ الذِّكْرِ

(*O Allah, make me, my children, my spouse, my students, my community, the people of knowledge, the people of worship, the people of filial piety, the people of Paradise, the people of the Quran, the people of prayer, the people of seeking forgiveness, the people of charity, and the people of remembrance*).

The prayer accompanying this phase extends the orientation from the individual to children, spouses, students, communities, and people characterized by knowledge, worship, filial piety, prayer, charity, repentance, and remembrance, suggesting that piety is imagined as a relational and communal project rather than an exclusively individual achievement. This finding supports Rivauzi et al. (2025), who emphasize the integration of Sufi spirituality with broader religious and educational formation, but extends that perspective by showing that the communal horizon of spiritual formation is already articulated at the initial stage of the pedagogical process.

The second phase involves structured daily practices through the Khojakan manual, particularly *istighfar* and *ṣalawat* as follows:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ × ٢١

(I seek forgiveness from Allah the Great, Whom there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal, and I repent to Him – 21 times)

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(O Allah, bless our master Muhammad and his family and companions) a specified number of times.

After that, the *murshid* also instructs *murid* to recite *zikr* and fasting which is associated ethical restrictions, through which spiritual ideals are translated into routinized embodied practices. From a phenomenological perspective, such repetition is significant

because meaning is progressively constituted through lived and embodied experience rather than through cognitive instruction alone, while Lave and Wenger (1991) situated learning perspective explains how such competencies develop through sustained participation in established communal practices. This interpretation is consistent with Ardianto et al. (2026), who found that *zikr*, *rabitah*, and *riyadhah* contribute to the internalization of *tauhid* across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, and with Muttaqin et al. (2025) and Zahra Zulaikha et al. (2025), who associate structured *zikr* with self-control and emotional regulation. However, the TNA evidence adds a pedagogical dimension that is less explicit in those studies: the numerical sequence and prescribed repetition transform *zikr* into a form of micro-curriculum, making spiritual discipline observable, repeatable, and gradually habituated. This process is particularly visible in Murid 2's account that his initial participation was motivated by "fear of the administrators" and "fear of the rules," suggesting that the meaning of participation changes as followers remain engaged in the practice.

The transformation from externally motivated obedience to personal commitment constitutes a critical third dimension of the process because it indicates that the effectiveness of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* lies not simply in behavioral compliance but in the changing subjective meaning attached to religious practice. Phenomenologically, this shift can be interpreted as a transformation of lived consciousness in which practices initially experienced as external obligations become incorporated into the participant's own horizon of meaning (Husserl, 1990; Moustakas, 2009). This finding complements Abdalla's (2025) emphasis on gradual transformation and Memon et al.'s (2024) discussion of renewal within Islamic educational formation, while adding empirical evidence of a motivational trajectory from fear-based compliance toward internalized commitment. The finding also extends previous research on *zikr*, which has predominantly emphasized its psychological and behavioral effects, by demonstrating how those effects can emerge through a temporal pedagogical process in which repeated participation changes the follower's relationship with the practice itself. In this sense, the TNA process moves beyond the simple opposition between voluntary and compulsory practice because institutional discipline initially structures behavior while sustained participation can progressively generate personal meaning and commitment.

The third and most intensive phase consists of *tawajjuhan*, *rabithah*, and annual *khalwatan*, which function as an escalation from routine spiritual practice toward intensified lived spiritual experience. Murid 4's statement that *tawajjuhan* occurs every Sunday night, together with the instruction to "present the face of your teacher" during *zikr*, indicates that the ritual deliberately structures attention and spiritual presence around the *murshid*, while Schütz and Wagner (1975) concept of intersubjectivity helps explain how such individual experience is cultivated within a shared ritual world. This finding resonates strongly with Yusuf (2020), who identifies *suluk, tawajjuhan*, and *rabithah* as interconnected components of Naqsyabandiyah spiritual practice, and with Wirianto et al. (2023), who position the *murshid–murid* relationship at the center of spiritual guidance.

However, the TNA findings extend these studies by conceptualizing weekly *tawajjuhan* and annual *khalwatan* as an escalating pedagogical architecture, rather than treating each ritual as an independent practice. The *Istimdat Latifah* prayer within the *Khojakan* manual further connects contemporary practice with the chain of spiritual transmission, supporting Wahyudi et al.'s (2026) argument that the *ṭarīqa* should be understood as a system of spiritual education while demonstrating empirically how doctrine, ritual, transmission, and lived experience are integrated within successive stages of formation. Thus, the overall process can be understood phenomenologically as

intentional orientation, embodied habituation, internalized meaning, and intensified spiritual experience, providing a processual explanation of tarbiyah ruhiyah that goes beyond previous studies that have generally examined its individual practices or outcomes separately.

Table C.2 Process of Spiritual Formation

Categorization	Key Findings
Niyyah and Spiritual Orientation	*Taqarrub ilallah* establishes the existential and communal orientation of spiritual formation (KH Yusqi Qosim; Abdalla, 2025).
Structured Spiritual Discipline	*Khojakan* practices transform spiritual ideals into routinized and embodied discipline through repetition, *dhikr*, fasting, and ethical regulation (KH Yusqi Qosim; Murid 1–3).
Internalization of Commitment	Participation develops from externally motivated obedience toward personal commitment, reflection, and moral self-regulation (Murid 2; Abdalla, 2025; Memon et al., 2024).
Intensified Spiritual Experience	*Tawajjuhan*, *rabithah*, and *khalwatan* deepen lived spiritual experience through focused attention, communal participation, and transmission (Murid 4; Yusuf, 2020; Wirianto et al., 2023).
Processual Spiritual Transformation	The overall trajectory moves from intentional orientation to embodied discipline, internalized meaning, and intensified spiritual experience, constituting an integrated architecture of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* (Wahyudi et al., 2026).

Source: Interview, Observation, and Documentation (2025).

3. Transformative Impact on Followers

The findings demonstrate that the TNA generates interconnected transformations in spiritual consciousness, moral character, and social engagement. The experience of *jabdzah*, in which *salik* retain cognitive awareness while experiencing involuntary bodily movement (Observation 2026), can be interpreted phenomenologically as an altered mode of lived consciousness and, within Sufi psychology, as movement toward *fanā'* and *baqā'* (Husserl 1990; Trimulyaningsih et al. 2024). The reported experience of *sakinah* as a "hold in life" similarly indicates that spiritual practice is experienced as an existential resource rather than merely a ritual obligation, consistent with Yusuf's (2020) findings that *khalwat* cultivates inner tranquility and socio-moral awareness. The repeated affirmation *tahlil* further consolidates *tawhid* as lived consciousness, as follows:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ الْحَلِيمُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

(There is no god but Allah, the Great, the Forbearing. There is no god but Allah, Lord of the Mighty Throne).

It is supported by Ardianto et al. (2026), who identify measured *zikr* as a mechanism for developing spiritual personality. Thus, TNA spiritual formation for *murid* involves not only religious cognition but also a phenomenological transformation in how *muhibbin* (followers) experience themselves, their bodies, and their relationship with God (Husserl, 1990; Moustakas, 2009).

Moral transformation is likewise evident in both extraordinary and everyday behavioral changes. Narratives concerning thugs and drug users who reportedly repented following the intervention of the *murshid* suggest that charismatic example and *barakah* can function as catalysts for moral reorientation (Observation, Murid2 and Murid 3 2026)

complementing Yusuf (2020) and recent research on the Haddadiyah tarekat concerning spiritual authority and moral transformation. The account of a thug who "immediately repented" after KH Qosim Bukhori provided financial assistance without seeking compensation particularly illustrates how generosity and sincerity can operate as embodied moral pedagogy, while the teaching that valid fasting requires honesty and avoidance of backbiting demonstrates the integration of ritual discipline and ethical conduct. This finding complements research linking *zikr* with self-control and psychological regulation (Imam Muttaqin et al., 2025; Zahra Zulaikha et al., 2025) and character formation through tarekat practices (Yani et al. 2025), but extends it by showing that moral transformation emerges from the simultaneous interaction of quantified worship, ethical regulation, and charismatic role modelling, rather than from *zikr* alone.

Social engagement represents the third dimension of transformation, particularly through collective *khalwatan* involving more than 1,200 participants and increasingly professional event management that generates surplus resources for pesantren development. These practices indicate that spiritual values such as *amanah* and *ta'awun* are translated into collective organization and institutional action, supporting research that conceptualizes tarekat as an agent of social transformation, cohesion, and moral moderation. The findings also resonate with Yusuf's (2020) conception of the *salik* as an "intersubjective human" whose spiritual development is inseparable from social and moral intelligence, as well as studies documenting patience, resilience, perseverance, and social responsibility among tarekat practitioners. From Schütz and Wagner (1975) phenomenological sociology, such transformation can be understood as the movement from subjective spiritual meaning toward intersubjective action within a shared social world, thereby demonstrating that TNA spirituality extends beyond private devotion into collective life.

The principal novelty of this study lies in integrating spiritual, moral, and social transformation into a single processual model of tarekat-based formation. Rather than treating *zikr* as psychological therapy, *tarekat* as social cohesion, or the *murshid* as charismatic authority in isolation, the findings demonstrate how quantified worship, ethical restrictions, charismatic modelling, material religious symbols, and collective organization interact to produce transformative outcomes (Saude et al. 2026; Wahyudi et al. 2026). The written *tahlil* is particularly significant because it functions as a material reminder that reinforces *habitus* and everyday self-regulation, extending scholarship on religious materiality and symbolic practice (Putri and Pratiwi 2026; Kurmanbek et al. 2025). The professionalization of religious events further challenges a simple tradition–modernity dichotomy by showing that institutional modernization can coexist with the preservation of spiritual authority and ritual meaning. Consequently, TNA can be conceptualized as a dynamic pedagogical institution in which spiritual experience, moral internalization, and social participation mutually reinforce one another, offering a distinctive model of spirituality-based character formation within contemporary pesantren education.

Table C.3 Transformative Impact on Followers

Categorization	Key Findings
Spiritual Initiation	*Bai'at* functions as the foundational mechanism that establishes spiritual commitment, *rabithah*, and attachment to the *murshid* and *sanad*.
Spiritual Discipline	Structured *dhikr*, fasting, and ethical restrictions transform religious teachings into repeated and measurable practices that cultivate self-discipline and self-control.
Moral	Continuous engagement in spiritual practices gradually shifts piety from

Internalization	externally regulated compliance toward internally motivated moral awareness and behavioral consistency.
Material Reinforcement	Written *tahlil* serves as a material reminder that reinforces spiritual obligations and sustains awareness of religious and moral values in everyday life.
Spiritual Consciousness	Intensive practices such as *dhikr*, *tawajjuhan*, *rabithah*, and *khalwatan* deepen participants' lived spiritual experiences and strengthen their sense of proximity to God.
Moral Transformation	The interaction of disciplined worship, ethical regulation, and *murshid* role modelling contributes to the development of self-restraint, sincerity, patience, responsibility, and other pious dispositions.
Social Engagement	Internalized spiritual and moral values are extended into collective practices characterized by *amanah*, *ta'awun*, mutual care, and organizational responsibility.
Overall Transformation	The TNA operates as an integrated spiritual-educational process in which initiation disciplined practice internalization spiritual consciousness moral transformation social engagement, demonstrating that pious behavior is formed through sustained interaction between religious practice, lived experience, social relations, and material-symbolic reinforcement.

Source: Interview, Observation, and Documentation (2025).

The conceptual finding of this study is a holistic-dialectical model of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* in which pious behavior is constructed through the reciprocal interaction of institutional structure, embodied spiritual practice, subjective internalization, and social enactment (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Husserl, 1990; Schütz & Wagner, 1975). The model begins with *bai'at* as an institutional mechanism that establishes spiritual commitment and authority, followed by quantified *zikr*, fasting, and ethical discipline that transform religious prescriptions into routinized bodily practices (Ardianto et al., 2026; Chittick, 2022; Pinto, 2016, 2019). Through sustained participation, externally structured obligations may acquire personal meaning and develop into internalized moral dispositions, while material symbols such as written *tahlil* continuously reinforce this process through everyday reminders (Abdalla, 2025; Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Memon et al., 2024). The model therefore moves beyond a linear structure of "instruction to behavior" by explaining a dialectical movement in which institutional norms shape practitioners, while practitioners simultaneously reproduce and reinterpret those norms through lived experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Husserl, 1990; Moustakas, 2009). This extends Berger and Luckmann's externalization–objectivation–internalization framework by demonstrating that religious meanings are not only socially institutionalized but also embodied, materially mediated, phenomenologically experienced, and socially enacted within a specific Sufi educational environment (Putri and Pratiwi 2026; Berger and Luckmann 1991; Schütz and Wagner 1975).

The second conceptual contribution concerns the position of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* within Islamic education, where spiritual formation can be understood as an integrated pedagogical process rather than merely the transmission of devotional knowledge (Abdalla, 2025; Rivauzi et al., 2025). The findings suggest that spiritual education can be conceptualized as a "processual architecture of transformation" comprising intentional orientation (*niyyah/taqarrub ilallah*), embodied habituation, internalization of commitment, intensified spiritual experience, and social participation (Husserl, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wahyudi et al., 2026). These dimensions are not independent stages but mutually reinforcing processes through which spiritual consciousness, moral character,

and social engagement become interconnected expressions of religious formation (Ardianto et al., 2026; Wirianto et al., 2023; Yusuf, 2020). The model consequently reframes *tarekat* not merely as a system of devotional practices but as a context-specific pedagogical institution in which spiritual experience becomes a medium of character formation and communal responsibility (Wahyudi et al., 2026; Yani et al., 2025). This conceptualization extends previous scholarship that has tended to examine *zikr*, *rabithah*, *tawajjuhan*, *murshid* authority, or social transformation separately by integrating them into one explanatory framework of spiritual-moral-social formation (Ardianto et al., 2026; Wirianto et al., 2023; Yusuf, 2020). At the same time, because the model derives from a single TNA case in Putukrejo, it should be understood as a "contextually grounded conceptual proposition rather than a universally generalizable theory", with its broader applicability requiring further testing through comparative, longitudinal, and mixed-method research (Wahyudi et al., 2026).

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the TNA community in Putukrejo constitutes a context-specific pedagogical environment in which *tarbiyah ruhiyah* develops through the interconnected processes of institutional initiation, embodied spiritual discipline, moral internalization, and social enactment. The findings show that *bai'at* establishes spiritual commitment and authority, quantified *zikr*, fasting, and ethical restrictions habituate religious conduct, while written *tahlil* reinforces spiritual awareness through continuous material reminders. These mechanisms form a processual trajectory from intentional orientation and structured discipline toward internalized commitment and intensified spiritual experience through *tawajjuhan*, *rabithah*, and *khalwatan*, with the reported outcomes extending into spiritual consciousness, moral self-regulation, and social engagement.

The principal theoretical contribution is the "holistic-dialectical model of *tarbiyah ruhiyah"*, which conceptualizes pious formation as a reciprocal process linking institutional structure, embodied practice, subjective internalization, and social participation rather than as a linear transmission of religious instruction into behavior. The model extends Berger and Luckmann's externalization–objectivation–internalization framework by demonstrating, in the TNA context, how religious meanings become institutionalized, embodied through repeated practice, materially mediated through symbolic objects, phenomenologically experienced, and reproduced through communal action. It also advances Islamic education scholarship by positioning *tarbiyah ruhiyah* as a comprehensive experiential pedagogy in which spiritual cultivation, character formation, and social responsibility are mutually reinforcing dimensions of educational formation.

Practically, the findings suggest that selected principles of TNA pedagogy, such as sustained mentoring, disciplined habituation, moral exemplarity, reflective practice, and communal participation, may inform character-oriented Islamic education, provided that their application remains sensitive to institutional and theological contexts. However, these implications should be interpreted cautiously because the study examines a single TNA community and relies primarily on participants' lived experiences, observations, and contextual evidence; consequently, the proposed model represents a "contextually grounded theoretical proposition rather than a universally generalizable theory". Future research should therefore test the holistic-dialectical model through comparative and longitudinal studies across different *tarekat* and Islamic educational settings, complemented by mixed-method approaches examining how spiritual practices relate to moral development, social engagement, and well-being over time.

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