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TASAWUF AND MINDFULNESS THAT BRIDE ISLAMIC SPRITUALITY AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

Muhammad Aril1,Hafis Alfiandi
muhammadazi621@gmail.com1 Azhrialilhamharahap@gmail.com2

[12]State Islamic University of North Sumatra

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ABSTRACT

Sufism in Islamic tradition has long served as a path toward closeness to God through purification of the soul and control of desires. Meanwhile, mindfulness in modern psychology is practiced as a method to enhance present-moment awareness to achieve emotional balance and mental well-being. This article seeks to explore the intersection between Sufi teachings and mindfulness practices, examining how both approaches can complement each other in bridging Islamic spirituality and contemporary psychological approaches. This study employs a literature review method, analyzing classical Sufi texts alongside modern psychological research. The analysis reveals that despite originating from different cultural contexts, Sufism and mindfulness both emphasize inner presence, emotional regulation, and the journey toward spiritual peace. By understanding the integration of these two approaches, it is possible to formulate a more holistic model of self-development that enriches modern psychological therapies without neglecting Islamic faith principles. This integration also opens new possibilities for conceptualizing mental health grounded in divine values.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, the need for spiritual balance is increasing along with the complexity of psychological problems faced by humans. Contemporary psychology has offered various approaches to improve mental health, one of which is the practice of mindfulness. On the other hand, the Islamic tradition, especially through Sufism, has long contributed greatly to the development of spirituality through purification of the soul, self-control, and a deep contemplative approach (Brown, 2011). Sufism, as an inner dimension in Islam, emphasizes the importance of getting closer to Allah through the process of cleansing the heart, dhikr, and achieving the level of ihsan.

Although mindfulness and Sufism emerged from different cultural and historical backgrounds, both have common ground in fostering self-awareness, inner peace, and emotional balance. Research in psychology shows that mindfulness practices can consistently reduce levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Baer, 2003). However, the application of mindfulness in the context of Muslim society without considering Islamic spiritual values is often felt to be incomplete. Therefore, a Sufism-based approach can be a complement that enriches mindfulness practices with a deeper divine dimension.

Some scholars argue that the integration of Sufism tradition and modern mindfulness concepts can form a more balanced model of self-development, uniting psychological and spiritual aspects in one complete framework (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Sufism teaches inner presence in every activity, patience, gratitude, and awareness of the relationship between creatures and the Creator, which in many ways is in line with the goal of mindfulness to increase awareness of the present moment without judgment.

It is important to note that Sufism does not only focus on emotional management techniques, but also demands a deeper moral and spiritual transformation. Therefore, this comparative study between Sufism and mindfulness is relevant, not only in a scientific context, but also in the daily practice of modern Muslims who seek ways to harmonize mental health with spiritual piety.

Against this background, this article aims to explore the similarities, differences, and potential integration between Sufism and mindfulness, in order to offer a more comprehensive spiritual-psychological approach to addressing mental health challenges in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This approach was chosen to examine the concept of Sufism in Islam and mindfulness in modern psychology through analysis of written sources. Data were collected from various primary and secondary literature, such as classical Sufism books, books on mindfulness, and scientific articles relevant to the theme of spirituality and mental health (Sugiyono, 2015).

The data analysis process was carried out using content analysis techniques, namely by identifying, interpreting, and categorizing information related to the basic principles of Sufism and mindfulness. Each concept was compared to find points of similarity, difference, and the possibility of integration in the context of the development of contemporary spirituality and psychology (Krippendorff, 2004).

The validity of the data in this study is maintained by using source triangulation techniques, namely comparing various references from different disciplines to ensure accuracy and depth of understanding. In addition, the author strives to maintain objectivity by paying attention to the Islamic epistemological framework and scientific principles in modern psychology (Moleong, 2017).

By using this method, it is hoped that the research will be able to produce an in-depth and relevant analysis regarding the relationship between Sufism and mindfulness in bridging Islamic spirituality with the needs of contemporary psychology..

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The Power of Sufism in Bridging Spirituality and Psychology

Sufism, as a spiritual dimension in Islam, has a profound power in building a relationship between the spiritual aspect and the psychological health of humans. Sufism does not only talk about the relationship between servants and their God, but also about character building, emotional control, and mental balance, all of which are in line with the main goals of modern psychology. This is what makes Sufism have great potential to bridge the world of Islamic spirituality with the contemporary psychological approach (Nasr, 2007).

One of the main strengths of Sufism is its teachings on tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul). This purification involves the process of self-knowledge, control of lust, and awareness of the presence of God in every aspect of life. This process is similar to the concept of self-awareness in mindfulness, where individuals are required to be fully aware of their thoughts, feelings, and actions in a reflective manner (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Through practices such as dhikr, muraqabah (contemplation), and tafakur (reflection), Sufism teaches humans to always be present in the consciousness of God, while also fostering inner peace which is the foundation of mental health.

In addition, Sufism offers a comprehensive approach to healing the soul through the concepts of maqamat (spiritual levels) and ahwal (spiritual states). This spiritual journey teaches the importance of patience (sabr), gratitude (shukr), surrender (surrender), and divine love (mahabbah). These values are psychologically correlated with resilience, optimism, and emotional well-being, which are the goals of many positive psychology therapies today (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Sufism also emphasizes the importance of healing through healthy social relationships. The concept of ukhuwah (brotherhood) in Sufism shows how interactions based on compassion, honesty, and empathy contribute to emotional balance and the strengthening of self-identity. In psychology, social support has long been recognized as a major protective factor against stress and mental disorders (Taylor, 2011). Thus, the teachings of Sufism do not only focus on the vertical relationship of humans with God, but also build horizontal connections between fellow humans based on love and grace.

Furthermore, Sufism teaches the technique of muraqabah, namely the practice of full awareness of God's supervision, which in many ways resembles mindfulness training in psychology. This practice helps individuals to manage their thoughts, calm their souls, and organize emotional responses to various life situations. With awareness directed towards God, a person is invited to assess life events more clearly, reduce excessive anxiety, and develop a stable inner peace (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

Another strength of Sufism lies in its flexibility in accommodating changes in the times without losing its essence. In a modern context, the values of Sufism can be translated into spiritual-psychological therapy methods that are relevant to the needs of urban people who are vulnerable to alienation, stress, and existential emptiness. A number of contemporary studies have shown that a spiritual approach based on Sufism is effective in increasing psychological resilience and improving quality of life (Rothman & Coyle, 2018).

From these various aspects, it is clear that Sufism not only offers a path to spiritual closeness, but also provides a practical framework for fostering integral mental health. The combination of Sufism principles with modern psychological methods can produce a new approach to self-development and mental health therapy that is not merely technical, but also full of divine values.

Spirituality In Modern Psychology

In recent decades, there has been a paradigm shift in psychology, from a purely scientific-positivistic approach to a recognition of the importance of spiritual aspects in human mental health. Modern psychology has begun to recognize that spirituality, as an essential dimension of human beings, plays a major role in shaping psychological well-being. Figures such as Carl Jung have emphasized since the early 20th century that spiritual needs are an integral part of human personality development (Jung, 1933).

Spirituality in modern psychology is not limited to formal religiosity, but includes the search for the meaning of life, transcendental relationships, and a sense of connection to something greater than oneself. This is in line with the concept of self-transcendence developed by Viktor Frankl, where spiritual experience is the key to finding meaning, especially in the face of suffering (Frankl, 1985). Thus, spirituality is seen as a source of strength that helps individuals survive stressful and traumatic situations.

Within the framework of positive psychology, spirituality is even identified as one of the strengths of character that contributes to flourishing, which is the optimal condition in which a person lives happily, meaningfully, and productively (Seligman, 2011). Several empirical studies have found that individuals with high levels of spirituality tend to have lower levels of stress, greater optimism, and more effective coping abilities in dealing with problems (Pargament, 2007).

Mindfulness, as one of the popular concepts in modern psychology, also cannot be separated from its spiritual roots. Although in secular adaptations mindfulness is often removed from its religious context, its basic principles are still rooted in full awareness of the present moment, an attitude of acceptance, and inner presence, which are truly forms of profound spiritual experience (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

Furthermore, in clinical practice, the integration of psychological therapy with spiritual approaches has yielded significant results, especially in the fields of meaning-based psychotherapy and spiritual counseling. Therapists who pay attention to the spiritual aspects of patients are able to

help the recovery process more comprehensively, not only curing symptoms, but also strengthening the client's values, goals, and life expectancies (Richards & Bergin, 2005).

Given these developments, it is clear that modern psychology is increasingly opening up space for spirituality to be integrated into theory, research, and clinical practice. This context creates a great opportunity to present the richness of spiritual traditions, such as Sufism in Islam, as part of the contribution to the development of a more holistic and humanistic contemporary psychology.

DISCUSSION

The Order of Sufism in the Framework of Psychology

Sufism has systematic stages in the process of forming the human soul towards spiritual perfection. When placed within the framework of modern psychology, these stages in Sufism show similarities with the phases of personality development and self-actualization. This shows how Sufism can be used as a compatible approach to fostering one's psychological balance.

The first stage in Sufism is takhalli (emptying oneself of despicable traits). In this phase, a student tries to cleanse himself of negative traits such as arrogance, envy, showing off, and greed. In modern psychology, this stage is in line with the process of self-awareness and cognitive restructuring in which individuals learn to recognize and let go of dysfunctional thoughts and behaviors that are detrimental to their development (Beck, 1976).

After self-emptying, the next stage is tahalli (adorning oneself with admirable qualities). This includes cultivating values such as patience, sincerity, love, and humility. In a psychological perspective, this stage reflects the positive psychology phase where individuals build character strengths such as optimism, resilience, gratitude, and altruism which are important components in achieving psychological well-being (Seligman & Peterson, 2004).

The final stage in the spiritual journey of Sufism is tajalli (the illumination or manifestation of the Divine in the heart). In this phase, the individual reaches a high level of consciousness, where all aspects of life are filled with the presence of divine values. In psychology, this is comparable to the concept of self-actualization introduced by Abraham Maslow, namely the peak of personality development when the individual lives according to his deepest values and feels deep existential satisfaction (Maslow, 1968).

Each of these stages speaks not only of spiritual development, but also closely relates to healthy psychological growth. The journey of Sufism demands deep introspection, the formation of emotional regulation, and the development of harmonious social relationships, all of which are major focuses in modern clinical psychology and therapy (Corey, 2013).

Thus, understanding the order of Sufism in a psychological perspective opens up a great opportunity to integrate spiritual values into human mental and emotional development programs. Sufism not only functions as a spiritual path, but also becomes a transformative approach in forming a healthy, adaptive, and meaningful personality amidst the challenges of modern life.

CONCLUSION

Sufism in the Islamic tradition is a spiritual discipline that offers systematic stages in the development of the human soul, starting from self-purification, developing noble qualities, to achieving the highest divine consciousness. Each stage in Sufism shows strong relevance to various concepts in modern psychology, such as self-awareness, positive psychology, to self-actualization. This shows that Sufism is not only focused on the theological dimension, but also contributes to human psychological health.

On the other hand, modern psychology has evolved to recognize the importance of spirituality in maintaining mental well-being. Concepts such as mindfulness, self-transcendence, and meaning in life enrich the psychological approach in helping individuals achieve a healthy and productive mental state. Spirituality in modern psychology is not tied to a particular religious doctrine, but rather to a transcendental experience and connection with something greater than oneself.

The integration of Sufism and modern psychology shows that both have strong common ground. Sufism practices such as muraqabah and tafakur are in line with mindfulness training in contemporary psychology, both emphasizing the importance of full awareness, emotional management, and building meaning in life. With this integration, the approach to mental health becomes more complete, not only technically based, but also accommodating human spiritual needs.

Furthermore, Sufism offers a framework of values that can enrich modern psychology with ethical and transcendental dimensions. Principles such as sincerity, love, and patience strengthen the psychological resilience of individuals amidst the pressures of modern life full of challenges. Thus, Sufism can be a source of inspiration for the development of contextual and applicable spirituality-based psychological interventions.

Overall, Sufism and modern psychology have the potential to complement each other in the effort to build a whole person: mentally healthy, emotionally mature, and spiritually connected. The integration of the two opens up new avenues for forming a psychological approach that focuses not only on curing symptoms, but also on achieving a deeper and more meaningful balance in life.

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