# ACTUALIZING SUFI VALUES FOR THE MORAL FORMATION OF QUR'AN MEMORIZING STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY AT AL-HUFFAAZH, SIMALUNGUN

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the actualization of students' morality through the perspective of Sufism at the Tahfizh Qur'an Al-Huffaazh Foundation in Perdagangan, Simalungun Regency. Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings demonstrate that the internalization of Sufi values—such as sincerity (ikhlas), patience (sabar), trust in God (tawakkal), and humility (tawadhu)—is authentically manifested in the students' daily lives through habitual practice, exemplary conduct, and sustained supervision. These values significantly shape students' character, enhance the quality of Qur'anic memorization, and foster both religious discipline and everyday behavior. Nonetheless, challenges exist, both internal (e.g., peer influence) and external (e.g., gadget usage, social media, and romantic relationships). The foundation has implemented adaptive strategies, including restricting mobile phone usage, optimizing halaqah (group mentoring), individualized guidance, and collaborating with parents to address these issues. The study underscores the urgency of an innovative, collaborative Sufi-based moral education model as a solution for nurturing Qur'anic generations with noble character in the digital era.

**Keywords**: Student Morality, Sufism, Value Internalization, Tahfizh Education

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## A. Introduction

The formation of noble character stands as a central pillar of Islamic education, positioned directly after the domains of faith and worship (Nasywa Qriyayna La'aly, 2024; Nur Yasin, 2020). Good morality is not only a manifestation of faith but also serves as a benchmark for educational success and the holistic development of human character (Sidiq, 2024; Zakiyah, 2019). The urgency to reinforce moral values has become even more pronounced amid the rapid tides of globalization and modernization, which often trigger a shift in moral standards among the younger generation (Syukri, 2024; Ahmad Aqif Syauqi, 2024). Issues such as promiscuity, drug abuse, and the rise of anarchic

behavior among youth signal a genuine moral crisis, necessitating systemic solutions (Sugiarto, 2021).

Historically, Islamic boarding schools and Qur'an memorization institutions have been at the forefront of cultivating the character and morality of Indonesia's youth. However, much previous research has tended to focus on formal educational aspects, institutional governance, or academic achievements, while the dimension of spiritual value internalization, particularly Sufism, remains underexplored (Nurul Huda, 2024; Muzakkir, 2018). Sufism is believed to offer effective answers to contemporary moral issues by emphasizing inner transformation—purifying the heart of blameworthy traits and cultivating virtues such as sincerity, patience, reliance on God, and humility (Diklat, 2010; Abdullah, 2007; Nur, 2024). Moreover, research has shown that success in building student morality relies not only on the internalization of religious values on an individual level but is also shaped by environmental, familial, and digital media influences (Ahmad Aqif Syauqi, 2024; Nurul Huda, 2024).

Nonetheless, there remains a critical gap in the literature. Studies that specifically examine the current state of students' morality through the lens of Sufi values in daily life and Qur'an memorization are still scarce. Few works have thoroughly explored the interaction mechanisms between the foundation, family, and broader community in either supporting or hindering the internalization of Sufi values (Muzakkir, 2018; Nurul Huda, 2024). In addition, the increasing complexity of external challenges—from modernization to social media—demands innovative approaches to character education (Syukri, 2024). This underscores the need for research that addresses this gap and proposes adaptive character-building models suited to evolving societal dynamics.

Against this background, the present study specifically aims to analyze the actualization of students' morality at the Tahfizh Qur'an Al-Huffaazh Foundation in Perdagangan, Simalungun, through the perspective of Sufism. The primary focus is on the process of internalizing Sufi values in shaping students' character, along with their impact on the smoothness and quality of Qur'anic memorization. In addition, this study seeks to identify the factors that inhibit or support the implementation of Sufi values—whether originating from individual, family, or social contexts (Nasution, 2023). The argument advanced here is that the internalization of Sufi values not only strengthens the character and morality of students but also serves as an adaptive strategy for facing the

increasingly complex challenges of globalization and modernization. The findings are expected to offer both theoretical and practical contributions—as a reference for Sufi-based character education models in Islamic boarding schools and as guidance for policymakers and educational leaders in Indonesia.

## B. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain a deep understanding and analysis of the current state of student morality at the Tahfizh Qur'an Al-Huffaazh Foundation, Perdagangan, Simalungun Regency, from a Sufistic perspective. This approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to capture the meanings, processes, and internal dynamics of value internalization in students' daily lives, while allowing for a broad exploration of the individual, familial, and social factors influencing character formation (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2017). The site was purposefully selected due to the foundation's well-known commitment to character development and tahfizh education that integrates Islamic spirituality and character-building.

Data collection involved in-depth interviews with students, supervisors, teachers, and foundation administrators who have direct experience in Sufi value internalization. Interviews were complemented by participant observation of students' daily activities, particularly during character-building sessions and the habituation of values such as sincerity, patience, trust in God, and humility. Furthermore, document analysis was performed on official foundation documents, character-building programs, and relevant activity records to reinforce field findings (Yin, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019).

Data analysis was conducted interactively and cyclically, beginning with data reduction, presentation, and thematic conclusion-drawing. All analysis adhered to the Miles and Huberman model, with iterative verification until key patterns and themes that addressed the research focus emerged (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation and member checking, confirming findings with key informants. Additionally, the study upheld social research ethics, obtaining informed consent from all participants, protecting their confidentiality, and ensuring data were used solely for academic purposes (Creswell, 2014).

## C. Result and Discussion

## 1. Result

1) Foundation Profile and Character-Building System

In Tahfizh Qur'an Al-Huffaazh is a non-formal Islamic educational institution located in Perdagangan, Simalungun. It was established by community leaders and Islamic education advocates concerned about the lack of platforms for nurturing youth focused on Qur'an memorization and the inculcation of noble character. From its inception, the foundation has welcomed students from various backgrounds, including both pesantren and non-pesantren families, with the primary aim of producing Qur'an memorizers (hafidz and hafidzah) of sound Islamic character.

Each year, the foundation accepts dozens of male and female students who reside in the boarding facilities. Students, mostly from Simalungun and its surroundings, participate in a boarding school system. Their daily routines stretch from dawn to night, beginning with congregational dawn prayer, followed by tahfizh halaqah, Qur'anic memorization sessions, Islamic lessons, and character-building and etiquette activities. The foundation also regularly holds communal dhikr, reflection (muhasabah), and the habituation of virtuous deeds, such as mutual assistance and maintaining a clean environment.

Character-building is emphasized through intensive supervision and mentoring by supervisors and teachers. Students are accustomed to practicing etiquette in every aspect of life—from dressing and speaking to interacting with peers and teachers. Discipline is enforced with direct supervision and the inculcation of Sufi values such as sincerity in worship, patience in facing challenges, and humility in daily interactions. Character development is thus inseparable from the main tahfizh program, making it an integral part of students' lives.

The foundation also maintains strong relationships with parents, who regularly receive updates on their children's memorization progress and behavior. Activities such as family religious gatherings and parent meetings are scheduled to foster communication between the foundation and families. The surrounding community supports the educational process, engaging students in various social and religious activities beyond the foundation. This integration of educational, familial, and social support sets Al-Huffaazh apart as a center for Qur'anic memorization and Islamic character formation.

2) Internalization of Sufi Values

The internalization of Sufi values at Al-Huffaazh occurs tangibly in students' daily lives, both in the dormitory and school settings. Key values—sincerity (ikhlas), patience (sabar), trust in God (tawakkal), and humility (tawadhu)—are instilled through routine practice, guidance from teachers, and the exemplary conduct of supervisors. Sincerity is fostered by teaching students that all deeds, particularly memorizing the Qur'an, must be done solely for Allah, not for praise. As one student shared:

> "Our teacher always says that the key to maintaining and quickly acquiring memorization is drawing close to Allah through good character. We are constantly reminded to remain sincere in our efforts to memorize the Qur'an, patient when memorization comes slowly or when we struggle with recitation, and ultimately to entrust the outcome to Allah. We are also repeatedly advised to maintain proper etiquette, especially toward teachers and peers." (Interview with NM, April 28, 2025)

Patience is practiced through overcoming the difficulties of memorization, fatigue, and the necessity of repeating lessons. Students are taught to accept these hardships as part of their spiritual education and not to give up easily.

Trust in God is another core value, emphasized after diligent effort, encouraging students to leave the results of their work to Allah. They believe that ultimate success in memorization lies in Allah's hands. Humility is visible in students' refusal to boast about their achievements, their continued respect for teachers and peers, and their constant effort to uphold courtesy. This attitude is consistently monitored and nurtured by supervisors. Behavioral changes are reported directly by students, such as:

> "Since memorizing the Qur'an, I have become more organized and patient with teasing friends at school. I am more sincere in helping others, and memorization comes easier. I also obey my parents more, no longer talk back, and am more disciplined in congregational prayers." (Interview with RA, April 28, 2025)

These findings indicate that Sufi values are not merely theoretical but are actively internalized through practice, supervision, and exemplary leadership, resulting in positive behavioral changes and greater religious awareness among students.

3) Enhancing Religious Discipline (Especially the Five Daily Prayers)

One tangible impact of Sufi-based character-building at Al-Huffaazh is the improvement of religious discipline, especially in observing the five daily prayers. Many students, initially inconsistent in prayer, reported significant improvements after

engaging in the foundation's educational programs. Discipline is cultivated not only through strict schedules but also through understanding the spiritual importance of prayer as a means of drawing closer to Allah and facilitating Qur'anic memorization.

Students are encouraged to maintain devotion and communal spirit in prayer. Teachers regularly remind them not to neglect prayer, building collective enthusiasm for worship. The religious atmosphere and the proximity of dormitories to the mosque further reinforce this positive habit. As another student recounted:

> "Since memorizing the Qur'an, I have become more obedient to my parents and more serious in congregational prayer. My teacher said the key is prayer, to draw closer to Allah." (Interview with RA, April 28, 2025)

This discipline is reinforced by the understanding that prayer is the main channel for strengthening spiritual connection with Allah and a vital source of spiritual energy for Qur'an memorization. Teachers guide students to understand the meaning of prayer, which further motivates them to perform it well. Communal prayer not only creates routine but also strengthens bonds and discipline among students. These results affirm that religious discipline at Al-Huffaazh is cultivated not only through rules but also through collective habituation, teacher role-modeling, and a consistent spiritual ethos.

4) Challenges in Applying Sufi Values

The process of internalizing Sufi values at Al-Huffaazh faces a range of internal and external challenges. Internal challenges include peer influence and distractions in the dormitory or outside school. As one student noted:

> "Sometimes I want to focus on memorizing, but friends distract me, and it becomes difficult to concentrate." (Interview with SN, April 28, 2025)

External challenges include the use of gadgets, games, and social media. The allure of technology is considerable, diverting students' attention from memorization and worship. Many admit struggling to manage their time when using phones, especially for games or social media.

> "When I'm on my phone, I lose track of time, especially if friends invite me to play games or scroll TikTok." (Interview with FRA, April 28, 2025)

Romantic relationships are another prominent external challenge. Despite strict prohibitions, some students become involved in relationships that distract them from learning and worship. A teacher recounted:

"We once observed a student's declining performance and discovered it was due to a romantic relationship. As a non-formal school, we cannot fully control students outside the foundation, so this remains a challenge." (Interview with Ustadzah EY, April 28, 2025)

These findings highlight the need for ongoing vigilance and intervention to prevent such challenges from hindering character formation and memorization.

5) Strategies to Overcome Challenges

To address these challenges, Al-Huffaazh has implemented several strategies. The use of mobile phones is strictly limited during school activities, especially tahfizh sessions, to prevent distractions and exposure to inappropriate content. Group mentoring (halaqah) is optimized to strengthen students' mental resilience, providing a forum for character development, religious advice, and mutual support. Individual guidance is offered for students who display problematic behavior, with interventions tailored to the severity of the issue. As a teacher explained:

"When a student exhibits inappropriate behavior, we provide guidance. For serious violations, we meet with them face-to-face in the office; for minor issues, we address them on the spot. We also involve parents for collaboration." (Interview with Ustadzah MS, April 28, 2025)

Collaboration with parents is vital, ensuring supervision outside the foundation through regular communication, progress reports, and joint warnings where needed. The overall strategy centers on prevention, ongoing support, and sustainable character-building to ensure students remain steadfast in embodying Sufi values and are shielded from negative influences.

## 2. Discussion

This study demonstrates that the internalization of Sufi values among students at Al-Huffaazh is actively realized in daily life. Through routine habituation, exemplary guidance, and continuous supervision, values such as sincerity, patience, trust in God, and humility become living character traits rather than mere theory. This finding supports Al-Ghazali's concept in *Ihya Ulumuddin*, which holds that character formation requires not just theoretical knowledge but also repeated practice (Nurul Hidayah, 2023). Sincerity, for example, is fundamental to successful tahfizh learning, as highlighted by Nayal Maharani, who found that pure intention and sincerity lend meaning to the memorization

process and insulate it from extrinsic motivations. This reinforces Hery Nugroho's (2021) view on the importance of pure intention in shaping genuine Muslim character.

Patience and trust in God are equally pivotal. Students face numerous challenges, from difficult verses and physical or mental fatigue to temptations and setbacks. Patience not only enhances memorization but also builds mental resilience for life's trials. Mashar (2020) and Rahman (2020) affirm that training in patience and trust is foundational in Sufi ethics, fostering tenacity and perseverance. Field data reveal that students who are patient and reliant on God are more accepting of temporary failures and less prone to motivational decline.

Humility is expressed in harmonious social interaction—respecting teachers, avoiding arrogance, and cultivating mutual assistance. Al-Ghazali asserts that humility involves appreciating others' virtues and refraining from pride in one's accomplishments, a value strictly upheld at Al-Huffaazh.

The enhancement of worship discipline, particularly the five daily prayers, is a tangible outcome of Sufi value internalization. Students' discipline is nurtured not only through schedules and supervision but also through deepened understanding of worship's meaning. This aligns with Mahmud (2019) and Tsalitsah (2020), who emphasize the efficacy of religious habituation and environment in strengthening worship commitment. Behavioral improvements are reported by students, including better prayer attendance, increased filial piety, and improved emotional regulation.

However, the study also identifies real challenges. Internal pressures from peers can undermine memorization consistency and the application of Sufi ethics, as seen in Syifa Nurfadilah's experience. Externally, technology and romantic relationships pose risks to students' focus and spiritual resilience. Dede Setiawan (2021) and Adis Mulyadi (2023) highlight the potential of technological advances to erode moral quality if not counterbalanced by effective character-building.

To meet these challenges, the foundation's strategies reflect the findings of Suhayib (2016), who advocates for close collaboration among mentors, teachers, and parents. Limiting gadget use, providing individual guidance, and optimizing halaqah are all effective measures, as is involving families in monitoring students' social conduct outside the foundation.

Overall, the research underscores the critical contribution of Sufi-based tahfizh education in shaping outstanding student character, both spiritually and socially. The findings affirm Achmad Juanedi Sitika (2024), who argues that Sufi ethics are not just relevant in traditional boarding schools but highly applicable to modern education facing the challenges of the digital age. The study also calls for innovative character-building strategies, such as positive technology utilization and enhanced synergy among institutions, families, and communities. The implications are clear: Consistent and sustainable Sufi value cultivation is vital for producing Qur'anic generations who excel in memorization and possess noble character and spiritual resilience. Thus, the model implemented at Al-Huffaazh can serve as a reference for other tahfizh institutions seeking to integrate Sufi approaches into their systems and address the complexities of contemporary character formation.

## D. Conclusion

This study affirms that the internalization of Sufi values—specifically sincerity, patience, trust in God, and humility—has been effectively implemented in the daily lives of students at the Tahfizh Qur'an Al-Huffaazh Foundation, Perdagangan, Simalungun. Sufi-based character-building occurs through routine habituation, exemplary mentorship, and systematic supervision, making significant contributions to both character formation and the quality of Qur'anic memorization. Beyond spirituality and everyday behavior, the internalization of Sufi values encourages religious discipline (especially in prayer) and strengthens students' relationships with their families and social environments. However, internal challenges such as peer influence and external ones such as gadget usage, social media, and romantic relationships remain persistent obstacles.

The foundation has adopted adaptive strategies—such as restricting mobile phone use, optimizing group mentoring, personal guidance, and collaborating with parents—to ensure effective and sustainable character-building. The implications highlight the need for innovation and synergy among educational institutions, families, and communities to foster Qur'anic generations who excel in memorization and possess noble character and spiritual resilience in the digital age. Therefore, the Al-Huffaazh Foundation's model offers a reference point for other tahfizh institutions seeking to integrate Sufi approaches

in their educational systems and to address the increasingly complex challenges of contemporary character education.

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