Akhlak Tasawuf And Ethical Competence Of The Future English Teachers

Amanda Agni Oktavia Ramadhani [1]; **Siti Rahmawati** [2];
Roshim Ahmad Musyaffa [3]; **Shella Aulia Putri** [4];
Raysha Ramadhani [5]; **Najwa Amalia** [6]
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya
E-mail: amandaniviani489@gmail.com [1]; sitirahmawati2400@gmail.com [2];
sroshimahmadmusyaffa@gmail.com [3]; hella2311120026@ftik.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id [4];
raysha13ramadhani@gmail.com [5]; najwaamaliaw@gmail.com [6]

Address: George Obos Complex Street Islamic Centre Palangka Raya, Code post 73112

Abstract: *Sufism (tasawuf) approaches in education make a significant contribution to addressing ethical competence in the classroom, particularly for future English teachers. This article examines how Sufism principles can strengthen morality and ethics in the learning process. Sufism, with its emphasis on cleansing the heart and spiritual upliftment, offers a holistic method to educate students not only intellectually but also morally and emotionally. Through the Sufism approach, teachers can create a learning environment imbued with spiritual values such as honesty, patience, compassion, and respect. This research employs a qualitative method with a literature study analysis to explore how Sufi concepts can be applied to teaching strategies. The findings show that integrating Sufism into education can foster higher moral awareness among students and help teachers create a harmonious and productive classroom atmosphere. By applying this approach, future English teachers can become role models in teaching moral values..*

Keywords: *Sufism, moral education, English teacher, spiritual approach, ethics in education.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial foundation for shaping individual character and morality. However, in the context of English classes, teachers often face complex moral challenges, including student disobedience, disrespectful behavior, and lack of motivation to learn. Conventional approaches are often insufficient to address the underlying moral roots of these problems.

Amid the complexity of ethical competence in the classroom, the Sufism approach offers a deep and holistic perspective. Sufism, a branch of Islam that emphasizes the development of spirituality and an individual's relationship with God, has principles that can be applied in an educational context to strengthen students' character.

As interest in holistic and spiritual educational approaches grows, studies on the use of Sufism in educational contexts are increasingly emerging. However,

there is still a lack of understanding of how Sufi principles can be integrated into English language teaching practices.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the potential of the Sufism approach in addressing ethical challenges in the classroom for future English teachers. By deepening the understanding of Sufi principles and integrating them into the English teacher education curriculum, it is hoped that teachers can acquire effective tools for holistically shaping students' character.

THEORETICAL STUDY

a. Sufism Approach in Ethical Competence

The Sufism approach offers a rich view of spiritual and moral values in Islam. Concepts such as *tazkiyah* (self-cleansing), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *sabr* (patience), and *muhasabah* (self-introspection) form the basis of this approach.

b. Relevance to English Language Education

For future English teachers, applying a Sufism approach to addressing ethical competence in the classroom is highly relevant. The Sufism approach helps in cultivating students with strong moral awareness and the ability to interact positively.

c. Implementation of the Sufism Approach in the English Class Context

1. Introduction to the Concept of Sufism: Future English teachers need to understand the basic concepts of Sufism and how its values and principles can be applied in the context of moral education in the classroom.

2. Analysis of Ethical Competence in the English Classroom: Identify ethical competencies that are typical in English learning environments, such as disobedience, verbal impoliteness, or disrespect for cultural diversity.

3. Developing a Relevant Sufism Approach: Designing English language learning strategies that integrate Sufism values, such as through inspirational stories, reflective discussions, or collaborative learning activities that encourage empathy and tolerance.

4. Implementation in Learning: Applying a Sufism approach in every aspect of English learning, whether in learning materials, teacher-student interactions, or evaluating learning outcomes.

5. Evaluation and Improvement: Evaluate the effectiveness of the Sufism approach in overcoming ethical competence in the English class, and make continuous adjustments and improvements to improve the results.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the library research method to explore how the Sufism approach can enhance ethical competence in the classroom, particularly for future English teachers. This method was chosen because it enables the collection, analysis, and synthesis of various relevant and authoritative sources on the topic. The complete stages of this research are as follows:

1. Topic Identification and Selection:

- Determine a specific research topic, namely the Sufism approach in the context of moral education in the classroom.
- Identify research questions to be answered, such as how the principles of Sufism can be applied by English teachers to overcome ethical competence in the classroom.

2. Data Source Collection:

- Collect relevant library sources, including books, academic journals, articles, and other publications that discuss Sufism, moral education, and teaching strategies in the context of English education.
- Utilize digital libraries and academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and university libraries to access quality literature.

3. Evaluation and Source Selection:

- Evaluate the credibility and relevance of the library sources found. Choose the most authoritative and relevant sources to the research topic.
- Eliminate sources that do not meet credibility or relevance criteria.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

A. Definition and Principles of Sufism

Sufism has its roots in terms like "shafa" (purity), "ahl al-suffah" (the devoted companions), and practices of zuhd (asceticism and renunciation of worldly attachments). While there are multiple interpretations, at its core, Sufism emphasizes inner spiritual and moral purification as a means to draw closer to Allah. It involves a three-stage journey (Dodi et al., 2018; Nasution & Casmini, 2020; Supriyadi & Jannah, 2020):

1. Takhalli: Shedding vices and worldly attachments, like excessive materialism.
2. Tahalli: Cultivating virtues by replacing bad habits with good ones.
3. Tajalli: Reaching a state of spiritual presence where virtues become ingrained.

Sufi practices have origins in the Prophet Muhammad's companions and evolved into a formal discipline by the 3rd century AH (Fuad, 2021).

- Takhalli: "Don't be too enthusiastic about realizing the pleasures of life...because you underestimate wealth, rank and status" (Nur Cholis & Syahril, 2018). This involves resisting destructive desires and embracing self-control.
- Tahalli: "The human soul can be trained...shaped according to the human's own will" (Nasution & Casmini, 2020). This stage focuses on replacing negative habits with positive ones to cultivate good character.
- Tajalli: "A soul that is filled with praiseworthy qualities..." (Supriyadi & Jannah, 2020). This final stage signifies a deep spiritual connection with God.

Sufism offers a path towards inner peace and a deeper connection with the divine through self-purification and moral development.

B. Sufism's Relevance and Role in Education

Sufism, with its emphasis on inner peace and detachment from materialism, is experiencing a resurgence in major cities. Dodi suggests this is due to its ability to counter the negative effects of consumerism and political

instability (Dodi, 2018). The rise in Sufi study centers and publications reflects a growing recognition of its value in modern society (Putra, 2013).

The three core elements of Sufism - maqamat (spiritual levels), thareqat (the spiritual path), and hal/ahwal (inner spiritual states) - encompass virtues like sincere repentance, awareness of God's presence, love for the Divine, patience, trust, and certitude of faith.

1. Spiritual Values in Maqamat: a) Repentance b) Wara' c) Zuhud d) Faqr e) Shabar f) Tawakkul g) Rida

2. Spiritual Values in Things or Things: a) Muraqabah b) Qurb c) Mahabbah d) Khauf e) Thuma'ninah f) Yaqin. (Sodiman, 2014)

Integrating these values can have a profoundly positive impact on cultivating strong moral character in students.

C. The Inquiry Learning Strategy (SPI) and Sufism

The realm of English language learning in Indonesia's Madrasah Aliyah schools is witnessing a unique approach – the SPI (Strategic Partnership Inquiry) method. SPI integrates the moral and behavioral dimensions of Sufism into the curriculum (Rasyidi, 2004). This fosters a learning environment that transcends mere vocabulary and grammar drills, aiming for a deeper understanding and personal development alongside language proficiency. Here's how SPI achieves this:

- In-depth Discussions: SPI dedicates ample time to discussing English lesson materials through a Sufi ethical lens. Students analyze the language itself, but also delve into the underlying values and morals conveyed in the texts.

- Self-Study and Exploration: Students are empowered through independent study opportunities. They can explore how the materials connect to Sufi principles, fostering critical thinking and ownership over their learning journey.

- Student-Led Discussions: The approach encourages students to raise discussion points that bridge the lessons to Sufi virtues. This active

participation strengthens their understanding and communication skills, while fostering a collaborative learning environment.

- Guiding Questions: Teachers play a vital role by posing thought-provoking questions that highlight the moral and spiritual underpinnings within the English lessons. These questions guide students towards deeper reflection and a well-rounded understanding.

D. Ethical Competencies Needed by English Teachers

At its root, ethical competence resides in the human quest for knowledge and action that defines right and wrong behavior, the touchstone of ethics. Thus, an ethically competent person is one who through innate or learned behavior can distinguish between right and wrong and act accordingly (Menzel, 2016). Here are some examples:

a. Emotional engagement with students dealing with personal trauma or issues
b. Limitations of educational resources and facilities
c. Navigating political disagreements or school policy issues
d. Dealing with culturally biased or inappropriate content in learning materials
e. Managing inappropriate language used by students
f. Upholding academic integrity and addressing plagiarism

Case study example found in a study, English teachers in England faced ethical competence in dealing with differences of opinion between students. The teacher must decide whether to remain neutral or give his or her opinion, which can affect classroom dynamics and teacher-student interactions. In other research there was the use of learning materials that promoted gender stereotypes in English textbooks in Taiwan, then the use of abusive language by English teachers in classes in Japan." (Hargreaves, 2001)

E. The Teacher's Vital Role in Moral Education

Schools and teachers play a critical role in fostering students' moral character, especially when families may not prioritize moral education (Lickona, 2012). This role becomes even more crucial in such situations. Within the school environment, teachers function in three key capacities:

- Moral Authorities: They establish a climate of moral discipline by creating and enforcing rules that promote respect for themselves, peers, and established codes of conduct (Lickona, 2012; Durkheim, 2010). This fosters an understanding of rules as a means of maintaining order and not simply arbitrary impositions.

- Moral Exemplars: Teachers serve as role models by consistently demonstrating ethical behavior and treating students with respect and care (Koesoema, 2012). This builds trust and encourages students to emulate positive behaviors.

- Moral Mentors: Through interactions and guidance, teachers provide ethical direction, correcting misconduct and explaining the reasoning behind moral principles (Koesoema, 2012). This process helps students develop a deeper understanding of right and wrong.

F. Internalizing and Reflecting Akhlak Tasawuf

From a Sufi perspective, teachers must internalize and act upon key principles of akhlak (morality), adab (etiquette), and keteladanan (emulating the Prophet's character) (Koesoema, 2012). These principles form the cornerstone of character education, emphasizing the inseparable nature of spirituality and ethical conduct. In Islamic terms, akhlak encompasses moral duties beyond religious law, adab refers to proper conduct, and keteladanan reflects the exemplary character of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This envolves:

- Alignment Between Words and Actions: A teacher's actions must mirror their teachings, fostering trust and demonstrating the importance of moral consistency.

- Holistic Moral Framework: Moral principles should be applied consistently across all situations, creating a clear and coherent ethical compass.

- Simple Living: Detachment from materialism exemplifies self-control and reduces distractions, allowing for a deeper focus on moral development.

- Self-Purification: Teachers should continuously strive to overcome negative desires and cultivate inner purity, serving as a model for self-improvement.

- Sacrifice and Benevolence: Demonstrating a willingness to sacrifice for students and exhibiting kindness creates a nurturing environment that fosters positive social interactions.
- Mindfulness: Maintaining a present and mindful approach allows teachers to be fully engaged in interactions, fostering a deeper connection with students.

G. Evaluating Effectiveness of Akhlak Tasawuf Approach

Assessing the effectiveness of a Sufism-inspired moral education program requires a multi-pronged approach (Sabariah, 2020). Here are some key methods:

- Student Assessments: These include traditional tools like daily tests, semester exams, and final assessments to gauge students' comprehension and skill development.
- Benchmarking: Comparing program outcomes against established standards provides insights into overall effectiveness.
- Program Evaluation: Educational authorities can conduct comprehensive evaluations to assess the program's design, implementation, and impact.

In addition to quantitative measures, qualitative observations offer valuable insights into the program's impact on students and teachers. Studies have reported positive changes in several areas (Sabariah, 2020):

- Improved Student Engagement: Increased punctuality, enthusiasm, and commitment to learning are observed.
- Enhanced Teacher Practice: Teachers report increased creativity, improved emotional control, and a heightened willingness to go the extra mile for students.
- Stronger Relationships: Deeper understanding of students' unique characteristics fosters better teacher-student connections.

These findings suggest that a Sufism-based approach can contribute to a more positive and productive learning environment, fostering not just academic achievement but also personal growth and well-being.

H. Historical Origins and Modern Relevance of Tasawuf

Sufism, though a later term, has roots in the ascetic practices and devotion of early Muslims seeking closeness to God (Ghulam Falach & Assya'bani, 2021). Its core practices – dhikr (remembrance of God), riyada (spiritual discipline), and the maqamat (spiritual stations) – guide Sufis towards divine truth.

Islam, encompassing الـعـقـيدة (aqidah - creed), الـشريـعة (sharia - law), and الـتـصوف (tasawwuf - Sufism), provides guidance for this life and the hereafter (Ghulam Falach & Assya'bani, 2021). Sufism, with its emphasis on overcoming materialism, purifying the soul, and moral development through the seven maqamat stations, offers a unique perspective in today's world. In an era of consumerism, moral ambiguity, and fragmentation, Sufism provides a compelling counterpoint. It addresses challenges like environmental degradation and spiritual emptiness by promoting a holistic and spiritually grounded existence (Ghulam Falach & Assya'bani, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The exploration of Akhlak Tasawuf and its impact on the ethical competence of future English teachers reveals significant potential for enhancing moral education in the classroom. Through the integration of Sufism principles, teachers can create a learning environment rich in spiritual values, fostering moral awareness and positive interactions among students. The holistic approach of Akhlak Tasawuf offers a promising pathway toward guiding teachers who serve as exemplars of ethical conduct in the modern era.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for educators and teacher training programs:

1. Incorporate training on Akhlak Tasawuf principles into English teaching education curricula to equip future English teachers with the necessary skills to promote moral development in their students.

2. Encourage ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to deepen their understanding of Sufism and its application in educational settings.

3. Foster collaboration between educators, scholars, and religious leaders to explore innovative approaches for integrating Akhlak Tasawuf into English language teaching practices.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

To further advance understanding in this area, future researchers are encouraged to:

1. Conduct empirical studies to examine the effectiveness of integrating Akhlak Tasawuf principles into English language classrooms on students' moral development and academic performance.

2. Investigate the perceptions and experiences of English teachers who have implemented Sufism-based teaching approaches to gain insights into best practices and challenges encountered.

3. Explore the intersectionality of Akhlak Tasawuf with other pedagogical frameworks and cultural contexts to ascertain its applicability and relevance in diverse educational settings.

By addressing these areas of inquiry, researchers can contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the role of Akhlak Tasawuf in shaping ethical competence among future English teachers and ultimately enriching moral education in schools.

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