

Integration of Neo-Sufism in the Social Welfare Education Curriculum in Indonesian Islamic Universities

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Abstract. This study aims to investigate the integration of Neo-Sufi values into the Social Welfare Education curriculum in Indonesian Islamic universities. The focus of the study includes the relevance of the Neo-Sufi ethical-spiritual framework to graduate competencies, as well as an analysis of curriculum documents, conceptual models, and academic discourse. The research employs a qualitative method with a systematic literature review design, drawing from indexed scientific articles, academic regulations, and curriculum syllabi from three state Islamic universities. The findings indicate that values such as empathy, justice, sincerity, and social service are implicitly present but are not yet systematically structured within the curriculum design. No operational pedagogical model was found that explicitly references Neo-Sufism. The main conclusion asserts that the integration of Neo-Sufism into the curriculum represents a transformative opportunity to develop graduates who are not only professionally competent but also spiritually grounded. Future curriculum development should include explicit modules and pedagogical strategies rooted in Sufi values.

Keywords: Neo-Sufism, education, curriculum, spiritual

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic universities in Indonesia play an important role in uniting the dimensions of Islamic knowledge and spirituality in the higher education system. In the midst of the rapid flow of modernization and the complexity of social problems, social welfare study programs in Islamic campuses are expected to produce not only professionally competent graduates, but also agents of change who uphold spiritual values. In this context, neo-Sufism as a form of actualization of Sufism teachings that emphasize an active role in social life emerges as a transformative approach that has the potential to strengthen the spiritual dimension in formal education, especially in the field of social welfare.(Zulkifli et al., 2021).

Efforts to integrate Islamic science and social science have become the focus of curriculum development in various Islamic universities, such as the integration-interconnection model developed at UIN Yogyakarta and the “Spider Web” approach at UIN Jakarta.(Hanifah, 2018). The main goal of these approaches is to eliminate the barriers between religious and general knowledge, and to instill a spirit of knowledge that is theocentric, humanistic, and responsive to social reality. In this framework, neo-Sufism can function as an ethical and spiritual framework that enriches the social welfare curriculum with values such as sincerity, empathy, justice, and a spirit of service.(Masrur, 2014).

Various studies have underlined the importance of integrating Islamic values into the education system.Zulkifli et al. (2021)highlights that the plurality of integration approaches

in Islamic higher education reflects open and contextual epistemological dynamics. Hanifah (2018) also emphasizes the importance of eliminating the dichotomy of science in higher education as a foundation for scientific integration. The study by Chairy et al. (2024) linking Islamic education and spirituality with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), affirming that Islamic values contribute significantly to the achievement of social justice. Furthermore, the idea P. Siregar (2014) and The Last Supper (2014) developing the epistemology of Islamic education from the perspective of figures such as M. Amin Abdullah and Azyumardi Azra, who emphasize the importance of internalizing Sufi values in higher education. The thematic analysis approach explained by Nowell et al. (2017) supports the relevance of using a thematic approach in exploring Sufi values contextually, especially in examining the correlation between neo-Sufism and learning outcomes in the field of social welfare.

Theoretically, this paper is based on the paradigm of the integration of Islamic science as an epistemological foundation, and is supported by the framework of social neo-Sufism which emphasizes the importance of practical spirituality in social life. In this context, neo-Sufism is not only positioned as a set of ethical norms, but also as a pedagogical strategy that can foster critical awareness of students towards social reality and equip them with a solid foundation of spiritual ethics.

The novelty of this study lies in the placement of neo-Sufism as a curricular basis, not just as a moral aspect or personal worship. In other words, this study offers a conceptual and applicative approach in making neo-Sufism an integral part of the design of social welfare curriculum in Islamic higher education environments. Although several studies have discussed the integration of Islamic values or Sufism in education, in-depth exploration of the position of neo-Sufism as a foundation of the curriculum in the context of higher education in Indonesia is still very limited.

Therefore, the objectives of this literature review are: first, to identify the relationship between neo-Sufi values and the competencies of graduates of social welfare study programs; second, to explore the application of the Sufi value integration model in the Islamic education curriculum; and third, to compile conceptual recommendations for the design of a neo-Sufi-based social welfare curriculum that can be implemented strategically in Islamic universities in Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. This method was chosen to explore and analyze in depth how neo-Sufi values are integrated into the

social welfare education curriculum in Islamic universities in Indonesia. This approach allows for a systematic search of various sources of scientific literature, academic documents, and educational policies related to the integration of Sufi spirituality in the realm of higher education.

The research data were obtained from two types of sources, namely primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources include curriculum documents, syllabi, and Semester Learning Plans (RPS) from the Social Welfare Study Program in several Islamic universities, such as UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, and IAIN Salatiga. In addition, scientific journal articles that explicitly discuss the topic of integrating Sufi values in Islamic education are also part of the primary sources. Meanwhile, secondary sources include books, dissertations, theses, previous research reports, and relevant academic policy documents.

The data collection process was carried out through systematic searches of online scientific databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, Garuda, and various university repositories. In addition, a physical literature review was also conducted through the library to strengthen the results of the study. Document selection was carried out using inclusion criteria, namely including documents that explicitly or implicitly contain Sufi values, discuss aspects of the social welfare curriculum, and are published by credible academic institutions.

The document selection and screening process was carried out in stages and systematically. In the initial stage, 94 academic documents were found. After eliminating duplications and repeated versions of the same source, the number was reduced to 76 documents. The next process was carried out by assessing the title and abstract, which resulted in 48 documents that were considered relevant and read in full. From the full reading process, 32 documents were declared to meet the eligibility requirements for content. However, 14 documents were eliminated because they did not contribute directly to the focus of the research, such as being too individual theoretical or not based on an educational approach. Finally, 18 documents were selected as the main material for thematic analysis.

The data analysis technique uses a content analysis approach consisting of three main stages. First, data reduction is carried out to filter out parts of the content that are not relevant to the focus of neo-Sufism integration. Second, thematic categorization is carried out based on key themes that appear in the document, such as social spirituality, Sufi values, barriers to integration, and Sufi curriculum models. Third, a synthesis of findings is carried out by integrating the results of the analysis into a comprehensive conceptual framework of

understanding the position of neo-Sufism in the design of Islamic higher education curriculum.

To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation techniques are used by comparing the results from various types of documents and strengthening them with the theoretical framework of the integration of science and spirituality in contemporary Islamic education. Thus, this method is expected to provide conceptual and practical contributions to the development of a transformative and spiritual social welfare education curriculum based on neo-Sufism values.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study produces several key findings related to how neo-Sufi values have been or have the potential to be integrated into the social welfare education curriculum in Islamic universities. These findings are obtained from literature documents, including journal articles, curriculum manuscripts, and academic policies reviewed.

Islamic higher education has the responsibility to shape students not only as intellectuals, but also as spiritual and social beings. This is an ideal foundation for the integration of neo-Sufism into the curriculum, considering that neo-Sufism offers the values of tazkiyah (self-purification), khidmah (service), and sincerity as the core of human competence.

In his research, The Last Supper (2022) has developed a curriculum based on theological values and a humanistic approach that is in line with the principles of Sufism that harmoniously combines spiritual and social aspects. This shows that Islamic higher education has begun to explore an integrative foundation that allows the Sufi approach to be included in academic planning.

The results of the analysis of curriculum documents in three Islamic universities (UIN Jakarta, UIN Yogyakarta, and IAIN Salatiga) show that Sufi values such as empathy, social service, justice, and sincerity have been implicitly included in courses such as Social Professional Ethics, Philosophy of Science, and Muslim Personality Development. However, explicit mention of "neosufism" or social Sufism is almost non-existent. This indicates that the integration of spirituality is more implicit than operational.

For example, in the syllabus of the Social Professional Ethics course at IAIN Salatiga in 2022, the learning achievement is listed as "students have social sensitivity and are able to practice the values of justice and fair service based on Islamic values". However, the Sufi approach or spiritual model used is not explained. This is consistent with the findings of Chairy et al. (2024) which states that the Islamic education curriculum tends to instill universal values but has not yet conceptually developed an integrated spiritual framework.

Other findings show that the integration approach carried out in Islamic universities tends to be value-based, not structural-based. This means that the curriculum has not explicitly compiled modules based on Sufi spirituality, but rather instills these values through learning approaches and exemplary lecturers. This is reinforced by Hanifah (2018) which emphasizes that the integration of science in Islamic campuses is often implicit through the learning atmosphere and value narratives. The following is a table of the results of mapping the content of Sufi values in the social welfare curriculum:

Obstacles to the Conceptual Implementation of Neo-Sufism

Although Sufi values have been implicitly present, the main obstacle in the integration of neo-Sufism is the lack of operational literature on Sufi pedagogy in the context of social welfare. The available literature discusses Sufism theoretically or Sufism in individual spirituality, but has not provided a pedagogical model that can be directly adopted in the curriculum. This was also conveyed by The Last Supper (2014) in his thesis which highlights the gap between the ideal of scientific integration and curriculum practices in the field.

In addition, the dominance of the competency-based curriculum (KBK) approach with a job market orientation is also a challenge in itself. The focus on professional work output often shifts the importance of ethical and spiritual dimensions, except in personality courses. This weakens the position of Sufi values in curriculum design.

The Need for Neo-Sufi Curriculum Design

Neo-Sufism is an urgent need for a response to the challenges of contemporary society that combines the dimensions of active spirituality with a transformative social role. The Last Supper (2010) states that Sufism can be a solution to the spiritual crisis of modern society and create a balance between personal and social piety. This is in line with Chairy et al. (2024) which states that Sufi values have a strong correlation with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in terms of social justice and community participation.

Another finding highlights the urgent need to formulate a Sufi curriculum design based on social neo-Sufism. A number of studies such as by Zulkifli et al. (2021) and P. Siregar (2014) suggests the development of a transformative curriculum based on Islamic values that goes beyond the normative moral approach and moves towards socio-spiritual praxis.

1. From the synthesis of literature results, three pillars emerged which were recommended as a neo-Sufi curriculum framework.
2. Pillars of Social Spirituality, namely emphasizing the values of devotion, empathy, and social responsibility.

3. Pillar of Transcendent Consciousness, namely teaching awareness of the relationship between humans and God in social action.

Pillars of Self and Social Transformation, namely integrating the processes of tazkiyah (self-purification) and islah (social improvement) in welfare learning.

Efforts to integrate neo-Sufism into the social welfare education curriculum are closely related to the paradigm of integrative Islamic education, which rejects the dichotomy between religious and social sciences. Rijal (2015) emphasizes that the transformation of Islamic higher education into State Islamic University (UIN) brings important consequences in the development of a curriculum that unites spirituality and social sciences coherently. In this model, all types of knowledge are considered to originate from revelation and are part of devotion to God and the welfare of the people.

In the context of Islamic higher education, the integration of neo-Sufism is not only normative but also strategic as part of the reform of the education system that eliminates the dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge. Salahuddin (2017) explains that the development model of Islamic higher education aims to reunite the two poles of science in one complete paradigm, namely through the establishment of a State Islamic University that combines scientific and spiritual dimensions. This approach opens up a large space for the entry of Sufi values into the learning system on campus, including in social welfare study programs.

The integration of neo-Sufism in this framework is not only a form of strengthening transcendental values, but also answers the challenges of globalization that often erode the moral foundations of students. By referring to the structure of integrated Islamic education, the curriculum can be filled with Sufistic material that is theologically relevant and applicable.

The integrative paradigm provides strategic space for neo-Sufism values that emphasize spiritual ethics, social service, and transcendental consciousness to enter conceptually and pedagogically into the social welfare education curriculum. This approach not only balances professional and spiritual aspects, but also reconstructs Islamic higher education as a space for developing complete character.

The development of the Islamic education curriculum also encourages updating of content and methods towards integration between science and spirituality. The Last Supper (2021) in his research emphasized that Islamic education needs to design a curriculum based on religious values and the development of science. This space opens up strategic opportunities to include neo-Sufism values that not only form formal religiosity, but also reflective spirituality and social response.

This discussion examines the results of research on the integration of neo-Sufi values in the curriculum of social welfare education in Islamic higher education, by comparing them to relevant literature and models in contemporary Islamic education. The discussion is directed at evaluating the depth of integration, obstacles to implementation, and opportunities for the development of Sufi curriculum in Islamic higher education in Indonesia.

Neo-Sufism Integration Is Still Value Based, Not Structural

The finding that Sufi values are more often presented implicitly and normatively, rather than through an explicit curriculum structure, indicates that the operational Sufi pedagogical approach in academic environments is still limited. This is reinforced by the findings of The Last Supper (2014) which states that the integration of Islamic values into Islamic education is often symbolic and has not touched on the technical aspects of the curriculum as a whole.

A similar phenomenon was also found in research by Afifudin (2017) which shows that the spiritualization of education in Islamic universities is more focused on ritual activities and short-term programs, not on integration in core teaching materials. This causes Sufi values to have no direct impact on students' understanding and competence in the context of social welfare.

Then The Greatest Showman (2017) in his review of curriculum development in Indonesia shows that although there has been progress in pedagogical approaches and value integration, the Sufi or spiritual dimension has not received significant attention in curricular practices. The curriculum tends to focus on understanding Islamic legal texts and norms, rather than on the spiritual transformation of the individual.

Thus, the integration of neo-Sufism is present as an important offer to fill this gap, by presenting values such as sincerity, service, and tazkiyah (self-purification), and ihsan as the basis for the formation of students' social personalities.

Relevance of Sufi Values to Social Competence

Sufi values such as empathy, sincerity, service, and tazkiyah have a direct intersection with the competencies needed in the social work profession, such as the ability to build relationships with clients, social sensitivity, and moral fortitude. In the study by Chairy et al. (2024) it is underlined that education based on universal Islamic values contributes significantly to strengthening the professional character of graduates, including in the social humanities field.

Hasanah (2013) also emphasized that core character values such as honesty, caring, and resilience have been integrated into the curriculum and academic management in higher education, indicating that Sufism's transformation in education is not a utopia. These values are universal and serve as a bridge between Sufism and contemporary character education.

In line with that, research by E. Siregar et al. (2024) stated that Islamic spirituality instilled through a Sufi approach is able to encourage students' awareness of social missions, justice, peace, and also logical thinking, which are integral parts of social welfare education.

The same is true with the research results Sayyi (2017) who examines Azyumardi Azra's thoughts and concludes that the modernization of Islamic education curriculum must emphasize the integration of spirituality, rationality, and social involvement. Azyumardi rejects the secularization of the Western model, but encourages the Islamization of inclusive and contextual knowledge. The values of neo-Sufism that emphasize social and spiritual piety are very much in line with the curriculum modernization framework developed by Azra. Thus, the integration of neo-Sufism does not conflict with modernity, but rather strengthens the relevance of Islamic education in responding to contemporary social problems.

The Last Supper (2024) in his research proved that Sufism education taught in Islamic universities is able to form moderate and spiritual characters of students, such as humility, compassion, and tolerance between religions. This proves that Sufism education is not just theoretical, but has a real impact on the formation of the character of graduates of Islamic universities.

This model is particularly relevant for social welfare study programs, as students in this field are required to have social sensitivity and moral depth in addressing issues of poverty, marginalization, and social disintegration.

Need for an Operational Model of Neo-Sufism Curriculum

In the context of future development, the integration of neo-Sufism in social welfare education can refer to a framework such as that developed by P. Siregar (2014), namely a theo-anthropo-centric epistemological approach that places transcendental values in every stage of education, from curriculum design to learning evaluation.

Evaluation based on spiritual processes, for example through students' reflective journals in social practice. This approach is in line with the transformative model in Islamic education offered by Zulkifli et al. (2021) which emphasizes the importance of alignment between values, curriculum structure, and learning strategies.

As in research Ijudin (2018) who developed the concept of a non-dichotomous curriculum that does not differentiate rigidly between religious knowledge and general knowledge. This concept is very compatible with the neo-Sufi approach that combines spiritual and social dimensions as a single unit of educational practice. He emphasized that the non-dichotomous paradigm allows Islamic education to be more adaptive to the needs of the times without losing its spiritual roots.

In the context of social welfare education, a non-dichotomous approach can direct the curriculum to instill Sufi values in social project-based learning, community service, and student self-reflection.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The Need for This research has provided an overview that the integration of neo-Sufism in the social welfare education curriculum in Indonesian Islamic universities is currently more normative and implicit, not yet systemically structured in curriculum design. Although Sufi values such as empathy, sincerity, and social service have become part of the learning narrative, the existence of neo-Sufism as a pedagogical or curricular approach has not been explicitly operationalized. The main objectives of the study, namely to examine the relationship between neo-Sufism values and social welfare education competencies, to map existing integration models, and to formulate the direction of Sufism curriculum development, have been answered through literature analysis and synthesis of academic document content. These findings emphasize the urgency to develop a curriculum model based on social spirituality that can answer the challenges of professionalism and morality in Islamic higher education.

Suggestion

In relation to the results of this study, there are several suggestions for further research and development of neo-Sufism-based social welfare education curriculum in Indonesian Islamic universities in the future, namely:

1. Development of Explicit Curriculum Based on Neo-Sufism

Islamic universities need to design a curriculum structure that explicitly adopts neo-Sufi values, either through new courses, thematic integration in existing courses, or through social practicum modules.

2. Empirical Field Study

Further research is expected to examine the integration of Sufi values through a field approach, such as qualitative studies in class or observations of lecturers' teaching, in order to obtain a more applicable and in-depth understanding.

3. Compilation of Sufi Pedagogy Guidelines

It is necessary to compile textbooks, modules, and learning guidelines based on social Sufism so that lecturers have a structured pedagogical reference in forming student character.

4. Lecturer Training and Curriculum Evaluation

The instillation of Sufi values will be more effective if accompanied by spiritual pedagogical training for lecturers and outcome-based curriculum evaluation that measures students' transcendental and social dimensions.

5. Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration

It is recommended that there be collaboration between the faculty of da'wah, the faculty of sharia, and the faculty of social sciences in formulating a relevant, contextual, and applicable Sufi curriculum framework.

Thus, the development of social welfare education based on neo-Sufism is not only a normative discourse, but can be a transformative foundation for building graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually noble and resilient in carrying out their social mission. Contains conclusions from the results of the research carried out and recommendations based on the results of the research..

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