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RECONSTRUCTING ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A SUFISTIC SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This study aims to reconstruct Islamic spirituality from a Sufi perspective in response to AI-driven disruptions. Employing a qualitative library research approach, this study examines classical Sufi literature alongside contemporary scholarship on AI, digital religion, and spirituality. The study collected data from primary Sufi sources and peer-reviewed academic publications and analyzed them using content and thematic analysis. The findings identify four major dimensions of spiritual challenges in the AI era: algorithmic authority, digital dependency, existential crisis, and technological dehumanization. In response, this study proposes the Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF), comprising five interconnected dimensions: *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the self), *muraqabah* (spiritual vigilance), *muhasabah* (self-examination), digital *zuhd* (detachment from excessive technological dependence), and *ihsan* (spiritual excellence). Together, these dimensions provide a conceptual framework for strengthening ethical awareness, self-regulation, reflective thinking, and human-centered engagement with AI. This study's novelty lies in integrating classical Sufi principles into contemporary AI discourse through digital *zuhd* and the proposed SSIF. The study contributes theoretically to contemporary Islamic studies by articulating a Sufistic approach to AI-related spiritual challenges and offers a conceptual foundation for spiritually responsible, humanistic engagement with AI.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Digital Zuhd; Islamic Spirituality; Sufism; Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF).

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has marked a new phase of digital transformation, extending beyond computational assistance to generating texts, images, videos, data analyses, and automated decisions. Its applications have expanded across education, healthcare, economics, politics, and religious practices, reshaping how people acquire knowledge, interact, and interpret information (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020). Within Islamic studies, AI-based applications support Qur'anic research, hadith retrieval, religious text translation, and technology-mediated learning, creating new opportunities for accessing and

disseminating Islamic knowledge (Ahmad et al., 2025; Nasir et al., 2025; Syahir et al., 2025). However, these opportunities also raise questions about the implications of technological mediation for religious authority, spiritual development, and the relationship between human beings and God (Campbell & Tsuria, 2022).

One significant challenge concerns the changing conditions under which religious knowledge is produced, circulated, and received. Algorithmic curation and platform visibility increasingly influence which religious interpretations reach audiences, potentially shifting attention from scholarly expertise and established traditions of knowledge transmission, including *sanad*, toward popularity and algorithmic recommendation (Evolvi, 2022; Riches, 2021). Moreover, the growing accessibility of religious information does not necessarily lead to deeper spiritual understanding. When religious engagement becomes predominantly centered on consuming digital content, opportunities for contemplation, self-examination, and spiritual cultivation may be diminished. These developments raise broader concerns about digital dependency, existential disorientation, and the possibility that technological efficiency may overshadow the qualitative dimensions of religious life (AlMazaedh et al., 2026; Am et al., 2025; Campbell & Tsuria, 2022; Effendi et al., 2026; Hidayatullah, 2024; Sierocki, 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, human beings are not merely rational entities endowed with intellectual capabilities (al-'aql); they are also spiritual beings possessing the dimensions of qalb (heart), ruh (spirit), and nafs (self) (Rassool, 2024). Although AI can perform sophisticated cognitive tasks and simulate aspects of human communication, its computational operations should not be equated with human spiritual consciousness and moral responsibility. Studies of Islamic conceptions of the soul and human spirituality similarly emphasize the distinction between artificial intelligence and the metaphysical dimensions of human existence (Ahmad Syahir et al., 2025). From an Islamic psychological perspective, qalb, nafs, and ruh represent dimensions of spiritual and moral consciousness that AI cannot replicate (Arrozy et al., 2024).

Sufism (*tasawwuf*) offers a relevant intellectual and spiritual tradition for addressing this concern because it emphasizes the purification of the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), self-examination (*muhasabah*), spiritual vigilance (*muraqabah*), and the cultivation of *ihsan*, or spiritual excellence. These practices seek to transform inner dispositions and moral conduct rather than merely expand an individual's possession of knowledge. Other Sufi values, including *zuhd* (detachment from excessive worldly attachment), *qana'ah* (contentment), *tafakkur* (contemplation), and sincerity (*ikhlas*), may also inform a more reflective and disciplined engagement with digital technologies. Contemporary scholarship has associated *tazkiyat al-nafs* with spiritual awareness, self-regulation, and ethical development (Bayhaqi & Masnawati, 2024; Kahfi et al., 2023).

From the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali and Jalal al-Din Rumi, Sufism provides a foundation for maintaining spiritual balance amid the materialism and instant gratification characteristic of digital societies. Contemporary studies highlight the contribution of *tazkiyat al-nafs* to spiritual awareness, self-regulation, and social ethics (Fathan et al., 2025; Harahap, 2025; Ihsan et al., 2025). Accordingly, Sufism encourages the use of technology to support spiritual growth and closeness to God rather than fostering excessive dependence (Campbell & Bellar, 2023).

Although scholarly discussions concerning AI from Islamic perspectives have increased considerably in recent years, most existing studies focus on technological ethics, the legal dimensions of AI usage, AI-based Islamic education, and religious epistemology in the digital age (Elmahjub, 2023). Research that explicitly integrates Sufism as a spiritual paradigm for responding to AI-driven disruption remains relatively limited. While several studies have highlighted the importance of spirituality in confronting post-human conditions and digital transformation, they have not yet developed a comprehensive conceptual framework explaining how Sufi principles can be reconstructed as a spiritual foundation for Muslim societies in the age of artificial intelligence (Abdelnour, 2025a; Andhika et al., 2025; Ghaly, 2024; Kannike & Fahm, 2025; Wahid & Maskhuroh, 2024). Consequently, a significant scholarly gap remains in connecting classical Sufi traditions with contemporary technological challenges.

Accordingly, this study examines the spiritual challenges associated with AI and reconstructs Sufi principles into the Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF). The framework integrates five interconnected dimensions: *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *muraqabah*, *muhasabah*, digital *zuhd*, and *ihsan*.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative library research approach with a conceptual-philosophical orientation to examine the relevance of Sufi teachings in responding to the spiritual challenges associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI). Library research was selected because the study focused on the critical interpretation and synthesis of existing literature rather than the collection of empirical field data. This approach enables the examination of theoretical concepts, the interpretation of philosophical arguments, and the development of conceptual insights through engagement with relevant scholarly sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Defossé & Mullier, 2019; Jw, 1998).

The study drew on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources comprised classical and contemporary Sufi writings addressing spiritual purification, self-awareness, self-examination, detachment, and spiritual excellence. Secondary sources included scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles discussing AI, digital religion, Islamic spirituality, religious epistemology,

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and the ethical and existential implications of technological development. These sources were examined in relation to the study's central concern: how Sufi principles can provide a conceptual foundation for understanding and addressing spiritual challenges in AI-mediated environments.

Relevant literature was identified through scholarly searches and reference tracing, focusing on Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital religion, Islamic spirituality, and Sufism. Search terms included "artificial intelligence," "digital religion," "Sufism," "Islamic spirituality," "tazkiyat al-nafs," "muraqabah," "muhasabah," "zuhd," and "ihsan," used individually or in relevant combinations. Sources were purposively selected based on their scholarly credibility and relevance to the research objectives. Literature addressing AI-related spiritual challenges and Sufi principles of spiritual development was included, while sources lacking substantive relevance to the research questions were excluded. The databases and search period are specified according to the actual literature search conducted.

The literature was analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic interpretation. Relevant arguments were identified, coded, and grouped into themes concerning AI-related spiritual challenges and Sufi principles. The analysis combined concepts informed by the study's theoretical orientation with themes emerging from the literature. These themes were then compared and interpreted to establish conceptual relationships between technological challenges and the spiritual functions of Sufi teachings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Major Findings of the Literature Synthesis

The qualitative synthesis of the literature identified four interconnected dimensions of AI-related disruption in contemporary human spirituality: (1) the relocation of epistemic authority toward algorithmic systems, (2) digital dependency and reduced reflective engagement, (3) a crisis of meaning and existential orientation, and (4) dehumanization and the erosion of human authenticity. These themes emerged from comparing recurring arguments across the selected literature and grouping conceptually related findings.

The first theme concerns the growing role of AI systems in mediating access to knowledge, including religious and spiritual information. The second concerns the relationship between digital convenience, attention patterns, and opportunities for reflection. The third addresses the limits of technological efficiency in answering questions of purpose, meaning, and values. The fourth concerns the risk of evaluating human capacities primarily through computational, functional, and productivity-oriented criteria.

The thematic synthesis presented in this study categorizes the major findings of the selected literature into four interconnected dimensions of AI-

related disruption in contemporary human spirituality. Each theme represents a distinct yet interrelated analytical perspective, encompassing the shifting authority of knowledge toward algorithmic systems, the influence of digital dependency on reflective engagement, the challenges of technological advancement in addressing existential questions, and the potential erosion of human dignity and authenticity. The table also identifies the analytical focus and supporting scholarly sources for each theme, providing a systematic overview of how the selected studies contribute to understanding the complex relationship between artificial intelligence and human spirituality. The synthesized findings for each dimension are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Synthesis of AI-Related Spiritual Disruptions

Theme	Analytical focus	Supporting sources	Synthesized finding
Algorithmic epistemic authority	AI-mediated knowledge and information access	Sierocki (2024); Mat Yusoff et al. (2026); Ahmad and Ghafar (2026)	AI increasingly mediates how individuals access and interpret information, including religious knowledge.
Digital dependency and reduced reflection	Attention, instant access, and reflective engagement	Mat Yusoff et al. (2026); Evolvi (2022)	Digital convenience may create tensions between rapid information consumption and sustained self-reflection.
Crisis of meaning	Purpose, values, and existential orientation	Haugan and Dezutter (2021); Tang and Yan (2026)	Technological capability alone does not resolve existential questions concerning purpose, identity, and meaningful human experience.
Dehumanization and human authenticity	Human dignity, identity, and computational evaluation	Tang and Yan (2026); Tsamados et al. (2022)	Treating algorithmic classifications as authoritative may marginalize dimensions of human dignity, agency, and individual experience.

Note: The source counts and references should reflect the literature actually analyzed. A source may support more than one theme when its content substantively addresses multiple dimensions.

Synthesis of the Four Dimensions

The four themes are analytically distinct but conceptually interconnected. Together, they indicate that AI-related disruption extends beyond information processing to questions of reflective consciousness, existential meaning, and human identity. This synthesis provides the conceptual basis for examining Sufi teachings as a response to the spiritual and ethical challenges associated with AI. The resulting conceptual sequence is: AI Disruption-Spiritual Crisis-Sufistic Reconstruction-Humanistic Orientation-Ethical and Socio-Religious Outcomes

This sequence represents the study's conceptual interpretation of the literature, not an empirically tested causal model.

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Synthesis of Sufi Responses to the AI Paradigm

The comparative synthesis presented in this study examines how Sufi perspectives offer conceptual and ethical responses to the assumptions underlying the contemporary AI paradigm. The analysis identifies four interconnected dimensions: human nature, knowledge, human transformation, and human value. Each dimension highlights the differences between AI-related assumptions, which tend to emphasize computational capabilities, information processing, automation, and measurable performance, and Sufi teachings, which recognize the holistic nature of human existence, the integration of intellectual and spiritual knowledge, continuous self-purification, and the intrinsic dignity of human beings. By bringing these perspectives into dialogue, the synthesis demonstrates the relevance of Sufi thought as a framework for critically examining the implications of AI for human spirituality and ethical development. Table 2 presents the comparative findings, including conceptual responses and supporting scholarly sources.

Table 2. Comparative Synthesis of the AI Paradigm and Sufi Conceptual Responses

Dimension	**AI-related assumptions identified in the literature**	**Sufi conceptual response**	**Supporting sources**
Human nature	Human capacities are increasingly represented through computational and data-oriented functions.	Human beings possess interconnected physical, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, including *qalb* and *ruh*.	Newman et al. (2020); Aisah et al. (2026).
Knowledge	Knowledge is increasingly mediated by information processing and algorithmic systems.	Knowledge includes intellectual understanding, moral discernment, and spiritual experience.	Tsamados et al. (2022); Fathan et al. (2025).
Human transformation	Technological environments emphasize immediacy, automation, and efficiency.	Spiritual development involves gradual self-cultivation, reflection, and ethical discipline.	Akhyar et al. (2026); Yazid dan Ihsan (2026)
Human value	Human performance may be assessed through measurable functionality and productivity.	Human value also encompasses moral character, spiritual development, dignity, and responsibility.	Newman et al. (2020); Martin dan Waldman (2023)

These categories provide a conceptual bridge between the identified challenges and the Sufi principles used to formulate the proposed framework.

The Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework

Based on this synthesis, the study proposes the Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF) as a conceptual model that connects AI-related spiritual challenges with Sufi principles of spiritual development. The framework

comprises five core dimensions: *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *muraqabah*, *muhasabah*, digital *zuhd*, and *ihsan*. These dimensions represent complementary processes of self-purification, spiritual vigilance, self-examination, intentional restraint in technology use, and spiritual excellence.

The conceptual synthesis identifies four interconnected challenges that AI raises for contemporary spirituality: the shifting of epistemic authority toward algorithmic systems, digital dependency and reduced opportunities for reflective self-awareness, the crisis of meaning, and the risk of dehumanization and diminished human authenticity. These challenges suggest that the implications of AI extend beyond technological change to include epistemological, existential, and spiritual concerns. In this context, Sufism offers a conceptual resource for examining how technological engagement may be considered alongside spiritual awareness, ethical responsibility, and inner cultivation. This synthesis provides the basis for developing the Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF), which connects these challenges with core Sufi principles relevant to contemporary human experience. The findings are formulated in the Figure 1.

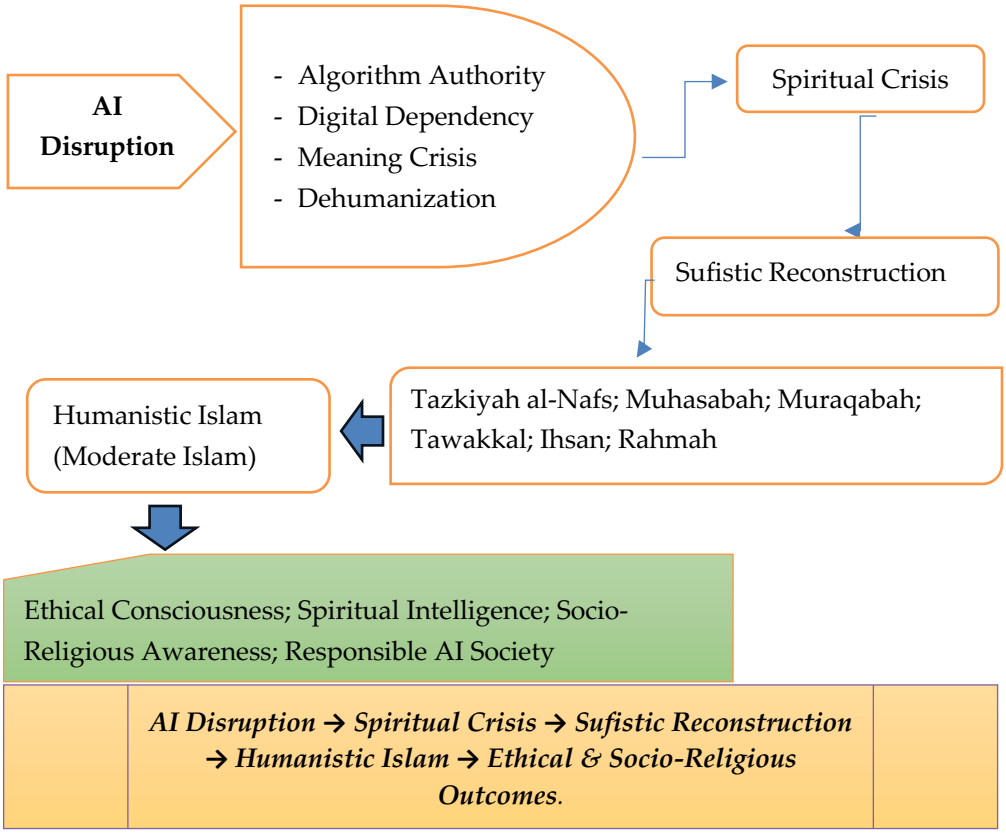


Figure 1. AI Disruption and Spiritual Crisis: A Sufistic Framework for Humanistic Islam

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DISCUSSION

Artificial Intelligence Disruption and the Spiritual Crisis of Contemporary Humanity

Algorithmic Dominance and the Shift of Epistemic Authority

From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, knowledge (*'ilm*) involves more than the accumulation of information; it also encompasses intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Classical Islamic educational traditions emphasize the roles of teachers (*murabbi*), chains of scholarly transmission (*sanad*), ethical discipline (*adab*), and spiritual experience in the acquisition of knowledge (Halstead, 2004; Sahin, 2018). From this perspective, AI may facilitate access to religious information, but it cannot by itself ensure the internalization of values and character formation associated with Islamic education.

The literature suggests that a central challenge of the digital age lies not only in accessing information but also in transforming it into meaningful knowledge, ethical judgment, and practical wisdom. Although AI enables rapid information retrieval, such access is not necessarily accompanied by critical reflection, contextual understanding, or moral discernment. Reliance on automated information may contribute to epistemological confusion or dependence on algorithmic systems, particularly when their recommendation and decision-making processes are not sufficiently transparent (Maclure, 2021; Sternberg & Karami, 2021). In religious contexts, existing studies have examined how digital algorithms may shape the visibility of religious knowledge, influence perceptions of religious authority, and affect the ways individuals construct and negotiate their religious identities in digital environments (Evolvi, 2022; Sierocki, 2024).

Digital Dependency and the Erosion of Reflective Consciousness

The literature suggests that intensive use of digital technologies may be associated with patterns of digital dependency, particularly when individuals increasingly rely on automated, personalized, and instantaneous services. Although AI-enabled convenience can support efficiency and productivity, it also raises concerns about the time and attention available for reflection, which is an important aspect of spiritual development. The extent to which these technologies affect reflective practices may depend on individual habits and the contexts in which they are used.

Within the Sufi tradition, self-examination (*muhasabah*) is a central practice through which individuals recognize their shortcomings, regulate their desires, and reflect on their relationship with God. Such reflection involves self-awareness and the sincere examination of one's inner condition (Al-Ghazali, 2013; Al-Muhasibi, 1996; Khasani, 2020; Muhasibi, 1999; Wahid & Maskhuroh, 2024). In digital environments characterized by frequent notifications, algorithmic stimuli,

and continuous information flows, maintaining space for this practice may become more challenging. This suggests a potential tension between patterns of constant digital engagement and the contemplative orientation emphasized in Sufi teachings.

Hartmut Rosa's concept of *social acceleration* provides a useful theoretical perspective for interpreting this tension. Rosa describes modern society as characterized by intensifying technological innovation, social change, and the pace of everyday life. These conditions may contribute to experiences of time scarcity, continual adaptation, and pressure to accomplish more within limited periods. In AI-mediated environments, the speed of communication, information production, and decision-making may intensify these pressures. As a result, individuals may become more responsive to external demands and digital stimuli, potentially limiting opportunities for self-reflection and contemplative engagement. Such conditions have been associated with concerns about alienation from oneself and the surrounding social world (López-Deflory et al., 2023; Rosa, 2003, 2013).

From a Sufi perspective, reduced opportunities for reflection may contribute to *ghaflah* (heedlessness), understood as a state of diminished awareness of one's spiritual condition and relationship with God (Al-Ghazali, 2013; Carr, 2010). This interpretation offers a conceptual lens through which to consider the spiritual implications of sustained digital engagement, rather than establishing that AI necessarily causes spiritual inattentiveness. Accordingly, the literature suggests that preserving opportunities for *muhasabah* and spiritual attentiveness may be important in navigating accelerated digital environments. Sufi teachings may therefore contribute to a more reflective approach to technology use by emphasizing intentional engagement, self-awareness, and the maintenance of spiritual priorities.

The Crisis of Meaning and Existential Emptiness in the AI Era

Technological progress does not necessarily translate into greater happiness, life satisfaction, or a stronger sense of purpose. Despite the convenience offered by contemporary technologies, concerns about loneliness, anxiety, depression, and existential uncertainty remain prominent in contemporary scholarship. Viktor Frankl's concept of the *existential vacuum* describes a condition in which individuals experience emptiness, purposelessness, or a diminished sense of meaning. This perspective provides a useful lens for examining how rapid technological change may intersect with individuals' efforts to find direction and significance in life.

In AI-mediated environments, increasing emphasis on efficiency, productivity, optimization, and performance raises questions about how human worth and achievement are understood. When these criteria become dominant,

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there is a risk that human experience may be interpreted primarily through instrumental and utilitarian measures, while questions of meaning, purpose, and existential responsibility receive less attention (Frankl, 1985; Haugan & Dezutter, 2021; Schimmoeller & Rothhaar, 2021). However, this concern does not imply that AI inherently diminishes human meaning; rather, it highlights the importance of examining the values and priorities that guide its development and use.

From a Sufi perspective, the crisis of meaning may be interpreted in relation to a weakened orientation toward the transcendent purpose of existence. When life is understood predominantly in terms of material achievement and instrumental efficiency, individuals may give less attention to their vocation as servants of God (*'ubudiyyah*) and their responsibility as stewards (*khalifah*) on earth. These concepts situate human existence within a broader spiritual and ethical framework that extends beyond productivity and material success (Attas, 1995; Chittick, 2013; Lima das Chagas & Muñoz García, 2023; Nasr, 2012; Wormley et al., 2025).

Sufism offers a perspective on meaning grounded in the cultivation of a relationship with God. In this tradition, the pursuit of proximity to God (*qurb ilallah*) provides a spiritual orientation through which human actions and achievements may be understood in relation to a purpose beyond material accomplishment. Al-Ghazali emphasizes the significance of knowledge of God (*ma'rifatullah*) in attaining tranquility of the heart (Al-Ghazali, 2013; Knysh, 2019; Soleh, 2022). From this standpoint, AI may support human activities and access to information, but technological capabilities alone do not necessarily address existential needs for meaning, love, and spiritual experience (Malik & Çelik, 2025). The concept of the *qalb* (heart), understood in Islamic spiritual thought as central to spiritual awareness and inner understanding, therefore offers a complementary perspective for considering dimensions of human experience that cannot be reduced to algorithmic processing (Abdelnour, 2025b; Hakim & Zaini, 2025; Lomas & Case, 2023). This perspective suggests that spiritual consciousness may remain an important resource for reflecting on meaning and human purpose in an increasingly AI-mediated world.

Digital Dehumanization and the Challenge of Human Authenticity

Sufism provides a framework for reflecting on human dignity through the cultivation of the soul, moral character, and proximity to God. This perspective shifts attention from computational performance alone toward the ethical and spiritual qualities through which human life acquires significance. Rather than positioning Sufism in opposition to technological development, this approach highlights its potential contribution to discussions of humanization, particularly where AI-related practices raise questions about human value, agency, and

authenticity. The relevance of Sufi thought in the AI era therefore lies in its capacity to provide spiritual and ethical resources for reflecting on the human condition amid rapid technological transformation (Çelik, 2023; Junaidi et al., 2024; Yudiono & Permadi, 2025).

Technological Rationality and the Reduction of Human Meaning

Al-Ghazali regarded reason (*'aql*) as an essential means of acquiring knowledge, while also emphasizing the significance of spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and inner realization in the pursuit of knowledge of divine realities (*ma'rifah*). From this perspective, knowledge involves not only cognitive understanding but also the ethical and spiritual formation of the knower (Al-Ghazali, 2013; Knysh, 2019). In the context of AI, computational systems can process extensive datasets, identify complex patterns, and generate sophisticated outputs. However, these capabilities should be distinguished from subjective experience and spiritual realization, which are central to many accounts of human existence (Çelik, 2023). The distinction is therefore not simply a matter of computational capacity, but also concerns how knowledge is experienced, interpreted, and integrated into moral and spiritual life.

Sufism's critique of technological rationality should not be interpreted as a rejection of technological progress. Rather, it draws attention to the limitations of an instrumental approach when efficiency, optimization, and productivity become the principal criteria for evaluating human life. Scholarship on technology and modernity has raised related concerns about the influence of instrumental rationality and social acceleration on how individuals understand their activities, relationships, and personal worth (Coeckelbergh, 2020; Rosa, 2013; Wormley et al., 2025). From this perspective, an excessive emphasis on measurable performance may leave insufficient room for qualities such as wisdom, empathy, self-reflection, and spiritual development.

The Ontological Limitations of Artificial Intelligence from a Sufi Perspective

Spiritual knowledge involves more than the accumulation of information or the intellectual comprehension of religious concepts. The concept of *ma'rifah* refers to knowledge of God associated with spiritual discipline, the purification of the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and the spiritual journey (*suluk*) (Chittick, 2013; Junaidi et al., 2024; Knysh, 2019). From this perspective, knowing is connected to the transformation of the knower, including the cultivation of spiritual awareness and the development of a relationship with the Divine. This understanding provides a basis for distinguishing the computational production of religious information from the experiential and transformative dimensions of spiritual knowledge (Çelik, 2023).

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The distinction becomes particularly relevant when AI generates narratives about divine love, mystical experiences, or spiritual practices. Such outputs may provide information, support reflection, or help users explore religious concepts, but their production does not by itself establish that the system undergoes the experiences it describes. Scholarship examining AI and spirituality has similarly raised questions about the distinction between simulated religious discourse and human spiritual experience(Çelik, 2023). From a Sufi perspective, therefore, the significance of *ma'rifah* lies not simply in the ability to articulate spiritual concepts but also in the lived process of spiritual cultivation and realization.

Sufism's Critique of Instant Culture in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

In contrast, Sufism emphasizes gradual spiritual development through sustained practice and self-discipline. The journey toward proximity to God (*suluk*) involves spiritual struggle (*mujahadah*), disciplined self-training (*riyadhah*), self-examination (*muhasabah*), and purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). Within this tradition, spiritual maturity is understood as an ongoing process of character formation and inner transformation rather than an immediate outcome (Elias, 2010; Khalil, 2018). This emphasis provides a conceptual basis for examining the tension between the immediacy of digital culture and the sustained effort associated with spiritual cultivation.

In AI-mediated digital environments, religious information, sermons, and spiritual reflections can be accessed almost instantaneously. This accessibility may broaden opportunities for religious learning, but access to religious content does not necessarily translate into sustained practice or inner transformation. The term *instant spirituality* can be used here to describe a tendency to seek spiritual fulfillment primarily through rapid consumption of religious information, with limited engagement in the reflective and disciplinary practices that support spiritual development. This tendency should not be equated with digital religiosity as a whole, since digital platforms can also facilitate meaningful religious learning and participation. Nevertheless, scholarship on digital religion has raised concerns about the ways digital media may reshape religious authority, individualize religious practices, and encourage consumer-oriented forms of engagement (Evolvi, 2025; Hjarvard, 2016).

Sufism as a Critique of Technological Dehumanization

From a Sufi perspective, human dignity is connected not only to intellectual capacity or productive achievement but also to spiritual cultivation, virtuous character, and relationships with others. Ibn 'Arabi's concept of *al-insān al-kāmil* (the Perfect Human) provides a philosophical perspective for understanding human development in terms of the cultivation of qualities associated with divine attributes. In this context, compassion (*raḥmah*), justice (*ʿadl*), and wisdom

(*ḥikmah*) offer ethical orientations through which human conduct and responsibility may be considered (Çelik, 2023; Junaidi et al., 2024). This perspective broadens the discussion of human value beyond cognitive performance by emphasizing the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.

The relevance of Sufism to AI-related dehumanization therefore lies in its potential to provide an ethical and spiritual framework for reflecting on technological practices. Rather than treating technological advancement as inherently dehumanizing, a Sufi perspective invites consideration of whether the development and use of AI support or undermine human dignity, meaningful relationships, and moral responsibility. Although AI can perform tasks associated with human cognition and communication, the ethical significance of its use also depends on the judgments, intentions, and responsibilities of the people and institutions employing it (Çelik, 2023; Fasoro, 2024). In this sense, Sufism may contribute to a human-centered understanding of technological development in which efficiency is considered alongside compassion, ethical accountability, spiritual awareness, and human flourishing. The analysis identifies four central dimensions of Sufism's critique of the contemporary AI paradigm, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Four Dimensions of Sufi Critique of the Contemporary AI Paradigm

Sufi Critique	Dominant tendency in the AI paradigm
Holistic understanding of human nature: Human beings encompass rational, moral, and spiritual dimensions, including the *'aql* (intellect), *qalb* (heart), and *ruh* (spirit).	Human capacities are often approached through computational processes, data, and measurable performance.
Experiential and transformative knowledge: Knowledge involves spiritual cultivation and inner realization, not merely the acquisition of information.	AI systems primarily process information and generate outputs through computational and algorithmic procedures.
Gradual spiritual development: Personal transformation requires sustained spiritual discipline, including *mujahadah*, *muhasabah*, and *tazkiyat al-nafs*.	AI-mediated environments can prioritize speed, automation, and efficiency, potentially encouraging expectations of immediate results.
Spiritual and moral human dignity: Human worth encompasses moral character, spiritual awareness, and responsibility beyond functional achievement.	In some applications, human capabilities and contributions may be evaluated primarily through functionality, performance, and productivity.

Source: Author's conceptual synthesis of the literature reviewed.

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Building on these four dimensions, this study proposes the Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF) as a conceptual contribution connecting Sufi thought with contemporary discussions of AI. The framework translates the broader critique into five dimensions: *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *muraqabah*, *muhasabah*, Digital Zuhd, and *ihsan*. Its contribution lies in bringing these Sufi concepts together to examine spiritual awareness, self-regulation, reflective practice, intentional technology use, and ethical conduct in AI-mediated environments. As a literature-derived conceptual framework, SSIF provides a basis for further theoretical refinement and empirical investigation rather than a model whose effectiveness has already been established.

The framework provides a conceptual approach to examining how technological development may be considered alongside spiritual awareness, moral responsibility, and human well-being. Figure 2 presents the Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF), developed through the conceptual synthesis of the study findings.

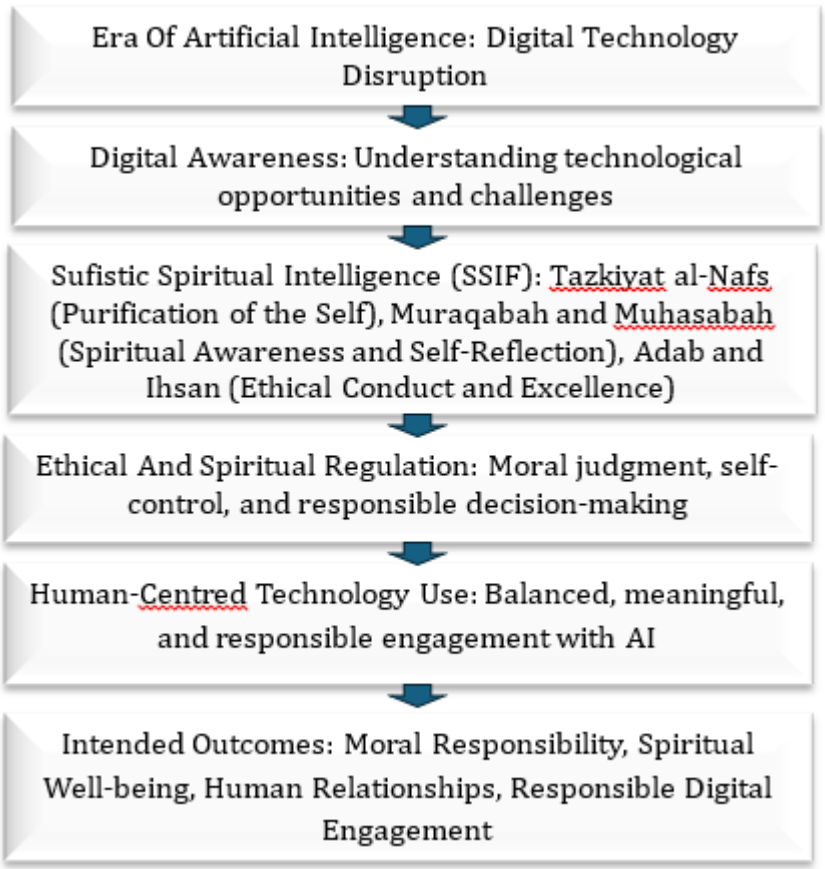


Figure 2. The Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF): A Conceptual Model Developed from the Study Findings

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between AI-related challenges to contemporary spirituality and the potential contribution of Sufi principles to navigating these challenges. The framework begins with the contemporary AI environment, in which digital technology disruption raises concerns about algorithmic dominance, digital dependency, the crisis of meaning, spiritual alienation, and technological dehumanization. These challenges provide the conceptual basis for examining the relevance of Sufi thought to spiritual life in AI-mediated environments.

Within the proposed framework, these five dimensions may contribute to the cultivation of Sufistic spiritual intelligence through divine awareness, digital self-regulation, critical engagement with AI-generated religious information, ethical technology use, and attention to human dignity. Their relationship is conceptual rather than a demonstrated causal sequence. The framework therefore presents the spiritually flourishing Muslim in the digital age as an orienting ideal characterized by reflective technology use, moral responsibility, and sustained spiritual cultivation. As a literature-based model, SSIF requires further conceptual refinement and empirical investigation to assess its applicability in educational, religious, and wider digital contexts.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study identifies four interconnected challenges associated with AI in contemporary spirituality: algorithmic epistemic authority, digital dependency, the crisis of meaning, and the risk of dehumanization. In response, it proposes the Sufistic Spiritual Intelligence Framework (SSIF), comprising five dimensions: *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *muraqabah*, *muhasabah*, Digital Zuhd, and *ihsan*. Theoretically, the study contributes to Islamic Studies by connecting Sufi thought with contemporary AI discourse and proposing Digital Zuhd as a Sufi-inspired perspective on intentional and spiritually conscious technology use. Practically, the framework may inform Islamic education, digital literacy, and ethically responsible AI engagement. However, as a conceptual study based on literature, the framework has not been empirically validated. Future research should examine its conceptual development, practical applicability, and potential relevance across educational and Muslim community settings.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed substantially to this manuscript, including conceptualization, methodology, literature review, data organization, analysis and synthesis, development of the conceptual framework, and interpretation of the findings. All authors contributed to preparing the original draft, reviewing and editing the manuscript, and making revisions throughout the publication process. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION OF AI

The authors declare that they used artificial intelligence tools during the preparation of this manuscript for language refinement, grammatical improvement, structural editing, and condensation of selected passages. The AI tool used was ChatGPT (GPT-5.6 Luna). Its use was limited to editorial and language-support purposes and did not replace the authors' responsibility for the study's conceptualization, analy. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

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