DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SPIRITUALITY: ANALYSIS OF THE VALUES OF BELIEF AND MORALITY IN THE BOOK OF AL-HIKAM

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore the values of aqidah (Islamic creed) and akhlaq (morality) in Ibn 'Athaillah Assakandari's Al-Hikam and their role in the spiritual and moral development of contemporary adolescents. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten purposively selected students actively engaged in Islamic spiritual activities. The findings indicated that key teachings from Al-Hikam including tawhid (divine unity), sincerity, self-reflection (muhasabah), patience, and ma'rifatullah (gnosis of God) facilitate spiritual transformation by enhancing emotional resilience, moral stability, and a deeper sense of purpose. The study indicated that Sufi-based soul development, as presented in Al-Hikam, offered a relevant and effective pedagogical framework for addressing the psychological and moral challenges of youth in a globalized, digital era. The implications of this study highlight that integrating classical Sufi teachings into formal and non-formal education can enhance not only religious understanding but also emotional resilience, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making among adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era of globalization, digital lifestyles, and pervasive popular culture, teenagers face significant spiritual and moral challenges. Many students and college students show a declining concern for religious values (Adhinda & Putri, 2023; Nasrudin et al., 2022). Weak awareness of spiritual responsibility often results in behaviors such as dishonesty, impatience, and excessive materialism. This phenomenon indicated spiritual emptiness and moral deterioration among adolescents (Mahyuni & Tanjung, 2024). Teenagers often

struggle with self-reflection, emotional regulation, and moral decision-making. Traditional academic education has proven insufficient in addressing these inner, spiritual, and emotional needs (Alamsyah et al., 2024; Has, 2023).

Al-Hikam by Ibn 'Athaillah Al-Sakandari offered profound spiritual and moral guidance. It emphasized the integration of *aqidah* (faith) and *akhlak* (morality). Strengthening these values can help adolescents develop resilience, moral integrity, and spiritual awareness (Rahayu et al., 2025). According to Ibn 'Athaillah, *aqidah* is not simply a superficial acknowledgment of religious teachings but a deep comprehension of the essence of God and human limitations. This gave highlights the importance of pure monotheism, affirming belief in the oneness of Allah without any doubt (Amri et al., 2024; Jalil, 2022).

As a result, Muslims who had both correct *aqidah* and noble morals were less likely to be swayed by worldly desires and temptations; instead, they strived to maintain the purity of their hearts and intentions in every action, aiming always to attain Allah's pleasure (Budiyanto, 2022). *Al-Hikam* encouraged readers to view life with humility and gratitude and to treat the world as a trust that must be safeguarded responsibly. Given the moral and spiritual challenges faced by contemporary teenagers, the teachings of *Al-Hikam* were particularly relevant as they provide a structured framework for spiritual and ethical development. This book offered practical exercises, reflection, and guidance that can strengthen teenagers' faith, build resilience against negative influences, and cultivate consistent moral behavior (Fathirah, (2021) & Salamuddin et al., 2024). Previous studies have explored the application of *Al-Hikam* in fostering values and morality among students. The research gap in this area lied in the lack of in-depth exploration of how classical Sufi texts, especially *Al-Hikam*, can be integrated into contemporary educational practices that target character formation and spiritual development especially the students (Chaves-Guerrero et al., 2024; Rohmad et al., 2022).

A study by Chanifah et al. (2021) demonstrated that the moral and spiritual guidance in *Al-Hikam* aligned with Indonesia's national character education program and effectively instills values such as honesty, piety, patience, and sincerity. Similarly, research conducted by Baina & Ii (2021) showed that incorporating *Al-Hikam* into thematic lessons, extracurricular religious activities, and teacher-led role modeling positively influenced students' character development, particularly in honesty, responsibility, and social awareness. These studies highlight that *Al-Hikam* can be used as a pedagogical tool to nurture both faith and moral behavior among teenagers, although systematic research connecting classical Sufi wisdom to modern adolescent psychological development remains limited.

Most existing studies focus primarily on philosophical analysis or Sufi scholarship itself, without explicitly linking the insights of *Al-Hikam* to the dynamics of formal and informal educational institutions or addressing the developmental needs of adolescents. Moreover, there has been limited mapping of how the wisdom of *Al-Hikam* can be translated into pedagogical strategies that

resonate with modern teenagers' psychology and their exposure to globalized culture.

This study aimed to explore and analyze the values of faith and morality in *Al-Hikam* and assess their relevance to the spiritual and moral development of contemporary teenagers, particularly students and college students. By contextualizing Ibn 'Athaillah's teachings, adolescents were expected to build a solid foundation of *aqidah* and noble morals, ultimately leading to a more balanced life between worldly demands and spiritual fulfillment. This study also aimed to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of a transformative and contextual model of spiritual education sourced from the classical Sufi tradition, enabling teenagers to cultivate inner peace, moral integrity, and resilience in the face of contemporary societal challenges.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach to explore in depth the understanding, experiences, and perceptions of adolescents regarding the values of faith (*aqidah*) and morals (*akhlak*) in the Book of *Al-Hikam* by Ibn 'Athaillah Al-Sakandari and their application in daily life. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 10 respondents. It included high school and college students, selected using purposive sampling based on objective criteria: 1) respondents were aged 16–22 years and enrolled in formal education programs ranging from late high school to undergraduate level; 2) they had participated consistently for at least six months in Islamic spiritual development activities such as Sufism study groups, religious mentoring programs, Qur'anic study circles, or ethical discussion forums; 3) they demonstrated a clear interest in spiritual and ethical development through active participation or reflection; they had exposure to Sufi texts, particularly *Al-Hikam*, ensuring a foundational understanding of the material; and 4) they were willing to share personal experiences regarding the integration of *aqidah* and *akhlak* in daily life.

Data analysis followed a systematic process of data reduction, thematic categorization, and drawing conclusions to understand how adolescents internalize and apply the Sufi teachings in forming character, navigating modern challenges, and maintaining moral integrity. The validity and reliability of the findings were maintained through source triangulation, comparing responses across multiple participants, and member checking, allowing respondents to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations, thereby ensuring that the results were credible, contextually relevant, and reflective of the spiritual experiences of contemporary Muslim adolescents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

This study aimed to explore in depth the values of faith and morals contained in the book of *Al-Hikam* Ibn 'Athaillah Assakandari and its application in the development of the soul among teenagers, especially school and college

students. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study involved ten respondents who were selected purposively based on the criteria of their involvement in religious activities and interest in spiritual studies. The focus of this study is on the subjective understanding of respondents regarding the content and meaning of the wisdom in *Al-Hikam*, and the extent to which these teachings influence their attitudes, behaviors, and perspectives in facing everyday life. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, then analyzed thematically to reveal patterns of understanding and spiritual experiences experienced by teenagers in a modern era full of challenges.
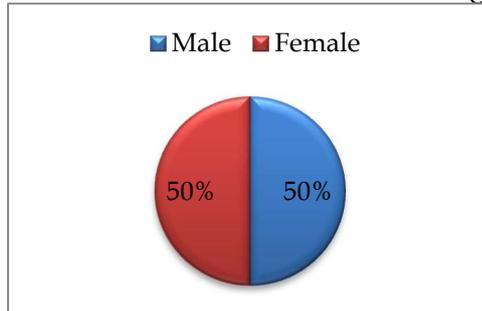

Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

The gender distribution of respondents from the data above was perfectly balanced, with 5 males and 5 females. This balanced representation ensured that the study captures perspectives from both male and female adolescents, making the findings on spiritual and moral development more comprehensive and inclusive.
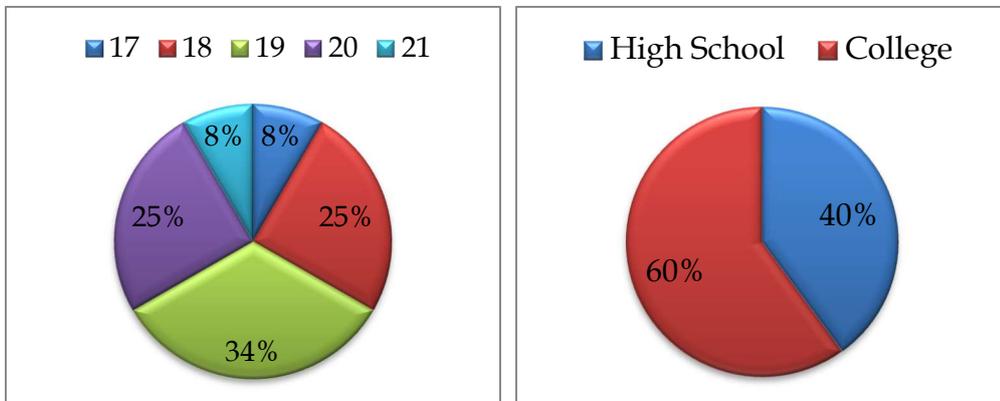

Figure 2. Age Distribution of Respondents   **Figure 3. Educational Level of Respondents**

Respondents' ages range from 17 to 21, representing late adolescence to early adulthood. This period was crucial for forming moral, spiritual, and personal identity. The concentration of respondents aged 18–20 (6 out of 4 high school students) indicated a focus on adolescents who are likely experiencing significant social, emotional, and spiritual challenges relevant to the application of Al-Hikam teachings. The majority of respondents were college students (6 out of 10), while the rest are high school students. This distribution allowed the study to capture a range of perspectives from adolescents at different stages of formal education, highlighting how spiritual and moral values from Al-Hikam are internalized in both secondary and tertiary education contexts.
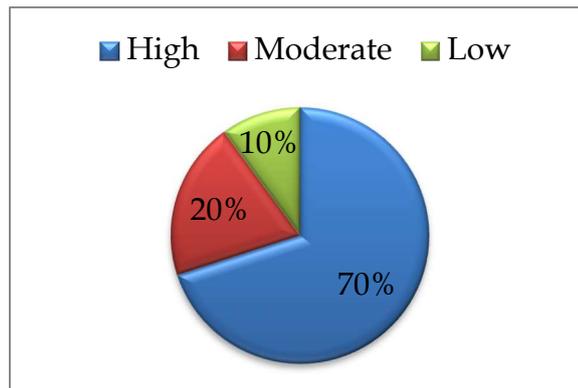
Figure 4. Interest in Sufism Studies

Most respondents (7 out of 10) show a high level of interest in Sufism studies, suggesting that the participants are highly motivated to engage with spiritual teachings. This strong interest likely facilitates deeper internalization of Al-Hikam's values, indicating that spiritually inclined adolescents may be more receptive to applying Sufi moral and ethical guidance in their daily lives.
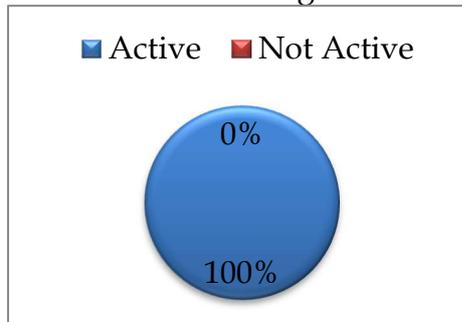

Figure 5. Participation in Religious Activities

All respondents actively participated in religious activities, ranging from mentoring, dhikr assemblies, da'wah, and Islamic discussion forums. This high level of engagement demonstrated that respondents were already inclined toward spiritual development, making them ideal subjects for understanding how the values of faith and morals in Al-Hikam influence adolescent behavior and decision-making in real life.

Tawhid as the Foundation of Psychological Balance for Teenagers

The concept of tawhid in Ibn 'Athaillah Al-Sakandari's *Al-Hikam* provided teenagers with a solid psychological foundation amid the pressures of modern life. Understanding that all events occured according to Allah's will help adolescents develop inner calm and reduces anxiety caused by academic competition, parental expectations, and social pressures. Teenagers who internalized this principle tended to focus on their efforts while trusting God with the results, fostering resilience and emotional stability in a highly connected, fast-paced digital environment.

Placing God at the center of life also shifts priorities, encouraging teenagers to pursue spiritual and moral goals rather than seeking social validation. This orientation allowed them to develop a stronger sense of purpose and to evaluate

success and failure through a spiritual lens, reducing the stress associated with comparison and external approval. By integrating tawhid into daily life, adolescents learn to balance worldly achievements with spiritual responsibilities, achieving greater inner peace.

Moreover, tawhidic awareness promotes ethical sensitivity and social responsibility. Teenagers became more mindful of their actions, understanding that every deed carries accountability before Allah. This consciousness encouraged integrity, justice, and careful behavior in both offline and online interactions, providing a moral-spiritual compass that supported well-rounded psychological development.

Sincerity (*Ikhlas*) in Spiritual and Moral Development

The value of sincerity, as emphasized in *Al-Hikam*, plays a crucial role in shaping moral behavior and spiritual awareness among teenagers. By performing actions solely for Allah's pleasure rather than worldly recognition, adolescents develop authenticity in their intentions and consistency in their ethical conduct. This perspective reduces dependency on external validation and strengthens internal motivation for moral and spiritual growth.

Adolescents practicing sincerity reported a sense of personal satisfaction and spiritual fulfillment when their actions aligned with inner values. They become less influenced by peer pressure or social comparison, focusing instead on purposeful engagement in worship, study, and social interactions. Sincerity encourages self-reflection, allowing teenagers to monitor their intentions and correct deviations in conduct before they become habitual.

In addition, sincerity fosters resilience against moral compromise. Adolescents who internalize ikhlas are more likely to resist temptations, uphold ethical principles, and contribute positively to their communities. This alignment between internal motivation and external behavior supports the development of integrity, emotional maturity, and a strong sense of responsibility.

Self-Reflection (*Muhasabah*) for Personal Growth

Self-reflection, or muhasabah, encouraged adolescents to assess their thoughts, behaviors, and spiritual progress regularly. Through contemplation and evaluation, teenagers became aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement. This practice cultivated humility, accountability, and self-discipline, which were essential for personal growth and ethical behavior. By engaging in *muhasabah*, teenagers gained insight into how their actions impact themselves and others. It fostered a habit of considering consequences, refining intentions, and making conscious efforts to align behavior with moral and spiritual ideals.

This process enhanced emotional regulation, reduces impulsivity, and strengthens decision-making in challenging situations. *Muhasabah* also helped adolescents navigate the digital era responsibly, as they critically evaluated their engagement with social media, online content, and peer interactions. This reflective practice built awareness of the influence of external pressures and

encourages teenagers to act according to spiritual and ethical guidance rather than trends or peer expectations.

Patience (*Sabr*) in Facing Challenges

Patience, or *sabr*, was another central teaching in *Al-Hikam* that supported psychological and moral resilience. Teenagers who cultivated sabr develop the ability to endure hardships, delays, and disappointments without losing composure or ethical standards. This quality was particularly relevant in a fast-paced, competitive environment where setbacks were frequent and social comparison is common.

Adolescents practicing patience reported feeling less frustrated or anxious when facing challenges, as they understand that trials are part of life and a means of spiritual growth. Patience encourages thoughtful responses rather than impulsive reactions, helping teenagers navigate conflicts, academic pressures, and interpersonal relationships more effectively. Furthermore, *sabr* nurtured perseverance in spiritual practices and moral endeavors. Teenagers learned to remain committed to ethical conduct and personal goals despite obstacles or slow progress, building resilience and reinforcing long-term character development.

Gnosis of God (*Ma'rifatullah*) and Spiritual Maturity

Understanding *ma'rifatullah*, or the awareness of God's attributes and presence, deepens teenagers' spiritual and moral awareness. Adolescents who developed this consciousness experience a heightened sense of purpose, emotional stability, and ethical responsibility. Recognizing God's omnipresence encouraged mindfulness in thoughts, speech, and actions, guiding teenagers toward sincerity, humility, and accountability.

This spiritual insight helped teenagers interpret life events through a lens of divine wisdom, reducing anxiety and fostering acceptance of challenges. They learned to perceive successes and failures as opportunities for spiritual growth rather than purely material outcomes, which enhanced psychological resilience.

Moreover, *ma'rifatullah* strengthened the integration of faith and moral conduct. Teenagers who cultivate awareness of God naturally aligned their behaviors with ethical principles, demonstrating compassion, justice, and integrity. This alignment ensured that spiritual maturity translates into practical, everyday moral behavior, supporting the holistic development of character and emotional stability.
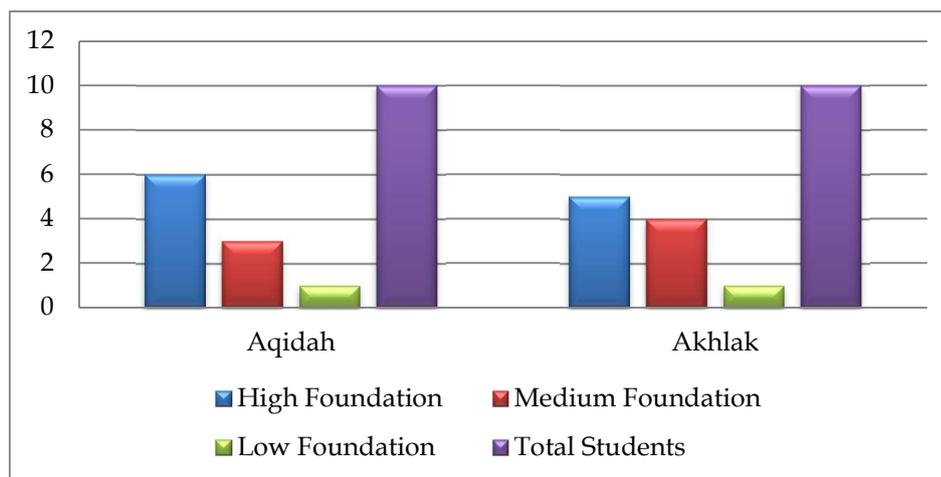
Figure 6. Distribution of students' foundation in Aqidah and Akhlak according to Al-Hikam Ibn 'Athaillah Assakandari

Based on the results of the distribution of the foundation levels of *aqidah* and *akhlak* of students which showed a balanced condition, this finding reflected the integrative principle that was strongly taught in *Kitab* al-Ḥikam by Ibn ʿAṭāʾillah al-Sakandarī. In the perspective of al-Ḥikam, the balance between inner belief (*al-īmān al-bāṭin*) and outward manifestation of behavior (*al-ʿamal al-ẓāhir*) was an indicator of a servant's spiritual maturity. Ibn ʿAṭāʾillah emphasized that deeded without a straight foundation of monotheism will lose value, while *aqidah* without the habituation of morals will only stop at the conceptual level. This was in line with his wisdom which implied that actions were the fruit of the heart's belief, so that the quality of morals reflected the depth of *aqidah*. The balance of these findings indicated that students not only understand *aqidah* cognitively but were also able to internalize it in the form of everyday ethical and moral behavior. Thus, a balanced distribution of *aqidah* and morals signified the success of a holistic educational process, in line with the vision of al-Ḥikam, which places monotheism as the foundation and morals as the concrete manifestation of human spiritual awareness.

Discussion
Tawhid as the Foundation of Psychological Balance

The study revealed that adolescents who internalized the concept of *tawhid* demonstrated greater psychological resilience, reduced anxiety, and a balanced perspective when facing academic, social, and digital pressures. This aligned with theoretical perspectives that emphasized tawhid as the core of Islamic spiritual development, where belief in the oneness of God guides moral decision-making and emotional stability. Previous research by JR (2022) has shown that adolescents with strong monotheistic awareness are better equipped to navigate challenges, interpreting life events as part of divine wisdom rather than personal failure.

The urgency of strengthening *tawhid* was particularly pronounced in the digital era, where constant exposed to social media, peer comparison, and materialistic culture can overwhelm teenagers and lead to spiritual and moral

confusion (Allen et al., 2022 & Andrei, 2021). Without a strong internal framework rooted in monotheism, adolescents were more susceptible to existential anxiety, value relativism, and impulsive behaviors. Strengthening *tawhid* provided not only a theological foundation but also an emotional buffer that supports resilience, decision-making, and ethical consistency. From a practical perspective, integrating *tawhid* into youth spiritual programs helped adolescents prioritize long-term ethical and spiritual goals over immediated gratification or social validation. By understanding that all events occured according to God's will, teenagers developed patience, gratitude, and a deeper sense of purpose, which collectively improve their psychological balance and moral orientation in daily life.

Sincerity (*Ikhlas*) in Spiritual and Moral Development

Findings from the study indicated that adolescents who practice sincerity are more consistent in their moral behavior and less motivated by social recognition or material reward. This was consistent with Al-Ghazali's teachings that *ikhlas* ensured that moral action stems from devotion to God, not worldly incentives. Research from Giles et al. (2022) & Yasir et al. (2022) has shown that intrinsic moral motivation reduced susceptibility to peer pressure and promoted ethical behavior, especially in environments that encourage performative morality.

The urgency of cultivating *ikhlas* emerged from modern social challenges where teenagers were exposed to performative pressures on social media platforms, such as gaining likes, followers, or approval. Adolescents without sincere intentions might engage in behavior that appears ethical outwardly but lacks internal moral grounding. By fostering *ikhlas*, adolescents were equipped to act according to conscience and divine guidance rather than social expectation, making their moral conduct more stable and authentic. Practically, nurturing sincerity can be implemented through reflective spiritual exercises, mentorship, and role-modeling from religious leaders or educators. Adolescents learned to evaluate the intention behind every action, which strengthens both their ethical decision-making and their spiritual development, ensuring that morality becomes an internalized habit rather than a reactive behavior.

Self-Reflection (*Muhasabah*) for Personal Growth

The research showed that adolescents practicing muhasabah demonstrate enhanced self-awareness, ethical sensitivity, and thoughtful decision-making. This aligned with classical Sufi theory in Al-Hikam, where self-reflection was emphasized as a mechanism to recognize personal limitations, evaluate intentions, and align actions with divine guidance. Prior studies supported -- the role of structured reflection in improving emotional intelligence and reducing impulsive behaviors among teenagers (Atoum et al., 2025; Aulia et al., 2025).

Muhasabah is particularly urgent in contemporary contexts because adolescents face complex social interactions, digital distractions, and value-laden pressures (Allen et al. (2022) & Nissen et al. (2021). Without reflective practice,

they might act impulsively, adopt unethical behaviors, or experience internal conflict between personal desires and spiritual principles. Reflection allowed adolescents to pause, assess their choices, and correct deviations before they became habits. In practice, integrating guided *muhasabah* sessions in educational or spiritual programs helped adolescents internalize moral lessons from daily experiences, strengthens their ethical awareness, and improves resilience to external pressures. Self-reflection transformed knowledge of morality and faith into tangible, actionable habits that support both character development and psychological well-being.

Patience (*Sabr*) in Facing Challenges

Findings indicated that adolescents who cultivated *sabr* respond to setbacks, stress, and challenges with greater emotional stability and ethical consistency. This supported the theoretical assertion in Al-Hikam that patience is not only a moral virtue but also a psychological tool that enables individuals to endure hardship without compromising moral integrity. Previous studies Davis (2022) & Wenham et al. (2021) have shown that adolescents practicing sabr demonstrate higher perseverance in academic and social tasks, and are less prone to impulsive reactions under stress.

The urgency of *sabr* was clear in the modern adolescent context, where pressures from academic competition, peer relationships, and digital connectivity create frequent stressors. Without patience, adolescents might succumb to frustration, aggression, or unethical shortcuts. By cultivating *sabr*, teenagers can regulate emotional responses, maintain composure, and navigate life's challenges while adhering to spiritual and ethical principles. Practically, patience can be nurtured through exercises in delayed gratification, mindful breathing, and structured reflection on adversity, helping adolescents internalize the virtue as both a coping strategy and a moral guide. *Sabr* became a foundational skill that integrated spiritual values with practical life resilience.

Gnosis of God (*Ma'rifatullah*) and Spiritual Maturity

The study showed that adolescents who developed ma'rifatullah exhibit higher moral awareness, purpose-driven behavior, and emotional regulation. This aligned with Sufi teachings in Al-Hikam, which stress that deep awareness of God's presence fostered ethical living and guides decision-making in all spheres of life. Theoretical and empirical studies highlight that *ma'rifatullah* strengthens adolescents' sense of meaning, resilience, and ethical consistency (Nurfadilah & Husein, 2025; Prayitno et al., 2022).

Ma'rifatullah is particularly urgent in the contemporary era because secularization, popular culture, and digital influences often promote materialistic or value-neutral behaviors (Anis et al., 2022; Muvid & Kholis, 2020). Adolescents lacking awareness of God's presence were more vulnerable to adopting behaviors that prioritize immediate pleasure or social approval over ethical principles. Cultivating *ma'rifatullah* ensured that teenagers internalize spiritual values and integrate them into daily life choices. In practice, *ma'rifatullah* can be

fostered through reflective study of Al-Hikam, mentorship, and engagement in spiritually oriented community activities. Adolescents learned to perceive life events through the lens of divine wisdom, aligning intentions and actions with ethical and spiritual principles, which supports holistic development.

This research demonstrated that classical Sufi teachings from Al-Hikam were highly relevant for strengthening adolescent *aqidah* and *akhlak* in the contemporary, digitally connected world. By examining *tawhid, ikhlas, muhasabah, sabr,* and *ma'rifatullah,* the study provided empirical evidence linking Sufi wisdom to practical psychological and moral outcomes. It addressed the research gap by connecting classical spiritual knowledge to modern adolescent development, showing how Al-Hikam can guide educational programs, mentorship, and youth-focused interventions. The study contributed both theoretically, by validating the integration of Sufi concepts in youth moral education, and practically, by offering concrete strategies for cultivating resilient, ethically conscious, and spiritually mature adolescents.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of students' foundations in Aqidah and Akhlak, it can be concluded that the values of faith and morals in the Book of Al-Hikam by Ibn 'Athaillah Assakandari provide a substantial framework for developing the inner and outer dimensions of adolescents' character. The quantitative and qualitative findings show that most students have a medium to high foundation in both creed and moral practice, indicating that their understanding of monotheism, sincerity, patience, and moral responsibility can be further strengthened through structured spiritual guidance. The Sufi approach in Al-Hikam offers a reflective and transformative methodology that connects intellectual comprehension of faith with practical moral action, equipping teenagers to navigate contemporary challenges such as identity crises, moral lapses, and pressures from digital and social environments. The implications of this study highlight that integrating classical Sufi teachings into formal and non-formal education can enhance not only religious understanding but also emotional resilience, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making among adolescents. This study, while providing valuable insights, the research was conducted with a relatively small group of purposively selected students who were already actively engaged in Islamic spiritual activities. Their prior involvement in religious practices could have influenced their perspectives, potentially resulting in a more favorable view of the impact of Al-Hikam on faith and moral behavior. Future research could address these limitations by including larger and more diverse samples of adolescents across various educational and cultural contexts and by employing longitudinal designs to track the sustained effects of Al-Hikam's guidance on faith, morality, and psychological resilience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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