

EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON SUFISM AND *TAREKAT* IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perspectives of Islamic master's students in Bandung, Indonesia, towards sufism and tarekat, sufi orders (Arab: *ṭarīqah*). The objective is to analyze graduates' beliefs regarding the influence of foreign practices on sufism and their explanations of the controversial doctrines associated with tarekat. Utilizing a qualitative approach, eight respondents from two universities, who demonstrated high proficiency in the sufism course, were selected. The research employed documentation studies and in-depth interviews as primary techniques. Assessments were conducted before and after the sufism course to gauge respondents' attitudes towards the central tenets of sufism and tarekat. The results indicated significant shifts in viewpoints, with the majority initially holding opposing perspectives that evolved positively after the course. Many graduates embraced tarekat under the guidance of a *murshīd* (spiritual guide) and accepted doctrines such as *ẓikr-tarekat*, *talqīn-ẓikr*, *ma'rifat*, and *wahdat al-wujūd*. The study concludes that Sufism lectures have a constructive impact on fostering religious moderation among students, effectively countering the negative narrative propagated by the Salafi campaign against sufism and tarekat. The findings highlight the importance of conducting Sufism lectures in Islamic master's programs, emphasizing their effectiveness in shaping graduate students' attitudes towards tarekat.

Keywords: Attitude, Higher Education, Islamic Religious Education, *Sufism*, *Tarekat*

INTRODUCTION

The debate over the merits and drawbacks of tarekat (sufi orders) engages both laity and ulama within Islamic communities. Common individuals participate in Sufism by dedicating significant time to prayer, fasting, engaging in *ẓikr* (remembrance of God), and seeking spiritual solace through seclusion in hermitages or homes. They believe these practices can lead to sustenance and peace of mind without rigorous labor. However, critics argue that Sufism deviates from Islamic teachings, citing historical instances of *sufi* figures facing death sentences (Corbin, 2002) and criticizing pseudo-sufis for rejecting the *shari'ah* and traditional worship practices, such as prayer and fasting, in favor of exclusive reliance on *ẓikr* (Kabbani, 2015).

The scholarly discourse on Sufism centers around its core tenets, including tarekat, *murshīd* (spiritual guide), *ẓikr-tarekat*, and *talqīn-ẓikr* (guided *ẓikr* by the *murshīd*). Tarekat represents the spiritual path within Sufism, guided by a *murshīd* who traces their spiritual lineage back to Prophet Muhammad (Nasution, 2000). Despite its deep-rooted tradition, Tarekat faces criticism from non-Tarekat scholars who question the validity of its *sanad* (chain of hadith narrators) using hadith criticism methodologies. Critics argue that the *ẓikr-tarekat* and *talqīn-ẓikr* lack legitimacy without a valid sanad (Rahmat, 2016).

The doctrines of *ma'rifat* (direct knowledge of God) and *wahdat al-wujūd* (unity of being) further highlight the divergence in perspectives. Sufi scholars view *ma'rifat* as the highest level of spirituality, involving a close relationship with Allah and achieving a union with God (Latifa

et al., 2019). However, non-tarekat scholars accuse these doctrines of incorporating external influences and lacking evidence in the Quran or Hadith (Hilal, 2002). The *wahdat al-wujūd* principle, articulated by Ibn `Arabī, posits the unity of human beings with God, leading to accusations of heresy and *shirk* (polytheism) from critics (Sirriyeh, 2013; Cheifetz, 2023).

In Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country, two prominent Islamic organizations, Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, hold differing views on Sufism. NU supports the practice of tarekat, while Muhammadiyah, with a Salafi leaning, advocates for sufism without Tarekat (Beck, 2014). This division reflects a broader spectrum of opinions within the Muslim world, with countries like Saudi Arabia and Malaysia officially rejecting sufism and tarekat (Arifan, 2014; Ambrosio, 2017), while others, like Turkey, have historically seen sufism as an obstacle to modernization.

Previous research has highlighted the positive outcomes associated with sufism, such as increased religiosity, improved morality, religious moderation, and stress reduction (Rahmat et al., 2016; Rahmat & Yahya, 2021; Yahya & Rahmat, 2022; Sulistyawati et al., 2019; Kusuma et al., 2020; Ahmad et al., 2021). However, there is a notable gap in the literature concerning the attitudes of postgraduate students toward sufism and tarekat. Our study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the impact of Sufism courses on these students' attitudes toward the fundamental doctrines of sufism and tarekat. This innovative focus sets our research apart, providing valuable insights into the educational effectiveness of sufism courses in shaping the perspectives of postgraduate students in Islamic studies.

METHOD

This study examined the attitudes of Islamic postgraduate students towards core Sufi doctrines, including tarekat, *murshād*, *ẓikr-tarekat*, *talqīn-ẓikr*, *ma'rifat*, and *wahdat al-wujūd*. A qualitative method was chosen for its depth in exploring these topics and the necessity for a profound understanding of sufism's relationship with Islamic teachings (Simuh, personal communication, 2023). Supported by scholars like Yahya and Rahmat (2022), who advocate for qualitative methods in studying sufism, the researchers' expertise further justified this approach. Previous academic work by Fahrudin (2013), Rahmat (2010), and Yahya (2007) underscores their proficiency in the subject. Using a case study approach (Nasution, 1992), the research involved observing and interacting with participants in their environment. Following Berger's (1985) anthropological and sociological methods, the researchers immersed themselves in Sufism lectures. Eight students from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) and Universitas Islam Bandung (Unisba) were selected based on their familiarity and experience with Sufism (DePoy & Gitlin, 2015). All respondents had a solid understanding of sufism and tarekat, with four achieving the highest scores in their sufism course.

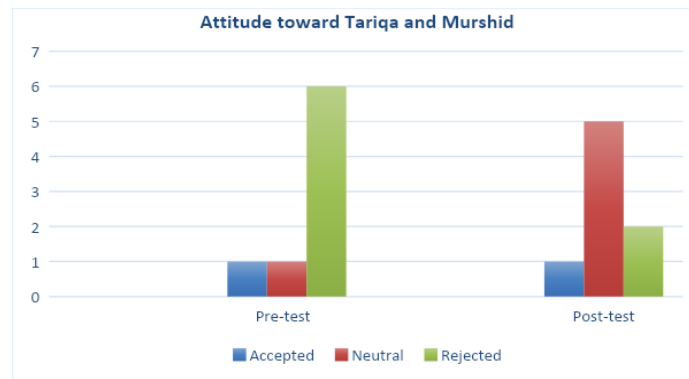
Our research, conducted in February (pre-test) and June 2023 (post-test), utilized tests and interviews to explore Islamic postgraduate students' views on the central doctrines of sufism and tarekat, including tarekat, *murshād*, *ẓikr-tarekat*, *talqīn-ẓikr*, *ma'rifat*, and *wahdat al-wujūd*. The tests measured students' written views and attitudes (acceptance, neutrality, or rejection) towards these doctrines. Lecturers emphasized that student attitudes did not influence the assessment, which was based solely on their mastery of the doctrines. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight students who received A grades to further analyze their understanding and attitudes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings, highlighting the shifts in respondents' views on key *sufi* concepts such as tarekat, *murshād*, *ẓikr-tarekat*, *talqīn-ẓikr*, *ma'rifat*, and *wahdat al-wujūd*. The data reveals significant changes in attitudes, reflecting the impact of the educational intervention on their understanding and acceptance of sufism and its practices.

Respondents' Attitude toward Tarekat and *Murshid*

The profile of students' attitudes towards *tarekat* and *murshid* before and after studying Sufism can be seen in figure 1.



n = 8 students of Postgraduate Islamic Students

Figure 1. Respondents' Attitude toward *Tarekat* and *Murshid*

The pre-test phase, illustrated in Figure 1, showed that most respondents held a negative stance towards *tarekat* and *murshid*, with only one accepting and another remaining neutral. After the lectures, more than half leaned towards acceptance, one fully accepted, and two rejected these doctrines. In pre-test interviews, participant AA described *tarekat* as a spiritual path with challenging religious practices focused on the afterlife, led by a *murshid*. AA noted diverse views, with some seeing *tarekat* as heretical and others supportive (AA, personal communication, February 2023). Participant BB defined *tarekat* as *taẓkiyat an-nafs* (purification of the soul), involving lawful wealth, abstaining from sins, increased worship, and extensive *ẓikr*, emphasizing the *murshid*'s role and the benefits of communal life (BB, personal communication, February 2023). Participant EE explained *tarekat*'s focus on the hereafter, shunning material pursuits, and embracing hardship, but argued that its emphasis on spirituality over physical aspects contradicts Islamic teachings, a view shared by five other respondents (EE, personal communication, February 2023).

Figure 1 shows a shift in respondents' attitudes towards *tarekat* after the lectures. Initially neutral, respondent AA began to accept *Tarekat*, citing its mention in the Q.s al-Jin72:16 as significant (AA, personal communication, June 2023). Pre-test interviews revealed commonalities in understanding among respondents AA, BB, and EE, who viewed *tarekat* as a spiritual path focused on the afterlife, involving increased remembrance of God, prayer, fasting, and simplicity, often led by a *murshid*. AA noted the controversy around *tarekat*, while BB highlighted its role in soul purification. Conversely, EE and five others (CC, DD, FF, GG, HH) held a negative view, arguing that *tarekat* contradicts Islamic teachings by overemphasizing the afterlife. After the lectures, AA's perspective shifted towards acceptance, reflecting a nuanced evolution in understanding post-education.

The essence of *tarekat* is the purification of the soul (*taẓkiyat an-nafs*) and the heart (*taṣfiyat al-qalb*), guided by the *murshid*, as rooted in Q.s. ash-Sham/91:9-10: "Indeed, successful is he who purifies the soul, and indeed, he fails who corrupts it." Achieving this purification involves ascending various levels of the *nafs*, starting with *nafs muṭmainnah*, the content and satisfied soul, as directed in Q.s. al-Fajr/89:27-30. The journey continues through higher levels like *nafs rāḍiyah* (pleased with Allah) and *maḍḍiyah* (Allah is pleased with him), ultimately reaching the highest level, *ʿibādī* (servants of Allah, namely *insān kāmil*).

Participant AA described the *murshid* as a guide helping followers reach *insān kāmil*, while allowing personal religious interpretations. Despite differing teachings on *ẓikr*, both NU and

Muhammadiyah respect the *murshîd* as an *abl az-ẓiker*, aligning with Q.s. an-Nahl/16:43's advice to seek knowledge from learned individuals. Most communities, although not following tarekat, seek guidance from Ulama, including *murshîd*, recognized as sufi scholars. EE expressed interest in joining tarekat despite hesitations about the *murshîd*, while DD emphasized the criteria for a legitimate tarekat, noting issues with the current *murshîd* of TQN Suryalaya. BB accepted tarekat based on Q.s. al-Jin/72:16, which promises happiness for followers (BB, personal communication, June 2023). Respondent CC and BB emphasized the importance of the *murshîd* in Sufism. CC referenced Q.s. al-Mâ'idah/5:35 and 2:143, explaining that *al-waṣīlata* and *wasatā ummatan* denote a community led by a *murshîd*. BB confirmed joining Tarekat TQN Suryalaya, while CC joined Shaṭṭāriyah Jogomerto. Conversely, respondent DD rejected the centrality of *tazkīyat an-nafs* and *tasfīyat al-qalb* in tarekat, arguing that these spiritual goals can be achieved without a *murshîd*'s guidance, as most scholars do not follow tarekat. DD noted that organizations like Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam (Persis) have also rejected tarekat, with only NU supporting it (DD, personal communication, June 2023). HH shared a similar view, citing the rejection of tarekat by many scholars, including Ibn Taimiyah, who deemed it heretical (HH, personal communication, June 2023).

The negative Salafist campaign against Tarekat largely failed, as most respondents accepted it after the lectures. They cited Quranic verses such as 72:16, 18:17, 16:43, and 21:7, emphasizing the need for Tarekat and the guidance of the *murshîd*. Verses like 5:35 and 2:143 highlighted the importance of seeking *al-waṣīlata* (*murshîd*). Respondents mentioned a hadith on obeying the Prophet Muhammad's successors (al-khulafā al-rāshidīn al-mahdiyyīn). Even initially skeptical respondents eventually joined tarekat, though some hesitated to find a suitable *murshîd al-kāmil-mukammil*. According to Ibn al-Arabī, the vicegerent (*khalīfā*) descends through various degrees of perfection in human society (Khalil, 2023). From 1980-2010, Abah Anom was a recognized *al-kāmil-mukammil*, attracting students from various groups, including Muhammadiyah leaders (Ridwan, 2015; Abror & Arif, 2021). However, without an appointed successor, several claimed his role. One respondent found Kiai Muhammad Anwar Muttaqin suitable, while most lecturers and other groups joined Tarekat Shaṭṭāriyah Jogomerto, Nganjuk, Indonesia (Yahya et al., 2022). Another respondent viewed Abah Gaos as the successor of TQN Suryalaya's Abah Anom (Mughtar, 2019).

Only one respondent maintained a negative attitude towards Tarekat, aligning with Wahabi/Salafi views that consider Tarekat heretical and an outside influence on Islam (Sahin & Asroor, 2021; Wagemakers, 2017). Despite the negative Salafi campaign, most respondents, including those initially skeptical, accepted tarekat after the lectures. While many scholars practice sufism without tarekat, Nursi described Sufism as a path to recognizing the essence of faith and using the Quran as a guide to attain proximity to Allah (Nursi, 2017; Munandar et al., 2020). Movements practicing sufism without Tarekat are present in countries like Turkey and Indonesia (Khamami, 2016; Fahrudin et al., 2022). In Indonesia, Muhammadiyah, which leans towards Salafism, leads this modern Sufism movement, with figures like Buya Hamka promoting it (Beck, 2014; Masrur, 2019; Hutama et al., 2021).

Respondents' Attitudes towards *ẓikr*-Tarekat and *Talqīn-ẓikr*

The subsequent Figure 2 illustrates the profile of students' attitudes towards *ẓikr*-tarekat and *talqīn-ẓikr* before and after studying Sufism.

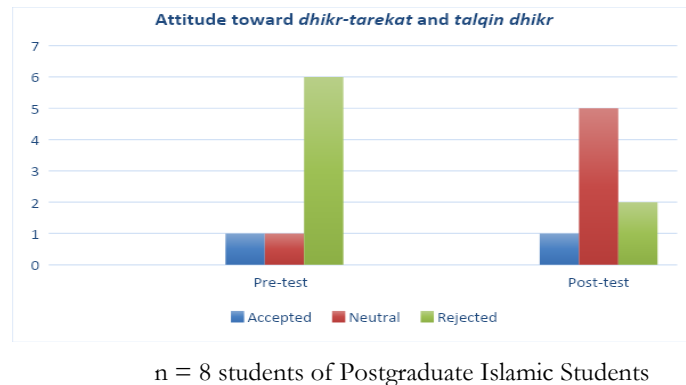


Figure 2. Respondents' Attitude toward *ẓikr-tarekat* and *talqin-dhikr*

Figure 2 shows that before the lectures (pre-test), most respondents rejected *ẓikr-tarekat* and *talqîn-ẓikr*, with only one accepting and another remaining neutral. After the lectures (post-test), more than half leaned towards acceptance, with one fully accepting and two still rejecting these practices. Initially, interviews revealed mixed attitudes towards *ẓikr-tarekat* and *talqîn-ẓikr*. Participant AA described dhikr as involving phrases like "subhana Allāh," "alhamdu li Allāh," "lā ilāha illā Allāh," and "Allāh akbar," and maintained a neutral stance on *ẓikr-tarekat* taught by a *murshīd* (AA, personal communication, February 2023). BB emphasized the remembrance of Allah's name and acknowledged the goodness of *ẓikr-tarekat* but had not personally practiced it (BB, personal communication, February 2023). Similarly, EE explained dhikr as the remembrance of Allah and *ṭayyiba* words, noting that while *ẓikr-tarekat* involves a Murshīd's guidance, it isn't necessary for all, and highlighted heretical views about certain practices (EE, personal communication, February 2023). Post-lecture, attitudes shifted. AA recognized the goodness of all forms of *ẓikr*, including *ẓikr-tarekat talqîn-ẓikr*, though not personally practicing them, and cited Quran 7:205 to support heart *ẓikr* (*ẓikr khafī*). Similar views were echoed by respondents EE, FF, and GG (AA, personal communication, June 2023).

Respondent BB positively defined *ẓikr* as the heart's remembrance of Allah, stressing the need to know Allah before engaging in dhikr. BB highlighted the role of ahl *aṣ-ẓikr* (*murshīd*) as the source of knowledge, citing Quran 16:43 and 21:7. BB emphasized the importance of *ẓikr khafī* (silent remembrance) and referenced Quran 7:205 to support this practice (BB, personal communication, June 2023). Similarly, CC interpreted Quran 7:205 as "remember (Substance) your Lord" rather than just mentioning His name (CC, personal communication, June 2023). In contrast, DD expressed disapproval of *ẓikr-tarekat*, particularly practices like head shaking, and emphasized traditional forms of *ẓikr* such as mentioning Allah's name and performing ṣalāt (DD, personal communication, June 2023). HH viewed *ẓikr* as actively carrying out God's messages, comparing it to a husband remembering his wife's instructions and needs (HH, personal communication, June 2023).

Many respondents showed neutral or positive attitudes towards *ẓikr-tarekat* and *talqîn-ẓikr*, with two individuals fully embracing Tarekat. Those indifferent often viewed it favorably and some practiced *ẓikr-tarekat* without *talqîn-ẓikr*. The practice of *ẓikr*, including verbal and internal recitation, follows the teachings of Shaykh Abd al-Qādir al-Jailānī and includes spoken and contemplative forms (Haykal, 2011; Khaerani et al., 2018). Practices like reciting *al-asmā al-ḥusna* and joint *ẓikr* during majelis taklim add to the diversity of *ẓikr* practices (Agustina et al., 2020; Hasan, 2012; Sakr et al., 2022). However, finding a qualified *murshīd* is challenging, with the term extending to any credible, pious, knowledgeable scholar. Sufism courses have been shown to enhance religiosity and morality, promoting religious moderation and resistance to radicalism (Gitosaroso, 2015; Rahmat et al., 2016; Rahmat & Yahya, 2020, 2021; Ahmad et al.,

2021). Only one respondent expressed a negative attitude towards *ẓikr*-tarekat and *talqīn-ẓikr*, aligning with the Wahabi/Salafi view that considers tarekat heretical due to perceived external influences on Islamic practices (Sahin & Asroor, 2021; Wagemakers, 2017). Interestingly, some Salafis may not know that Ibn Taymiyyah, a revered figure among them, followed Tarekat Qadiriyyah (Sirriyeh, 2013).

Respondents' Attitudes towards *Ma'rifat* and *Wahdat al-Wujūd*

Figure 3 below illustrates the profile of students' attitudes towards *ẓikr*-tarekat and *talqīn-ẓikr* before and after studying Sufism.

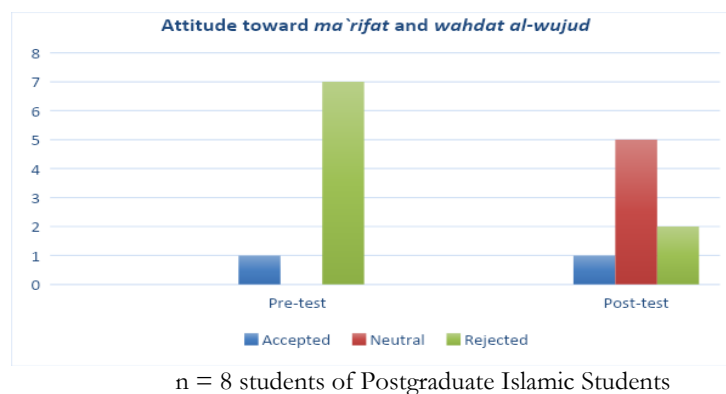


Figure 3. Respondents' Attitude toward *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd*

Figure 3 shows that before the lectures (pre-test), nearly all respondents had a negative view of *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd*, with only one expressing acceptance. After the courses (post-test), over half were neutral but leaned towards acceptance, one accepted it, and two rejected it. In pre-test interviews, AA described *ma'rifat* as direct knowledge from Allah through revelation and inspiration but expressed concerns about verifying its authenticity, particularly regarding Allah's Essence, which could be misleading (AA, personal communication, February 2023). The concept of *wahdat al-wujūd*, meaning unity with God, is controversial among scholars, illustrated by the executions of Al-Hallāj and Javanese Sufi Shaykh Siti Jenar for their beliefs (AA, personal communication, February 2023). This view was shared by CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, and HH. BB defined *ma'rifat* as direct knowledge from Allah, or *ladunni* science, acquired through inspiration rather than formal learning, noting that a pious person might attain *ma'rifat* as good motivation, referencing Q.s. ash-Sham/91:8 ("fa alhamahā fujūrahā wa taqwāhā") (BB, personal communication, February 2023).

Wahdat al-wujūd, signifying the unity of humans with God, sparks controversy among scholars and is known in Indonesia as Manunggaling Kawula Gusti. Al-Hallāj, a proponent in Baghdad, declared "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" ("I am the Truth"), leading to his execution by shari'a scholars. Similarly, Javanese Sufi Shaykh Siti Jenar faced execution by Wali Songo, though historical accounts suggest political motivations, as he was seen as a believer by Allah but an infidel by humans (BB, personal communication, February 2023). Post-lectures, respondents' attitudes towards *ma'rifat* and *Wahdat al-wujūd* shifted. AA adopted a neutral stance, defining *ma'rifat* as direct knowledge of God through *kashf* or *gnosis*, noting scholars' division on its validity due to lack of Quranic and Hadith evidence and potential external influences, while proponents cited certain hadiths for legitimacy. Shaykh Muhyi interprets *wahdat al-wujūd* as *wahdat al-shuhūd*, meaning an agreement of witness between man and God. Al-Hallāj's declaration "*Anā al-Ḥaqq*" is thus understood as "I witnessed Allah," making *Wahdat al-wujūd* correct (AA, personal communication, June 2023). This view was shared by DD, EE, FF, and GG. BB respondents viewed *ma'rifat* as direct knowledge of God through *kashf*, typically reserved for Prophets,

Saints, and possibly *murshids*, and saw *wahdat al-wujūd* as a unity with God, similar to Al-Hallaj and Shaykh Siti Jenar's experiences (BB, personal communication, June 2023). Conversely, DD respondents criticized *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd* as hazardous and misleading due to lack of Quranic or Hadith support, citing the executions of Al-Hallaj and Shaykh Siti Jenar as evidence of the dangers of these beliefs (HH, personal communication, June 2023).

In conclusion, the post-test results revealed a diverse range of perspectives among respondents concerning *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd*. Respondent AA maintained a neutral stance, describing *ma'rifat* as direct knowledge of God's Self through *kashf* or gnosis, which sparked scholarly debates due to the lack of concrete Quranic and Hadith evidence and potential influences from other religions. Nonetheless, proponents defended *ma'rifat*, citing a hadith about the believer's ability to discern with the light of Allah. This view resonated with respondents DD, EE, FF, and GG. BB respondents offered positive insights, likening *ma'rifat* to the experiences of Prophets, Saints, and the *murshid*, and described *wahdat al-wujūd* as a state where humans and God mutually witness each other, emphasizing the concept of *wahdat ash-shubūd*. Respondent CC shared similar sentiments, highlighting the importance of acquiring knowledge of God through the Murshid and the happiness associated with achieving *wahdat al-wujūd*, though acknowledging that such experiences are typically reserved for Prophets, Rasuls, and Wali beloved of Allah.

In contrast, DD respondents expressed negative perspectives, rejecting *ma'rifat* as hazardous and misleading due to the lack of Quranic or Hadith support. They similarly criticized *wahdat al-wujūd*, dismissing its validity for the same reasons. DD cited historical instances of executions, such as those of Al-Hallaj in Baghdad and Shaykh Siti Jenar by Wali Songo, as evidence of the perceived dangers and misleading nature of these beliefs. Overall, the post-test results highlight the nuanced and diverse opinions on *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd* among respondents, reflecting the complex landscape of Sufi doctrines. Most participants exhibited neutral or positive attitudes towards *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd*, with two individuals becoming followers of tarekat. Even those indifferent to the concepts maintained a favorable view, citing Q.s. al-Qiyamah/75:22-23 and a hadith from Tirmizī (2013) to support the possibility of direct knowledge from Allah. They believed that Prophets, Apostles, and saints like Ibn `Arabi, Al-Hallaj, and Shaykh Siti Jenar achieved *ma'rifat* and experienced *wahdat al-wujūd*. Shaykh Said Nursi, despite generally rejecting sufism and tarekat, acknowledged *ma'rifat* as the pinnacle of sufism (Sahin & Asroor, 2021). However, two respondents had negative attitudes, aligning with Salafis who view Tarekat and its doctrines as heretical deviations from Islam. Salafis argue that *ma'rifat* through gnosis/*kashf* is not recognized in Islam (Hilal, 2002; Anwar, 2002; Ibrahim, 2002; Wagemakers, 2017). Conversely, Khozin Afandi (2009) argued that Sufism explores the human connection with God through *talqin-ẓikr* facilitated by a *murshid*, asserting that *ma'rifat* begins with *talqin-ẓikr* under a *murshid's* guidance. Sufism also offers benefit for social life. It can contribute to the country to maintain peace and avoid religious conflict (Dodi & Abitolkha, 2022).

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced understanding of *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd* among Islamic postgraduate students, highlighting both the diversity and complexity of their attitudes. Prior to the lectures, many students held negative or neutral views towards these Sufi doctrines, often influenced by criticisms related to their perceived lack of Quranic and Hadith evidence. However, post-test results showed a notable shift, with over half of the respondents moving towards a more accepting stance. This shift suggests that educational interventions, such as detailed lectures and discussions, can significantly alter perceptions and increase acceptance of these mystical concepts. The study underscores the importance of informed and structured learning environments in bridging gaps in understanding and fostering a more inclusive appreciation of Islamic spiritual diversity.

While this study provides valuable insights into respondents' attitudes towards *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd*, it has certain limitations. The focus on a specific demographic limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations with diverse cultural or religious backgrounds. The sample size, though informative, may not fully represent the vast diversity of perspectives on Sufism. Additionally, reliance on self-reported attitudes introduces potential subjective bias, as interpretations of concepts like *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd* may vary among participants. The post-test design offers a snapshot of views after specific exposure, potentially neglecting long-term changes in perspectives. Future research should include more diverse participant samples to enhance generalizability and employ a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys for a richer exploration of individual interpretations and experiences. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in attitudes over time would provide a more nuanced understanding of how perspectives evolve beyond the immediate post-test phase. Additionally, exploring regional variations and conducting comparative analyses between different Islamic schools of thought, such as salafism and sufism, could uncover unique cultural influences and theological positions on *ma'rifat* and *wahdat al-wujūd*. These steps would address the study's limitations and pave the way for more comprehensive investigations into Islamic spirituality.

CONCLUSION

The lectures on Sufism provided in Islamic master's programs in Indonesia effectively countered the anti-Sufism perspective promoted by the Salafi movement, as revealed by this study. Respondents cited hadiths emphasizing the importance of obeying the *murshīd*, seen as the representative and successor of Prophet Muhammad (*al-ḥulafā al-rashīdīn al-mahdiyyīn*). Interestingly, even Ibn Taymiyyah, a prominent Salafi figure, had a history of studying under a *murshīd*. While most respondents had not directly studied under a *murshīd*, their reluctance was due to the challenge of finding an *al-kāmil-mukammil murshīd*, rather than a rejection of the concept. A minority of respondents successfully identified such a *murshīd*. Overall, the majority accepted fundamental sufi doctrines, including *ẓikr-tarekat*, *talqin-ẓikr*, *ma'rifat*, and *wahdat al-wujūd*. The findings underscore the importance of maintaining sufi courses within Islamic graduate programs. Future research should explore the impact of these courses on the acceptance of sufi and Tariqa doctrines among undergraduate students and assess how acceptance or rejection influences the religious spirituality and moderation of both undergraduate and graduate students.

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