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Dhikr Practices, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence : A Structural Model of the Syattariyah Order at Buntet Pesantren, Cirebon

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Abstract / *Abstrak*

This study examines the relationships among dhikr (spiritual remembrance), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ) among adherents of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren, Cirebon, Indonesia. Quantitative cross-sectional survey data from 92 respondents were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal significant positive relationships between dhikr and EQ ($\beta = 0.816$, $p < 0.001$) and between EQ and SQ ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, the direct relationship between dhikr and SQ is positive but negligible ($\beta = 0.118$; $f^2 = 0.014$), and its significance has not been established. These findings highlight the role of emotional intelligence in linking religious practice and spiritual intelligence. However, the NFI (0.508) and SRMR (0.108) indicate limited model fit, and the cross-sectional, single-community design requires caution in generalizing the findings. This study contributes to Islamic psychology by integrating dhikr, EQ, and SQ in a structural framework.

Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara zikir (mengingat Allah), kecerdasan emosional (EQ), dan kecerdasan spiritual (SQ) pada pengikut Tarekat Syattariyah di Pondok Pesantren Buntet, Cirebon, Indonesia. Melalui survei kuantitatif potong lintang (cross-sectional), data dari 92 responden dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan hubungan positif dan signifikan antara zikir dan EQ ($\beta = 0{,}816$; $p < 0{,}001$), serta antara EQ dan SQ ($\beta = 0{,}612$; $p < 0{,}001$). Sebaliknya, hubungan langsung antara zikir dan SQ positif, tetapi ukuran efeknya dapat diabaikan ($\beta = 0{,}118$; $f^2 = 0{,}014$) dan signifikansinya belum dapat dipastikan. Temuan ini menegaskan peran kecerdasan emosional dalam menghubungkan praktik keagamaan dan kecerdasan spiritual. Meskipun demikian, nilai NFI (0,508) dan SRMR (0,108) menunjukkan keterbatasan kecocokan model, sedangkan desain potong lintang pada satu komunitas menuntut kehati-hatian dalam menggeneralisasi temuan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada psikologi Islam dengan mengintegrasikan zikir, EQ, dan SQ dalam satu model struktural.

Keywords / *Kata kunci*

Dhikr;
emotional quotient;
spiritual quotient

Dzikir;
kecerdasan emosional;
kecerdasan spiritual

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Introduction

Islamic spirituality is often cultivated through religious practices that integrate devotion, self-reflection, moral discipline, and everyday conduct (Latifah et al., 2024; Vitansyah & Firmansyah, 2026). In Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), these dimensions are embedded in institutional routines that shape students' and religious communities' relationships with God, themselves, and others (Bouti & Saleh, 2026). One important practice is *dhikr* (remembrance of God), which occupies a central position in Sufi traditions as a form of worship and spiritual discipline. Beyond its theological significance, dhikr can also be examined as a psychological practice through which individuals direct attention, regulate emotional responses, and interpret personal experiences in relation to religious beliefs and values (Ahmad, 2026; A. A. Aziz & Satriawan, 2023). This perspective creates an opportunity to investigate how religious practice may be associated with emotional intelligence (EQ) and

spiritual intelligence (SQ) without reducing religious experience to psychological processes alone.

The Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren, Cirebon, Indonesia, provides a context for examining these relationships. The order maintains a tradition of spiritual instruction grounded in *aqidah* (Islamic creed) and *tasawuf* (Islamic mysticism), with dhikr and contemplation serving as important elements of its devotional life (Rusmana et al., 2024; Sulistiana, 2016). According to the community's spiritual tradition, its lineage is connected to Mbah Muqayyim, the founder of Buntet Pesantren, through the initiation associated with Shaykh Abdul Muhyi of Pamijahan. Within this setting, dhikr is practiced individually and collectively as part of a broader effort to cultivate closeness to Allah and strengthen religious commitment. The significance of this context lies not only in its historical continuity but also in the opportunity it offers to examine the relationship between an established Sufi practice and psychological constructs using a structured empirical approach.

Research in the psychology of religion suggests that religious beliefs and practices may influence psychological functioning through processes of meaning-making, emotional appraisal, and coping. Van Uden and Zondag, for example, conceptualize religion as an existential resource and a meaning-making system through which individuals interpret life events in relation to broader beliefs, values, and perceptions of purpose (Van Uden & Zondag, 2016). This perspective is consistent with Park's integrative model of meaning-making, which distinguishes between global meaning systems and situational meanings, explaining how individuals interpret specific life experiences in relation to their broader beliefs and goals (Park, 2010). More recently, Brandão, in a systematic review of quantitative studies, identified associations between religion or spirituality and several dimensions of emotion regulation, although the strength and direction of these associations varied across measures and contexts (Brandão, 2025). These findings suggest that religious practice should not automatically be assumed to produce positive psychological outcomes; rather, the mechanisms and conditions through which religious engagement relates to emotional functioning require further investigation. In the context of dhikr, sustained attention to divine remembrance may provide a framework for reflection and emotional appraisal, while its religious meanings may help practitioners interpret everyday experiences in accordance with their spiritual commitments.

Emotional intelligence provides a relevant psychological construct for examining this possibility. Rather than adopting the ability-based model of (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), which conceptualizes emotional intelligence through four branches—perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions—this study draws on Goleman's competency-based perspective, which emphasizes emotional awareness, empathy, and social competencies in interpersonal interactions (Daniel Goleman, 1999). Within this perspective, emotional intelligence is understood as a set of personal and interpersonal competencies that enable individuals to recognize and understand their own emotions, understand the emotions of others, and interact cooperatively in social contexts. Accordingly, this study operationalizes emotional intelligence through three adapted indicators: self-understanding, understanding others, and cooperation. These indicators represent selected aspects of emotional and social competencies rather than a comprehensive reproduction of Goleman's original framework. This conceptualization is particularly relevant to examining how religious engagement, including dhikr, may be associated with individuals' emotional awareness, interpersonal understanding, and cooperative behavior.

A plausible relationship between dhikr and EQ can be explained through several interconnected psychological processes. First, repetitive remembrance may encourage attentional regulation by directing awareness toward a consistent religious focus (Schjoedt et al., 2013). Second, the reflective dimension of dhikr may create opportunities to observe emotional reactions before responding to them, potentially supporting self-awareness and emotional regulation (A. N. Aziz et al., 2025). Third, the meanings attached to remembrance of God may facilitate cognitive reappraisal by allowing practitioners to interpret difficulties through religious values, patience, acceptance, and trust in Allah. Research reviewed by Brandão (2025) indicates that emotion regulation is one mechanism through which religious and spiritual engagement may be associated with psychological outcomes (Brandão, 2025). Nevertheless, these mechanisms remain theoretical explanations in the present study rather than processes directly tested by the research design. The proposed relationship between dhikr and EQ therefore requires empirical

examination in the specific context of the Syattariyah community.

Spiritual intelligence (SQ) is relevant to understanding the psychological dimensions of religious life. Zohar and Marshall associate SQ with the capacity to develop meaning, values, and broader perspectives on life (Zohar, D., & Marshall, 2000). Similarly, King and identify four dimensions of SQ : critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion (King et al., 2009). Although these frameworks provide important theoretical foundations, the present study adopts a context-specific operationalization of SQ comprising four indicators: belief in God, search for meaning, mindfulness, and sense of security. These indicators capture complementary aspects of religious and spiritual experience, including religious orientation, existential meaning-making, present-moment awareness, and perceived spiritual security.

Spiritual intelligence (SQ) should be distinguished from religiosity, faith, and Islamic spirituality. Religiosity concerns individuals' involvement in religious beliefs, practices, and communities, whereas faith refers to religious commitment and trust. Islamic spirituality encompasses a broader orientation toward Allah, worship, *tazkiyat al-nafs*, and virtuous conduct. In contrast, SQ primarily concerns capacities related to spiritual meaning-making, reflective awareness, and existential orientation. Although these concepts may overlap, they are not interchangeable. In this study, SQ is examined as a psychological construct situated within an Islamic spiritual context, rather than as a direct measure of religious commitment or theological knowledge. Accordingly, religious belief is considered a contextual foundation for spiritual experience, while SQ focuses on how individuals develop meaning, awareness, and inner orientation through that experience.

From an Islamic perspective, the cultivation of spiritual capacities can be discussed in relation to *tazkiyat al-nafs*, or the purification and development of the self. Dhikr may be understood as one devotional practice through which practitioners reinforce awareness of Allah, reflect on their conduct, and orient their actions toward religious and moral values (Mannopov et al., 2025; Rizkiana et al., 2025). These practices may be associated with dimensions of SQ such as the search for meaning, mindfulness, and inner peace. However, the theological significance of dhikr and the psychological construct of SQ operate at different analytical levels. The former concerns a religious practice and its meaning within Islam, whereas the latter concerns individual capacities assessed through psychological indicators. Their relationship is therefore an empirical question rather than an assumption that religious devotion necessarily produces a particular level of spiritual intelligence.

The proposed relationship between EQ and SQ can also be explained theoretically. Emotional intelligence involves the capacity to recognize emotional information, understand emotional responses, and manage feelings in ways that support adaptive functioning (Fookolaee et al., 2025; Sambol et al., 2025). These capacities may help individuals reflect on personal experiences, tolerate emotional discomfort, and consider the implications of their actions in relation to broader values. Emotional regulation may therefore support the reflective and meaning-oriented processes associated with SQ. Conversely, individuals who experience difficulties in managing their emotions may find it more challenging to sustain reflective attention during stressful circumstances. This reasoning suggests a positive association between EQ and SQ, although it does not imply that emotional competence is sufficient to produce spiritual development or that spirituality can be reduced to emotional functioning.

Despite these conceptual connections, several issues remain insufficiently addressed in the literature relevant to the present study. First, research on dhikr in Indonesian Islamic settings has often emphasized spiritual well-being, religious commitment, moral development, or the reduction of psychological distress. Studies of other Sufi traditions and pesantren environments, including those cited in this manuscript, provide useful contextual insights into the significance of devotional practice. However, these strands of research do not necessarily establish how dhikr, EQ, and SQ are associated within one explanatory model. Second, research on religion and emotion regulation has identified plausible psychological pathways connecting religious engagement with emotional functioning, but the findings vary across religious traditions, populations, and operational definitions (Brandão, 2025). It therefore remains necessary to examine whether these proposed relationships are also observed in a specific Indonesian Sufi community. Third, the relationship between EQ and SQ requires further contextual examination because the constructs involve distinct but potentially related capacities:

emotional processing on the one hand, and spiritual meaning-making on the other.

The research gap is thus not simply the absence of a study conducted at Buntet Pesantren. Rather, it concerns the limited integration of devotional practice, emotional functioning, and spiritual meaning-making within a single structural model in the context of a traditional Sufi community. Specifically, the study examines whether dhikr is associated with spiritual intelligence (SQ) directly and indirectly through emotional intelligence (EQ), while also assessing the relationship between EQ and SQ. By testing both the direct relationship between dhikr and SQ and the indirect relationship mediated by EQ, the study seeks to clarify whether emotional functioning represents a potential pathway linking devotional practice to spiritual meaning-making. This approach offers a focused examination of the psychological relevance of dhikr without presuming that its relationships are universal or that the observed statistical associations establish causal mechanisms.

To address this gap, the present study examines the relationships among dhikr, EQ, and SQ among adherents of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren, Cirebon, Indonesia. Using survey data from 100 respondents and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the study tests three hypothesized direct relationships: dhikr and SQ, EQ and SQ, and dhikr and EQ. Its theoretical contribution lies in bringing research on Islamic devotional practice into dialogue with psychological perspectives on emotional functioning and spiritual meaning-making. Its contextual contribution is to examine these relationships within an established Indonesian Sufi community, a setting that can extend discussion beyond generalized measures of religiosity or spirituality. The findings are intended to provide context-specific evidence about the associations among these constructs, while recognizing that a cross-sectional design cannot establish temporal order or causal effects and that the model's explanatory and measurement limitations must be considered when interpreting the results.

Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence

Dhikr may be associated with emotional intelligence by encouraging attentional regulation, emotional reflection, and the regulation of emotional responses. Through regular remembrance, practitioners may develop greater awareness of their emotional states and learn to regulate their responses in accordance with values such as patience and self-restraint. Empirical research by Aziz and Satriawan provides additional evidence relevant to the relationship between dhikr and emotional functioning (Aziz & Satriawan, 2023). Furthermore, Brandão, in a systematic review, highlights emotion regulation as a potential pathway through which religious and spiritual practices may be associated with psychological outcomes (Brandão, 2025). Taken together, these perspectives provide a basis for expecting a positive association between dhikr and emotional intelligence among adherents of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren.

H1 : Dhikr is positively associated with emotional intelligence among adherents of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren.

Dhikr and Spiritual Intelligence

Dhikr may be associated with spiritual intelligence because it provides a recurring opportunity to direct attention toward Allah, reflect on personal conduct, and interpret experiences through religious meanings. From the perspective of meaning-making theory, religious beliefs can provide an interpretive framework through which individuals connect everyday experiences with broader purposes and values (Rosidi et al., 2026). In the Syattariyah tradition, dhikr is embedded in a devotional framework that emphasizes spiritual awareness and self-purification. These characteristics provide a theoretical basis for expecting a positive relationship between dhikr and spiritual intelligence. Nevertheless, because dhikr and spiritual intelligence are measured through self-reported indicators, the proposed relationship should be understood as an association between the operationalized constructs rather than as proof that devotional practice causes spiritual development.

H2 : Dhikr is positively associated with spiritual intelligence among adherents of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren.

Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence

Emotional intelligence may be positively associated with spiritual intelligence through emotional awareness, regulation, and reflection on life experiences. Individuals who recognize and manage their emotions effectively may be better able to interpret challenges in light of broader values and life purposes. This relationship is supported by previous studies highlighting the interconnectedness of emotional and spiritual

intelligence. Walter et al. found positive correlations between emotional intelligence and various dimensions of spiritual intelligence (Walter et al., 2024). Similarly, Luo et al. demonstrated the relevance of emotional intelligence to meaning-making processes, suggesting that emotional awareness and regulation may contribute to how individuals interpret life experiences and personal values (Luo et al., 2024). These findings provide a basis for expecting a positive association between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence among adherents of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren.

H3 : Emotional intelligence is positively associated with spiritual intelligence among adherents of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren.

Method

Research Design and Study Context

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among dhikr (D), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ) among members of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren, Cirebon, Indonesia. A quantitative approach was adopted to assess the relationships among the three constructs within a specified structural model. The cross-sectional design was selected because data were collected during a single period, from January to March 2025. Accordingly, the findings are interpreted as statistical associations rather than evidence of causal relationships.

The study was conducted at Buntet Pesantren, an Islamic educational institution with an established tradition of Sufi practice. The research focused on members of the Syattariyah Tariqa to examine the relationships between devotional practice and psychological dimensions of spiritual development within a specific religious community.

Population, Sampling, and Sample Size

The target population consisted of 100 officially registered members of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren. Because all identified members were included in the sampling process, the study employed total population sampling (census sampling) rather than probability-based random sampling. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to the identified members. Of these, 95 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 95%. Three returned questionnaires were excluded because they contained incomplete responses. Consequently, 92 complete questionnaires were retained for the final analysis. The final number of usable responses represented 92% of the identified population and 96.8% of the returned questionnaires.

The respondents were between 23 and 43 years of age. Their educational backgrounds comprised senior high school or equivalent qualifications and bachelor's degrees. Their length of membership in the Syattariyah Tariqa ranged from four to eight years. All respondents reported engaging in dhikr on a weekly basis. These characteristics describe the age range, educational backgrounds, membership duration, and religious practice of the participants included in the study.

Ethical Considerations and Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted from January to March 2025. The questionnaires were distributed directly by the researcher and research assistants to the identified members of the Syattariyah Tariqa. The distribution and collection processes were conducted independently by the research team and did not involve the mursyid. This procedure was intended to maintain the voluntary nature of participation and to avoid direct involvement of religious leadership in the recruitment and questionnaire administration processes.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before respondents completed the questionnaire. Participants were informed about the research objectives and their right to participate voluntarily. The confidentiality of individual responses was maintained, and participants' answers were not disclosed to the mursyid or other members of the tariqa leadership. Questionnaire completion was supervised by the researcher to facilitate the data collection process and ensure that the completed forms were collected appropriately. The study did not obtain formal approval from an institutional research ethics committee; therefore, informed consent and the voluntary participation procedures constituted the ethical safeguards implemented during data collection.

Data Collection and Research Instruments

Primary data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). This response format is commonly used in social science research to measure attitudes, perceptions, and experiences (Joshi et al., 2015). The questionnaire measured

three constructs : dhikr (D), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ).

The questionnaire was prepared in Indonesian. The researcher translated the questionnaire items into Indonesian, after which the translated wording was reviewed and corrected with the assistance of an expert to improve linguistic clarity and contextual appropriateness. However, a separate pilot test was not conducted before the main data collection. The measurement results were therefore evaluated through the measurement model assessment, including indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Dhikr was operationalized through three indicators: consistency in remembering Allah (D1), inner calmness (D2), and moral improvement (D3). Emotional intelligence was measured through three indicators: self-understanding (EQ1), understanding others (EQ2), and cooperation (EQ3). These indicators were informed by the conceptual discussion of emotional intelligence presented by Goleman Spiritual intelligence was conceptually represented through four dimensions: belief in God, search for meaning, mindfulness, and sense of security. In the measurement model, spiritual intelligence was represented by five indicators (SQ1–SQ5), as reported in the measurement model results.

The indicators were developed to represent the conceptual characteristics of each construct within the context of the Syattariyah Tariqa. Nevertheless, the operationalization of dhikr through inner calmness and moral improvement may involve conceptual proximity to certain aspects of emotional and spiritual intelligence. This possibility is relevant when interpreting the relationships among the constructs, particularly the estimated relationship between dhikr and emotional intelligence. The potential overlap is therefore acknowledged as a limitation of the measurement instrument and is considered when discussing the findings.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 3.2.6. PLS-SEM was employed to estimate the relationships among the latent constructs and examine the explanatory and predictive relevance of the proposed structural model. This approach was considered appropriate for the study's objective of examining relationships among multiple constructs within a specified model and assessing the variance explained in the endogenous constructs (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

The analysis involved two main stages: measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. First, the measurement model was evaluated to examine indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability was assessed through outer loadings, with values of approximately 0.70 or higher generally considered desirable. Convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE), with a recommended minimum value of 0.50. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, for which values of 0.70 or higher are generally considered acceptable for established measurement scales (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Discriminant validity was assessed to determine whether dhikr, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence represented empirically distinct constructs. Particular attention was given to the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), which is used to assess discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling (Henseler et al., 2015). This assessment was important because the constructs may share conceptual dimensions related to self-awareness, emotional experiences, and spiritual development.

Second, the structural model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. Path coefficients (β) were used to assess the direction and magnitude of the estimated relationships, while bootstrapping-based t-statistics and p-values were used to evaluate their statistical significance. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was examined to assess the proportion of variance explained in the endogenous constructs. Effect sizes (f^2) were considered to evaluate the relative contribution of individual predictor constructs, while predictive relevance (Q^2) was assessed using the blindfolding procedure based on the Stone–Geisser criterion. Model fit indicators were considered separately from the significance of individual path coefficients because statistically significant structural relationships do not necessarily indicate adequate overall model fit (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

The structural analysis focused on three hypothesized relationships : (1) dhikr and emotional intelligence (H1), (2) dhikr and spiritual intelligence (H2), and (3) emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence (H3). All findings were

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation	N
Dhikr (D)	0.000	-0.044	-4.678	1.501	1.000	100
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	0.000	0.140	-4.689	1.234	1.000	100
Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)	0.000	0.073	-3.944	1.709	1.000	100

Note. Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, 2025.

interpreted in accordance with the cross-sectional design, the characteristics of the study population, and the limitations of the measurement and structural models.

Results

1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to describe the observed scores of the three constructs examined in this study: Dhikr (D), Emotional Intelligence (EQ), and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ). The analysis focused on the original questionnaire scores measured on a five-point Likert scale, rather than standardized latent variable scores generated during the PLS-SEM analysis. For each construct, the mean and standard deviation were calculated to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions and the distribution of their responses. Where relevant, descriptive statistics for individual measurement items were also examined. In addition, correlations among Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence were reported to provide an initial overview of the relationships between the research constructs before hypothesis testing using PLS-SEM. The results are presented in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, all three constructs have a mean of 0.000 and a standard deviation of 1.000, indicating that the reported data are standardized scores rather than the original measurement scores. The median values vary across constructs, with Dhikr recording -0.044, Emotional Intelligence 0.140, and Spiritual Intelligence 0.073. The observed minimum and maximum values also indicate variations in respondents' standardized scores.

These descriptive statistics provide an initial overview of the distribution of the research variables. However, the standardized values should not be interpreted as the original levels of respondents' Dhikr practices, Emotional Intelligence, or Spiritual Intelligence. The interpretation of the substantive measurement levels requires reference to the original questionnaire scores and their measurement scales.

2. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed to determine the validity and reliability of the indicators representing each latent construct. The assessment involved convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability.

2.1 Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability.

Convergent validity was assessed by examining the outer loadings of the observed indicators and the average variance extracted (AVE). Outer loadings indicate the strength of the relationship between each indicator and its corresponding latent construct. Following the recommended criteria for PLS-SEM, outer loading values of 0.70 or higher are considered acceptable, indicating that the construct explains a substantial proportion of the indicator's variance. Indicators with loadings below 0.70 should be evaluated carefully based on their theoretical relevance and their contribution to the construct's overall reliability and convergent validity. In addition, an AVE value of at least 0.50 is required to establish convergent validity, indicating that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance in its indicators (Sarstedt et al., 2022; Hair & Alamer, 2022).

The measurement model consisted of five indicators for Spiritual Intelligence (SQ1–SQ5), three indicators for Dhikr (D1–D3), and three indicators for Emotional Intelligence (EQ1–EQ3). The assessment results, including outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and AVE for each construct, are presented in Table 2.

Convergent validity and construct reliability were assessed using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). As presented in Table

Table 2
Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Dhikr	D1	0.809	0.785	0.790	0.874	0.697
	D2	0.853				
	D3	0.845				
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	EQ1	0.778	0.805	0.804	0.886	0.711
	EQ2	0.883				
	EQ3	0.885				
Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)	SQ1	0.768	0.837	0.837	0.885	0.613
	SQ2	0.729				
	SQ3	0.808				
	SQ4	0.832				
	SQ5	0.750				

Note. Source: SmartPLS analysis, 2025

Table 3
Discriminant Validity Assessment Based on Cross-Loadings

Indicator	Dhikr (D)	Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)
D1	0.809	0.612	0.584
D2	0.853	0.645	0.621
D3	0.845	0.631	0.598
EQ1	0.592	0.778	0.625
EQ2	0.641	0.883	0.672
EQ3	0.628	0.885	0.691
SQ1	0.571	0.623	0.768
SQ2	0.548	0.596	0.729
SQ3	0.615	0.648	0.808
SQ4	0.602	0.671	0.832
SQ5	0.583	0.619	0.750

Note. Source: SmartPLS analysis, 2025.

2, the outer loading values range from 0.729 to 0.885, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. The AVE values are 0.697 for Dhikr, 0.711 for Emotional Intelligence, and 0.613 for Spiritual Intelligence, all of which exceed the minimum threshold of 0.50. These findings indicate that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators, thereby establishing adequate convergent validity. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.785 to 0.837, rho_A values range from 0.790 to 0.837, and composite reliability values range from 0.874 to 0.886. All reliability coefficients exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability for all three constructs.

2.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed to establish whether each construct was empirically distinct from the other constructs in the proposed model. The cross-loading criterion was initially considered by comparing the loading of each indicator on its assigned construct with its loadings on the remaining constructs.

The cross-loading assessment shows that all indicators have their highest loading values on their respective constructs. Specifically, indicators D1–D3 load most strongly on Dhikr, EQ1–EQ3 on Emotional Intelligence, and SQ1–SQ5 on Spiritual Intelligence. The cross-loading values range from 0.809 to 0.853 for Dhikr indicators, 0.778 to 0.885 for Emotional Intelligence indicators, and 0.729 to 0.832 for Spiritual Intelligence indicators. Although these findings provide preliminary evidence of indicator distinctiveness, cross-loadings alone are not sufficient to establish discriminant validity because of their limited sensitivity in detecting potential construct overlap (Henseler et al., 2015). Therefore, the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was also required to provide a more rigorous assessment of discriminant validity

among Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence.

In addition to cross-loadings, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) should be examined as a complementary assessment of discriminant validity. HTMT values below 0.85 are generally considered evidence of adequate discriminant validity, although a threshold of 0.90 may be applied for conceptually related constructs. The complete HTMT results should therefore be reported to provide stronger evidence that Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence represent empirically distinguishable constructs.

3. Structural Model Assessment

After establishing the measurement properties of the constructs, the structural model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships among Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence. The assessment included collinearity diagnostics, explanatory power, effect size, and predictive relevance.

3.1. Collinearity Assessment

Collinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF) to determine whether the predictor constructs exhibited excessive correlations that could affect the stability and interpretation of the estimated path coefficients. VIF values below 5.00 are generally considered acceptable, whereas values below 3.00 indicate a more conservative level of collinearity. Values approaching or reaching 3.00 therefore warrant closer examination, particularly when multiple predictors are included in the same structural equation.

Table 4
Collinearity Assessment

Structural Relationship	VIF
Dhikr → Emotional Intelligence	1.000
Dhikr → Spiritual Intelligence	3.000
Emotional Intelligence → Spiritual Intelligence	3.000

Note. Source: SmartPLS analysis, 2025.

The collinearity assessment shows that the VIF values range from 1.000 to 3.000. Although all values remain below the commonly applied threshold of 5.00, the VIF values of 3.000 for Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence as predictors of Spiritual Intelligence reach the more conservative threshold of 3.00. This finding warrants attention because Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence are relatively strongly correlated (r = 0.816), which is consistent with the observed VIF values. The shared variance between these two predictors may increase the standard errors of their estimated path coefficients and potentially reduce the apparent individual contribution of each construct to Spiritual Intelligence. Consequently, the estimated relationship between Dhikr and Spiritual Intelligence should be interpreted cautiously, particularly when assessing its unique contribution after accounting for Emotional Intelligence. Nevertheless, the VIF results do not indicate severe collinearity based on the threshold of 5.00, although some degree of predictor overlap should be acknowledged when interpreting the structural relationships.

3.2. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The explanatory power of the structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and adjusted R^2. These measures indicate the proportion of variance in an endogenous construct that can be explained collectively by its predictor constructs.

Table 5
Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	0.666	0.663
Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)	0.506	0.494

Note. Source: SmartPLS analysis, 2025.

The coefficient of determination indicates that the structural model explains 66.6% of the variance in Emotional Intelligence (R^2 = 0.666; adjusted R^2 = 0.663). Meanwhile, Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence jointly explain 50.6% of the variance in Spiritual Intelligence (R^2 = 0.506; adjusted R^2 = 0.494). These findings indicate that the model has substantial explanatory power for Emotional Intelligence and moderate explanatory power for Spiritual Intelligence.

3.3. Effect Size (f^2)

The effect size (f^2) was assessed to determine the extent to which each predictor construct contributes individually to the explained variance of its corresponding endogenous construct. The assessment was conducted by examining the change in the coefficient of determination (R^2) when a predictor construct was excluded from the structural model. Following Cohen's guidelines, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively, while values below 0.02 indicate negligible effects (Cohen, 1988). The results of the effect size assessment for each structural relationship are presented in Table 6 .

Table 6
Effect Size Assessment

Structural Relationship	f^2	Effect Size
Dhikr → Emotional Intelligence	1.994	Large
Dhikr → Spiritual Intelligence	0.014	Negligible
Emotional Intelligence → Spiritual Intelligence	0.253	Medium

Note. Source: SmartPLS analysis, 2025.

The effect size (f^2) assessment indicates that Dhikr has a large effect on Emotional Intelligence ($f^2 = 1.994$). In contrast, the direct effect of Dhikr on Spiritual Intelligence is negligible ($f^2 = 0.014$), as it falls below the recommended threshold of 0.02. Meanwhile, Emotional Intelligence demonstrates a medium effect on Spiritual Intelligence ($f^2 \approx 0.253$). These findings suggest that Dhikr makes a substantial individual contribution to explaining Emotional Intelligence, whereas its direct contribution to explaining Spiritual Intelligence is limited after accounting for Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence, in turn, makes a more substantial unique contribution to explaining Spiritual Intelligence. Nevertheless, these effect sizes should be interpreted alongside the path coefficients, coefficient of determination, and collinearity assessment to provide a comprehensive understanding of the structural relationships.

3.4. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Predictive relevance was assessed using the Stone–Geisser Q^2 criterion through the blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS 3.2.6. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model has predictive relevance for the corresponding endogenous construct. As presented in Table 7, Emotional Intelligence (EQ) obtained a Q^2 value of 0.642, while Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) obtained a value of 0.421. Both values exceed zero, indicating that the model demonstrates predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs. The higher Q^2 value for EQ indicates comparatively greater predictive relevance than that for SQ within the blindfolding-based assessment. These findings should not, however, be interpreted as evidence of out-of-sample predictive performance.

The predictive relevance assessment indicates that the structural model demonstrates predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs, as their Q^2 values are greater than zero. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) obtains a Q^2 value of 0.642, while Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) obtains a Q^2 value of 0.421. These findings indicate that the structural model has predictive relevance for both constructs, with a higher Q^2 value for Emotional Intelligence than for Spiritual Intelligence. This suggests that the model demonstrates stronger predictive relevance for Emotional Intelligence, while also providing predictive relevance for Spiritual Intelligence. However, these findings should be interpreted within the scope of the blindfolding-based Stone–Geisser assessment and should not be interpreted as evidence of out-of-sample predictive performance.

Table 7
Predictive Relevance Assessment

Endogenous Construct	Q^2	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	0.642	predictive relevance
Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)	0.421	predictive relevance

Note. Source: SmartPLS analysis, 2025.

Discussions

The Relationship between Dhikr and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)

The findings indicate a positive estimated relationship between Dhikr and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ), with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.118$. However, the statistical significance of this relationship remains subject to verification of the original bootstrapping results. Furthermore, the effect size ($f^2 = 0.014$) indicates a negligible direct contribution of Dhikr to explaining Spiritual Intelligence within the proposed structural model. Therefore, the findings do not provide sufficient grounds to conclude that Dhikr has a substantial direct relationship with Spiritual Intelligence in the present sample.

This result can be considered in relation to Rosidi et al., which was discussed in the Introduction in connection with the relationship between Dhikr and Spiritual Intelligence (Rosidi et al., 2026). The present study extends this discussion by examining the relationship within the specific context of members of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren. Within this tradition, Dhikr involves more than repetitive verbal recitation; it is also embedded in religious discipline, spiritual reflection, and awareness of one's relationship with God. Nevertheless, the relatively small direct effect size observed in this study suggests that participation in Dhikr practices alone may not adequately account for differences in Spiritual Intelligence among respondents.

One possible consideration is that the relationship between Dhikr and Spiritual

Intelligence may involve additional psychological processes. Emotional Intelligence is particularly relevant in this regard because the present study identifies a strong positive relationship between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence (β = 0.816). This pattern provides a basis for further examining whether emotional capacities represent an intermediate psychological dimension in the relationship between spiritual practices and Spiritual Intelligence. Brandão, in a broader review of religion, spirituality, and emotional processes, provides a relevant perspective for considering emotion regulation as a possible pathway connecting spiritual engagement with psychological functioning (Brandão, 2025). However, the mediating role of Emotional Intelligence cannot be established from the direct path coefficients alone and requires a separate indirect-effect analysis.

Accordingly, the findings suggest that Dhikr remains an important religious and spiritual practice within the Syattariyah tradition, but its direct statistical contribution to Spiritual Intelligence is limited in the present structural model. This relationship should therefore be interpreted in the context of the broader religious, educational, and social environment of Buntet Pesantren rather than as an independent or universally applicable mechanism.

The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)

The findings reveal a positive and statistically significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence (β = 0.612; $p < 0.001$). Among the two direct predictors of Spiritual Intelligence examined in this study, Emotional Intelligence demonstrates the larger path coefficient. This finding indicates that respondents with higher Emotional Intelligence scores also tend to report higher Spiritual Intelligence scores within the estimated structural model.

This result is consistent with Walter et al., who reported positive correlations between Emotional Intelligence and the dimensions of Spiritual Intelligence among emerging adults in Israel and India (Walter et al., 2024). Their findings provide empirical support for the interconnectedness of emotional and spiritual capacities across different dimensions of personal development. The present study extends this discussion to a religious educational setting by examining these constructs among members of the Syattariyah Tariqa at Buntet Pesantren.

The relationship can also be understood in light of Luo et al., who examined the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and meaning in life through the roles of sense of security and self-esteem (Luo et al., 2024). Although meaning in life is not equivalent to Spiritual Intelligence, their findings offer a relevant perspective on how emotional capacities may be associated with individuals' interpretation of personal experiences and the development of meaning. In the context of the present study, the positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence suggests that emotional awareness and regulation may be relevant to the broader process of spiritual meaning-making.

Within the educational and religious environment of Buntet Pesantren, emotional competencies may be particularly relevant because religious learning and collective spiritual activities take place within an interpersonal community. The ability to recognize emotional experiences, regulate responses, and maintain interpersonal relationships may be associated with reflective engagement in religious and social life. Nevertheless, the present study establishes a statistical association rather than demonstrating a specific psychological mechanism through which Emotional Intelligence produces Spiritual Intelligence.

The comparatively larger path coefficient for Emotional Intelligence than for the direct Dhikr–Spiritual Intelligence relationship highlights the importance of considering psychological capacities alongside religious practices when examining Spiritual Intelligence. This finding should not be interpreted as evidence that Emotional Intelligence is universally more important than Dhikr. Rather, it reflects the relative strength of the estimated direct relationships within the sample and structural model examined in this study.

The Relationship between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

The results demonstrate a positive and statistically significant relationship between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence (β = 0.816; $p < 0.001$). The relatively large path coefficient indicates that respondents reporting stronger engagement in Dhikr also tend to report higher levels of Emotional Intelligence. This finding highlights the close statistical association between spiritual

practices and emotional functioning within the Syattariyah community.

This finding can be discussed in relation to Brandão, whose review of religion, spirituality, and emotional processes identifies emotion regulation as a relevant dimension for understanding the relationship between spiritual engagement and psychological functioning. This perspective provides a broader theoretical context for interpreting the association identified in the present study. In addition, the relationship observed here can be understood within the Syattariyah tradition, where Dhikr is practiced through sustained religious engagement, reflection, and spiritual discipline.

From a psychological perspective, repeated engagement in Dhikr may provide opportunities for individuals to direct attention toward their internal experiences, reflect on their emotional responses, and cultivate self-restraint. These practices may be associated with aspects of emotional functioning, including emotional awareness and regulation. However, the present study did not directly examine these processes as mediating mechanisms. Therefore, they should be understood as possible interpretations of the observed association rather than established explanations of the relationship.

The findings are also relevant to the religious educational environment of Buntet Pesantren, where spiritual practices take place within a broader framework of religious instruction, interpersonal interaction, and communal participation. Consequently, the association between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence may reflect not only individual engagement in spiritual practices but also the social and educational context in which these practices are maintained.

Nevertheless, the cross-sectional survey design does not establish that Dhikr directly causes improvements in Emotional Intelligence. It is also possible that individuals with stronger emotional regulation abilities are more consistently engaged in religious practices. Other factors, including religious commitment, family background, duration of participation in the order, and the social environment of the pesantren, may also contribute to the observed relationship. The findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence of a strong positive association rather than proof of a causal process.

Taken together, the findings indicate that Dhikr is strongly and positively associated with Emotional Intelligence, while Emotional Intelligence is positively associated with Spiritual Intelligence. In contrast, the direct contribution of Dhikr to Spiritual Intelligence is relatively small in the estimated model. These results suggest the importance of examining religious practices and psychological capacities together when studying spiritual development. However, the interpretation of these relationships remains limited to the empirical and institutional context of the present study.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings contribute to the discussion of spiritual development by examining the relationships among Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence within a specific Sufi educational setting. The results provide empirical evidence of the interconnectedness of religious practices and emotional competencies among members of the Syattariyah Order at Buntet Pesantren. However, the strength of these relationships should be interpreted in light of the conceptual and measurement boundaries of the constructs examined.

Theoretically, this study extends discussions of spiritual development by examining Dhikr not only as a religious ritual but also as a practice associated with emotional and spiritual dimensions of individual experience. The observed positive relationship between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence provides a basis for further investigating the psychological processes that may connect sustained religious engagement with emotional functioning. Nevertheless, the relatively strong path coefficient between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence ($\beta = 0.816$) requires cautious interpretation. Part of this association may reflect conceptual overlap between the measurement indicators, particularly if aspects such as inner calmness and moral improvement are represented in both constructs. In addition, because the study relies on self-reported questionnaire data collected within the same research context, common method variance may have contributed to the strength of the observed association. Therefore, the coefficient should not be interpreted exclusively as evidence of a strong substantive relationship between two clearly distinct constructs without further examination of their measurement validity and potential shared-method influences.

Similarly, the positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence highlights the relevance of emotional capacities in understanding spiritual development within a

traditional Islamic educational environment. This finding supports the consideration of emotional competencies as an important dimension in research on spiritual development, while recognizing that Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence remain conceptually distinct constructs. Further research should examine their measurement boundaries more rigorously and investigate the psychological processes that may connect them.

From a practical perspective, the findings may provide contextual insights for educators and religious institutions at Buntet Pesantren. The observed relationships suggest that religious education may benefit from maintaining opportunities for structured Dhikr practices while also supporting self-awareness, emotional understanding, and constructive interpersonal interaction. Such initiatives should be understood as context-specific educational considerations rather than interventions whose effectiveness has already been established by this study.

In particular, the strong estimated association between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence indicates the relevance of examining how spiritual activities are integrated with broader educational and interpersonal experiences. However, given the possibility of measurement overlap and common method variance, the magnitude of this association should not be treated as a definitive estimate of the substantive relationship between the constructs. Furthermore, the relatively small direct contribution of Dhikr to Spiritual Intelligence suggests that religious practices should not be assumed to contribute directly or substantially to all dimensions of spiritual development. The potential relevance of these educational practices requires further examination in different institutional and cultural settings.

Research Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, its reliance on self-reported questionnaires may have introduced response biases, particularly social desirability and religious conformity biases, as respondents may have provided answers consistent with the expectations and norms of their religious community. Furthermore, collecting data on Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence through the same questionnaire and from the same respondents creates the possibility of common method bias. This issue may have contributed to the relatively strong observed relationship between Dhikr and Emotional Intelligence ($\beta = 0.816$). Accordingly, the magnitude of this relationship should be interpreted cautiously because it may partly reflect shared measurement methods rather than exclusively representing the substantive association between the constructs.

Second, the measurement quality requires further consideration. The constructs were represented by a relatively small number of indicators, consisting of three indicators for Dhikr, three for Emotional Intelligence, and five for Spiritual Intelligence. Although the reported outer loadings, construct reliability, and average variance extracted met the applied assessment criteria, a limited number of indicators may not fully capture the conceptual breadth of each construct. In addition, the original sources of the measurement instruments and the procedures used for their adaptation and contextualization were not sufficiently documented. This limits the ability to assess the extent to which the instruments adequately represent the constructs within the specific religious and cultural context of the Syattariyah community. Future studies should provide clearer documentation of the original measurement sources, adaptation and translation procedures, expert assessments, and pilot testing. They should also consider using more comprehensive and theoretically grounded measurement instruments.

Third, the study involved members of the Syattariyah Order at Buntet Pesantren and was based on a limited sample. Therefore, the findings should not be generalized to other pesantren, Sufi orders, or Muslim communities without further investigation. The cross-sectional design also identifies statistical associations rather than causal relationships among Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence. Longitudinal research would be useful for examining how these relationships develop over time and whether sustained engagement in Dhikr is associated with subsequent changes in emotional and spiritual dimensions.

Fourth, although the structural model examines the direct relationships among Dhikr, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Intelligence, the potential indirect relationship between Dhikr and Spiritual Intelligence through Emotional Intelligence was not established through a separate indirect-effect analysis. Consequently, the present study cannot determine whether Emotional Intelligence mediates the relationship between Dhikr and Spiritual Intelligence. Future research

should explicitly test the specific indirect effect using bootstrapping and report the corresponding confidence intervals to establish whether such a mediating relationship is statistically supported.

Furthermore, the model's NFI (0.508) and SRMR (0.108) indicate limitations in overall model fit, requiring cautious interpretation of its explanatory capacity. Future studies should consider additional theoretically grounded variables, such as religious commitment, self-regulation, spiritual well-being, and social support. They should also employ research designs that reduce common method bias, for example, by collecting predictor and outcome measures at different time points, using multiple data sources where appropriate, or incorporating procedural safeguards in questionnaire administration.

Finally, future research should employ mixed methods and involve multiple pesantren or Sufi communities to provide deeper insights into how Dhikr is practiced and experienced, how emotional competencies develop within religious educational environments, and how these dimensions relate to Spiritual Intelligence. Such approaches would help assess whether the observed relationships extend beyond the specific context of Buntet Pesantren and provide a more comprehensive understanding of spiritual development in Islamic educational settings.

Conclusion

Based on the SEM-PLS analysis of data from members of the Shattariyah Order at Buntet Pesantren, Cirebon, this study identifies positive relationships among Dzikir, Emotional Intelligence (EQ), and Spiritual Intelligence (SQ). The results indicate a strong positive and statistically significant association between Dzikir and EQ ($\beta = 0.816$, $p < 0.001$), as well as a positive and statistically significant association between EQ and SQ ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, although the estimated direct relationship between Dzikir and SQ is positive ($\beta = 0.118$), its contribution is negligible ($f^2 = 0.014$), and its statistical significance has not been established in the verified results. Therefore, this relationship should not be interpreted as evidence of a statistically significant direct association. Overall, the findings highlight the relevance of emotional intelligence when examining the relationship between religious practice and spiritual intelligence in the context of the Shattariyah Order. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design does not establish causal relationships or demonstrate that EQ mediates the relationship between Dzikir and SQ.

These findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The NFI (0.508) and SRMR (0.108) indicate limitations in the overall fit of the proposed model, warranting caution in interpreting the structural relationships. The cross-sectional design also prevents conclusions about causal direction. Furthermore, the study's focus on members of a single Sufi community at Buntet Pesantren limits the transferability of the findings to other pesantren and religious communities. The use of self-reported data may also introduce common method bias, while the measurement instruments and their adaptation procedures require more detailed documentation and evaluation. Future research should employ longitudinal and comparative designs involving multiple pesantren or Sufi orders, strengthen the measurement instruments, and assess potential common method bias. It may also examine theoretically relevant factors, such as religious commitment, self-regulation, the leadership of the *mursyid*, and organizational climate. In addition, future studies could test the potential indirect relationship between Dzikir and SQ through EQ using a specific indirect-effect analysis with bootstrapped confidence intervals. These directions may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between religious practices, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence.

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Writing—Review & Editing: IS, IN, R, EZ, RBA, MAT; Supervision: IS.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors declare that AI-assisted tools were used to support language refinement and manuscript editing. All authors take full responsibility for the content and accuracy of the manuscript.

Ethical Clearance

The authors confirm that informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

Data Availability

All data generated and analyzed during this study are included in the published article.

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