

WIRID LATHIF TRADITION AND LOVE AND TOLERANCE EDUCATION IN PESANTREN: AN EXPLORATION OF LOCAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AS A SOURCE OF ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION

Zuhriyyah Hidayati
Universitas Billfath
zuhriyyah@billfath.ac.id

Abu Amar
Universitas Billfath
amarabu433@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study explores the Wirid Lathif tradition at the Tahfidhul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Paciran as a form of spiritual pedagogy that shapes students' gentleness (lathifah), love (mahabbah), and tolerance (tasamuh). Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, data were collected through observations, interviews with kiai, ustadz, and students, as well as documentation of wirid activities. The findings reveal that Wirid Lathif functions as an "inner madrasah" that educates the heart and complements intellectual learning. The repetitive and collective wirid practice cultivates spiritual calm, empathy, and humility, fostering affective transformation through daily habituation. Students experience increased patience, emotional control, and social harmony, showing that spiritual training effectively instills moral values without explicit instruction. Moreover, Wirid Lathif acts as a hidden curriculum promoting religious moderation by nurturing soft-heartedness and reflective religiosity. The study concludes that Wirid Lathif represents a model of Sufistic character education integrating spiritual, moral, and social dimensions and also relevant for developing compassionate and tolerant individuals in the context of contemporary Islamic education.*

Keywords: *Wirid Lathif, Islamic character education, love and tolerance, phenomenology, religious moderation.*

INTRODUCTION

Formal education in many countries, including Indonesia, still emphasizes the rational-cognitive aspect which includes mastery of knowledge, technical skills, and academic achievement as the main benchmark of student success.¹ However, global phenomena show that cognitive achievement alone does not necessarily produce morally

¹ Rahma Putri Rusdiyanti et al., "Imbalance of Cognitive and Psychomotor Assessment on Student Learning Motivation in State High Schools," *Journal of Nusantara Education* 4, no. 2 (2025): 113–21, <https://doi.org/10.55080/jpn.v4i2.192>.



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and emotionally mature human beings.² The younger generation often faces issues such as lack of empathy, increasing intolerance, inter-religious or inter-group conflicts, and identity and meaning crises.³ In the context of Islamic education, this can be seen in the criticism of orientation that focuses too much on memorization, ritual aspects or religious literacy alone, without paying enough attention to soul formation (*nafs*), social action, and sensitivity to humanity.⁴ Thus, one real problem is that the education system, even if successful in the cognitive aspect, is not optimal in educating character, soul, and deep interpersonal values.

In response to the shortage, several offers have been put forward in the educational literature. *First*, the explicit integration of character education into the school curriculum with a value approach (e.g. the values of honesty, responsibility, tolerance) taught through subjects and extracurricular activities.⁵ *Second*, a holistic learning approach that combines cognitive-affective-psychomotor aspects,⁶ so that students not only "know" but also "feel" and "do" these values. *Third*, the use of the school environment and school culture as a vehicle for character building for example, through routine activities, teacher examples, and pesantren-based school culture which nourishes the values of gentleness, togetherness, and tolerance.⁷ All of these offers show an awareness that education must be more than just knowledge transfer.

In addition to these efforts, there are other efforts that focus on spiritual education through wirid which is carried out through a spiritual practice and daily habituation⁸

² Mahna Mahna, "The Efforts of Islamic Religious Teachers in Building Emotional Intelligence (EQ) of Elementary School Children," *Al-Madrasah Journal of Education Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 9, no. 2 (2025): 716, <https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v9i2.4818>.

³ Mariati Purba et al., "Preventing Intolerant Understandings, Attitudes, and Behaviors among Generation Z Muslims in Public and Islamic Schools," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 14, no. 1 (2024): 31–61, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v14i1.31-61>.

⁴ Ani Fatimah Zahra Saifi et al., "Highlights and Criticisms of P4 Learning Management in Schools and Colleges," *Administration: Journal of Islamic Education Management* 13, no. 1 (2025): 82–98, <https://doi.org/10.30603/tjmpi.v13i1.5867>.

⁵ Purba et al., "Preventing Intolerant Understandings, Attitudes, and Behaviors among Generation Z Muslims in Public and Islamic Schools"; read also David D Williams et al., "Character Education in a Public High School: A Multi-Year Inquiry into Unified Studies," *Journal of Moral Education* 32, no. 1 (March 1, 2003): 3–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305724022000073310>.

⁶ Guntur Gunawan, Putri Rama Yanti, and Nelson Nelson, "Methods for Achieving Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor Aspects in Islamic Religious Education Learning: A Study at Senior High School in Rejang Lebong," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15, no. 1 (2023): 981–91, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i1.2793>.

⁷ Etty Ratnavati, "Edueskos : Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Ekonomi BUILDING YOUNG GENERATION CHARACTER: STRATEGIES FOR INTERNALIZING THE" XIII, no. 01 (2024): 117–27; Ainhua Viteri Jusué et al., "Learning How to Order Imaging Tests and Make Subsequent Clinical Decisions: A Randomized Study of the Effectiveness of a Virtual Learning Environment for Medical Students," *Medical Science Educator* 31, no. 2 (2021): 469–77, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-020-01188-5>; Nurul Khasanah, Niswanto Niswanto, and Khairuddin Khairuddin, "Character Education Management in Shaping School Culture," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 14, no. 3 (2022): 3713–20, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i3.2251>.

⁸ Nur Chanifah et al., "Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities," *Higher Education Pedagogies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 195–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1960879>; Munjin and Windariyati Dyah



carried out in the pesantren environment. In the context of this research, it is referred to as the *Wirid Lathif tradition*. This tradition of wirid is not only in the form of regular dhikr or wirid readings, but also a means of habituating the internalization of the values of gentleness (*lathifah*), love (*mahabbah*), and tolerance (*tasamuh*) between students and between students and the pesantren environment. As a local wisdom of Islamic boarding schools, wirid is unique because it is carried out in a collective, repetitive atmosphere, and embedded in the culture of the Islamic boarding school—so it is suitable as a medium of spiritual education that is not worked on by the formal education system that is very cognitive.

The reason why spiritual education through wirid was chosen as the main solution is that wirid penetrates the inner and emotional areas of students, which is not only shaping what students know but who they are as human beings.⁹ In addition, routine and collective wirid practices create a religious atmosphere, social cohesion, and deeper value interactions that allow character learning to occur not only in the classroom but in the daily life of the Islamic boarding school.¹⁰ Another reason is that, as part of the culture of the local Islamic boarding school, wirid has high social and religious legitimacy, so it is easier to accept and internalize by students than the character approach imposed from outside.¹¹ In an era of globalization and pluralism, traditions like this can be an important capital in developing religious moderation and tolerance, as they dig into local spiritual roots that promote human values.¹²

Previous studies have discussed how pesantren as an institution has great potential in character and spiritual education. Yulia Rahman (2021) stated that national-religious character education in traditional Islamic boarding schools fosters the values of love for the homeland, unity, and tolerance.¹³ Likewise, research conducted by Saepudin et al. (2023) illustrates that the spiritual basis of pesantren has an impact on multicultural

Kusumawanti, "The Educational Character Based on Islamic Spirituality," *Khazanah Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2023): 122–36, <https://doi.org/10.15575/kp.v5i2>.

⁹ M Yunus Abu Bakar and Ahmad Yani, "The Role of Islamic Boarding School Education in Shaping Students' Religious Character Amid the Challenges of Globalization," *Hikmah* 22, no. 1 (2025): 83–100, <https://www.e-jurnal.staisumatera-medan.ac.id/index.php/hikmah/article/view/455>; Rizal Fathurrohman et al., "THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF RIYĀḌ AH IN PESANTREN:" 7, no. 3 (2025): 301–20, <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v7i3.7982>.

¹⁰ M Wafiyul Ahdi, Wahyudi Wahyudi, and Ahmad Baihaqiyullo Ash-Syadzilil Islam, "Practice of Fasting and Dhikr in Developing Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ)," *DINAMIKA : Journal of Education and Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (2024): 14–23, <https://doi.org/10.32764/dinamika.v9i2.4828>.

¹¹ Fadhila Nurul et al., "Dissemination of Local Wisdom and Innovation Diffusion through Routine Wirid in Agam, West Sumatra" 13, no. 1 (2025): 17–38.

¹² Hilyah Ashoumi, Ludfiah Novi Cahyani H, and Muhammad Kris Yuan Hidayatullo, "Internalization of Religious Moderation Values Through Learning Moral Sufism with Implications for Student Association Ethics," *SCHOOLAR: Social and Literature Study in Education* 2, no. 2 (2022): 131–38, <https://doi.org/10.32764/schoolar.v2i2.2959>.

¹³ Yulia Rahman, "Religious-Nationalism Based Character Education in Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools," *TADRIS: Journal of Islamic Education* 17, no. 2 (2022): 348–64, <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v17i2.6862>.



awareness.¹⁴ However, few studies have specifically explored the practice of daily wirid as a soul-building medium that integrates the values of tenderness, love and tolerance systemically. Therefore, there is a research gap that has not been worked on, namely how wirid as a concrete spiritual practice facilitates the formation of soul character in the pesantren environment.

With this framework, this research focuses on specific local traditions, namely *Wirid Lathif* as a medium of soul education and tolerance in Islamic boarding schools, which are rarely discussed in the literature on character education and Islamic boarding schools. This study does not only look at cognitive aspects or religious rituals separately, but also examines the practicality of wirid as a pedagogy of students' life experiences (*phenomenological*) that forms inner values. In terms of contribution, this research has the potential to enrich the discourse of Islamic character education by adding a perspective of spiritual education based on pesantren spirituality, providing practical implications for pesantren managers and educators in designing programs that integrate wirid or spiritual practice as part of the implicit curriculum. At a practical level, the results can also serve as a reference for Islamic education policies to strengthen moderation and tolerance through local wisdom and also an important basis in the midst of increasingly complex challenges of intolerance and conflict.

This research aims to explore in depth the *Wirid Lathif tradition* as a form of local spiritual practice that plays a role in shaping the education of the soul, love, and tolerance in the pesantren environment. In particular, this research has three main objectives. *First*, to reveal the meaning and spiritual values contained in *the practice of Wirid Lathif* as understood by the students and kiai. *Second*, it explains the process of internalizing the values of *lathifah* (gentleness), *mahabbah* (love), and *tasamuh* (tolerance) through the routine of wirid in the daily life of the pesantren. *Third*, analyze the relevance and contribution of *the Wirid Lathif* tradition to strengthening Islamic character education and religious moderation in the midst of the global challenges of intolerance and social disintegration. With this goal, this research is expected to expand the understanding of how local wisdom of pesantren functions as *spiritual pedagogy* that instills human values in a contextual and sustainable manner.

METHODS

This study uses a phenomenological qualitative approach because it aims to understand the meaning of the spiritual experience of the students in the Wirid Lathif tradition at the Tahfidzul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangsawo Paciran, Lamongan. The phenomenological approach was chosen so that the research could explore the essence of inner values such as lathifah (tenderness), mahabbah (love), and tasamuh (tolerance) experienced directly by the wirid actors.¹⁵ Data was collected through

¹⁴ Saepudin Mashuri, Sauqi Futaqi, and Ahmad Sulhan, “Spiritual Base of Pesantren for Building Multicultural Awareness in Indonesia Context,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 24, no. 1 (2024): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v24i1.17141>.

¹⁵ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (SAGE Publications., 2018).



participant observations, in-depth interviews with kiai, ustaz, and students, and documentation of wirid activities that are routinely carried out after the tahajud prayer.

The data analysis in this study uses a phenomenological model as explained by Creswell (2018), which is based on the thinking of Moustakas (1994). The analysis was carried out in stages to find the essential meaning of the spiritual experience of the students in the Wirid Lathif tradition at the Tahfidzul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangsawo, Lamongan. The first process is to organize all the data from interviews, observations, and documentation so that they are ready for analysis. Next, the researcher read the entire data repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. The next stage is to encode significant *statements* that describe how students experience and interpret the practice of wirid practice. The results of the coding are then grouped into essential themes that represent inner values such as *lathifah* (gentleness), *mahabbah* (love), and *tasamuh* (tolerance). From these themes, two types of descriptions were prepared, namely textural descriptions (*what was experienced*) which describes what the students experienced, and structural descriptions (*how it was experienced*) which explains how the experience occurred in the context of pesantren life. These two descriptions are synthesized into a complete understanding of the essence of the meaning of the spiritual experience of the students in the Wirid Lathif tradition. The¹⁶ validity of the data is guaranteed through triangulation of sources and techniques as well as member checks to informants to ensure the accuracy of interpretation of meaning. The entire research process upholds scientific ethics by maintaining the confidentiality of the identity of the informant, respecting the culture of the pesantren, and ensuring the direct involvement of researchers dalam konteks kehidupan spiritual di pesantren.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

1. The Spiritual Meaning of Wirid Lathif at the Tahfidhul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Paciran

During field research at the Tahfidhul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Paciran, researchers found that *the Wirid Lathif tradition* is not only a routine practice, but also a means of forming the inner character of the students. Every 3:30 a.m., the students wake up from sleep, take ablution water, perform tahajud prayers and then sit cross-legged on the foyer of the mosque facing the qibla in a quiet atmosphere. The wirid reading is led directly by the kiai in a soft voice and with a slow rhythm. There is no coercion or threat of punishment; The students came with their own awareness. This routine seems to have become part of the spiritual breath of the pesantren, running naturally, without the need to be regulated with hard discipline.

The caretaker of the pesantren explained that *Wirid Lathif* is not just a series of dhikr that is read after tahajud, but an "inner madrasah" where the hearts of the students are educated to be gentle and sensitive to the presence of Allah. In an interview, he said,

¹⁶ Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth.



"*Wirid Lathif* is an exercise in softening the heart. Lathif means smooth, soft. Students must have a soft heart so that their knowledge is easy to enter and their barokah is felt. If his heart is hard, the verses of the Qur'an will not settle. This wirid teaches them to subdue their egos, calm down, and listen to their clear conscience."

According to him, the meaning of *lathif* is not only emotionally gentle, but also spiritual *calm* which is a sign of closeness to Allah. In his view, students who are diligent in wirid will experience a gradual spiritual process — from simply saying dhikr orally, to dhikr of the heart that is present, to achieving dhikr of taste where all consciousness is focused on God.

"If dhikr has reached the heart, it is called lathif. A lathif person is not quick to anger, does not easily judge others, and is always prejudiced. That is the fruit of true dhikr," he added.

In terms of education, the kiai views *Wirid Lathif* as a form of *spiritual tarbiyah* (spiritual education) that complements *tarbiyah aqliyah* (intellectual education). He said that memorizing the Qur'an without mental training can actually foster the arrogance of knowledge. Therefore, every student must balance memorization with wirid.

"Science is like water. It can only flow on loose soil. A heart that is hard as a stone, cannot absorb. So, this wirid is the task of loosening the heart," he said.

Ustadz, the tahfidz supervisor, also added the same observation. He said that students who regularly follow *Wirid Lathif* are usually calmer, not easily anxious when making memorized deposits, and have an empathetic attitude towards friends. "Wirid is a kind of inner exercise without realizing it," he said. "He formed the habit of silence, patience, and acceptance of the qualities that are needed in the process of memorizing the Qur'an."

Senior students and new students gave personal testimonies that strengthened this view. One of the students said that after a few weeks of participating in the wirid, he began to feel a different calm, like his mind was invited to dialogue with Allah. Meanwhile, the new student admitted that every time he finished wirid, he felt relief that was difficult to explain, such as his anger decreased, and he became more forgiving.

The researchers also observed that after wirid, the students closed their small books carefully, then shook hands with each other before returning to the dormitory. This scene shows that wirid has become part of the affective culture of pesantren, a form of character education that is alive and felt.

From all these observations, it appears that the meaning of *Wirid Lathif* for the caretaker of the pesantren is not only a ritual of remembrance of Allah, but also *a method of tazkiyatun nafs* (self-purification) that disciplines the mind and prepares students to receive the light of knowledge. He works beyond the cognitive dimension, penetrating the spiritual and emotional realms, to mold a gentle, humble, and empathetic personality. In this pesantren tradition, wirid is not only the sound of repeated dhikr, but the pulse of spiritual life that leads students to become a *lathif person*, as subtle in mind, clear in heart, and close to Allah.

2. Internalization of the Value of Love and Tolerance

In field observations, researchers found that *Wirid Lathif* is not only a dhikr ritual, but also serves as a means of internalizing gentle human values, especially love and tolerance. The wirid activity carried out before dawn creates a warm and loving spiritual atmosphere. The repeated recitation of dhikr, namely saying the names of Allah gently and mindfully, turns out to foster a sense of closeness not only between the students and their God, but also among fellow students.

A tahfidz supervisor said that the value of love in this pesantren is not taught through theory, but through inner experiences born from wirid. He said,

"Children here learn love through dhikr. When they mention God's name repeatedly, love arises unconsciously. From there they can respect their friends, be patient when they disagree, and even restrain themselves when hurt. It is all born from a calm heart."

This statement illustrates that *Wirid Lathif* works in the affective realm, namely changing moods, softening emotions, and instilling empathy naturally. On another occasion, Kiai, the caretaker of the Islamic boarding school, emphasized that the essence of *Wirid Lathif* does lie in *mahabbah* (love) and *tasamuh* (tolerance). He said calmly,

"Dhikr is the way to love. A person who is diligent in dhikr has a softened heart, and a gentle heart does not like to hurt. If the love for Allah has grown, then the love for fellow creatures has also grown. That is why the students here are taught wirid from the beginning: so that they not only memorize the Qur'an, but also have gentle morals."

He added that *tasamuh* is also the fruit of true love. According to him, students whose hearts are filled with love for Allah will easily forgive, do not envy the success of others, and do not feel better than others. "Dhikr trains humility," he said, "and humility is the source of tolerance."

The researchers' observations reinforce this view. After the wirid activity ended, the students used to greet their friends, even with those who had previously had a disagreement. In their daily lives, there are often scenes of students helping each other, such as helping friends who are picketing, taking their friends' food, and gradually. This moment seems simple, but it becomes a mirror of the inner transformation that is happening slowly. Several female students interviewed also described similar experiences. One of them said,

"If the wirid is crowded, it feels like we all have one heart. Sometimes if a friend has a problem, we help without being asked. It seems that because wirid teaches us to be gentle and unselfish."

This expression shows that wirid plays a role as *a non-verbal character education* that runs naturally. Moral values such as compassion, solidarity, and tolerance are not taught through lectures or commands, but grow from a collective consciousness built through togetherness in dhikr.

In the reflection of the researcher, *Wirid Lathif* in this pesantren becomes a kind of spiritual ecosystem where love and tolerance are lived, not just memorized. The repetition of dhikr fosters a gentle rhythm of the heart. In addition, togetherness in wirid



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fosters a sense of mutual understanding, and the example of teachers confirms the meaning of true love. This tradition shows that Islamic spiritual education can run through a silent but meaningful daily proxy, where every dhikr utterance becomes a seed that fosters the morals of love and tolerance in students.

3. Relevance to Character Education and Religious Moderation

Wirid Lathif's *activities* at the Tahfidhul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Paciran show that traditional spiritual practices can function as an effective means of character education as well as fostering religious moderation. Every morning, the students start the day with a gentle and mindful dhikr. The repetitive and calm rhythm of the reading fosters a peaceful inner atmosphere, far from tension or confrontational spirit. In such an atmosphere, the values of compassion, balance, and social empathy that are at the core of Islamic teachings grow naturally in the pesantren environment.

In a follow-up interview, the caretaker of the pesantren explained that *Wirid Lathif* is not just a ritual to get closer to Allah, but also a way to cultivate meekness which is the root of moderate behavior in daily religious attitudes. He said,

"Now many are hard in religion because they have lost meekness. If this dhikr lives in society, people are not easily angry, not easily disbelieved. *Wirid Lathif* is the most suitable soul education for this era. He trains the heart not to be hasty in judgment, not to be arrogant with his own truth."

The statement shows that wirid activities have a deep social dimension. It is not just a personal ritual, but a form of affective education that changes the way a person views difference. Through continuous spiritual practice, students learn to recognize that the truth does not have to be expressed with violence, but with wisdom and love. Gentle dhikr forms a calm personality, while the collective atmosphere in the pesantren fosters an awareness of togetherness and mutual respect.

The supervisor added his view that *Wirid Lathif* plays a role like a *hidden curriculum* that teaches moral values without having to be written in the formal syllabus.

"We don't lecture students about tolerance or empathy, but they learn directly through practice. Dhikr makes the heart soft. If their hearts are soft, they are automatically more polite, more patient, more accepting of differences."

The researchers' observations confirm this. In daily life, students who are diligent in wirid tend to show a calm and unpretentious social attitude. They are not easily involved in small conflicts, prefer dialogue, and often mediate if there are differences of opinion between friends. In the context of a society that is vulnerable to polarization and symbolic violence in the name of religion, such characters are clear evidence that spiritual education in Islamic boarding schools can be a fortress for religious moderation.

Furthermore, this wirid tradition reflects the local wisdom of pesantren as a form of *spiritual pedagogy* that balances knowledge, charity, and morals. Through dhikr habituation, students slowly build reflective awareness, namely how religious values should lead humans to be compassionate, forgiving, and open to diversity. *Wirid Lathif* is a bridge between spirituality and humanity, between memorization and appreciation, between personal worship and social harmony.



Thus, this wirid activity is not only a routine worship practice, but a spirituality-based social transformation strategy. He trains students to combine inner depth with breadth of view, making them calm, empathetic, and ready to coexist with anyone. In the framework of contemporary Islamic education, *Wirid Lathif* is a real example of how the sufistic approach is able to maintain a balance between cognitive and affective aspects, between mastery of knowledge and character formation, an educational model that is in line with the spirit of religious moderation in the modern era.

Discussion

The data analysis in this study was carried out with a phenomenological approach as formulated by Moustakas (1994) and adapted by Creswell & Poth (2018). The purpose of this approach is to understand the essential meaning of the spiritual experience of the students towards *the Wirid Lathif* tradition. All data from interviews, observations, and documentation are organized systematically, then read repeatedly to find meaningful *statements* that describe how students experience and interpret the practice of wirid practice. These statements are encoded, grouped into essential themes, and then arranged in two forms of description: textural (what is experienced) and structural (how the experience occurred). Through this process, the researcher seeks to synthesize a complete understanding of the essence of the spiritual experience of students in Islamic boarding schools.

The results of organizing and coding the data show three main themes that represent the spiritual experience of the students, namely: (1) *Wirid Lathif* as an inner madrasah that educates the heart and prepares itself to receive knowledge; (2) internalizing the value of love (*mahabbah*) and tolerance (*tasamuh*) through dhikr habituation; and (3) the relevance of *Wirid Lathif* to character education and religious moderation. These three themes show that *Wirid Lathif* not only functions as a religious ritual, but also as a spiritual pedagogical system that deeply shapes the personality of the students.

In the first theme, the spiritual meaning of *Wirid Lathif* is clearly seen in the experience of the students and the explanation of the pesantren caregiver. The caregiver emphasized that *Wirid Lathif* is not just a verbal dhikr, but an "inner madrasah" where the heart is trained to be gentle and sensitive to the presence of Allah. In practice, students sit cross-legged after tahajud, reciting wirid with a soft rhythm led by the kiai. There is no formal pressure or obligation, but rather a spiritual awareness that grows out of habit and example. This experience gives birth to a feeling of calm, peace, and inner connection with God. The students admitted that after participating in the wirid regularly, they became more patient and not easily angry. Structurally, the quiet atmosphere before dawn, repeated and rhythmic readings, and the teacher's example create a meditative space that directs students to experience dhikr that is not just speech, but full awareness. From this comes the essence of *the value of lathifah*—meekness as a result of self-purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*).



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This finding is in line with the view of Irhas (2023) who explains that dhikr has the power to transform a person's emotional and spiritual intelligence.¹⁷ Dhikr not only remembers Allah at the cognitive level, but also rearranges the emotional system, so that the heart becomes a container for knowledge and wisdom. Sukandar (2025) also stated that repeated dhikr is able to calm the mind and strengthen self-control.¹⁸ Thus, the experience of the students in *Wirid Lathif* shows that it is in accordance with these psychospiritual findings, namely the dhikr ritual works beyond the cognitive dimension and moves directly to the refinement of the mind.

In the second theme, namely the internalization of the values of *mahabbah* and *tasamuh*, the results of the analysis show that *Wirid Lathif* functions as a medium of character education that runs non-verbally. The guidance teacher said that "children learn love through dhikr", because mentioning the name of Allah repeatedly fosters love without realizing it. The students experience real affective changes, namely they are more patient, easy to forgive, and show high social solidarity. After wirid, they are used to shaking hands with each other, helping friends who are struggling, and maintaining harmony in relationships in the dormitory. Texturally, this experience is in the form of a feeling of "one heart" among the students. Structurally, it was born from the practice of collective dhikr that fosters an awareness of togetherness, supported by the example of kiai and a loving inner atmosphere. The results of the study show that *Wirid Lathif* functions as a systemic and continuous mechanism of inner formation (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) which is carried out through the repetition of words, rhythm of breathing, early morning silence, and collective togetherness, students experience real affective changes, namely calmness, emotional control, love, and the ability to forgive which in turn affect their social behavior. These findings are consistent with the concept of *tazkiyah* Al-Ghazali which views the purification of the soul as a continuous process that changes the properties of the soul through spiritual practices (*riyāḍah*) such as dhikr and muraqabah. In this perspective, the practice of wirid works not only on a cognitive level but directly disciplining the inner state so as to produce a gentle and empathetic disposition.¹⁹

This phenomenon also strengthens Rochman's (2022) argument which shows that the tradition of dhikr in tarekat and pesantren functions as a means of strengthening spirituality-based character. According to him, the repetition of dhikr performed collectively creates an emotional resonance that strengthens the sense of love and empathy between individuals.²⁰ In the perspective of educational psychology, this phenomenon is also in line with quantitative studies that have found that the intensity of

¹⁷ Ahmad Amir Aziz and Lalu Agus Satriawan, "The Power of Dhikr : Elevating Intellectual , Emotional , and Spiritual Quotients," 2023.

¹⁸ Universitas Adzkia, "'Dhikr as a Psychospiritual Therapy for the Elderly: A Phenomenological Study at the Elderly Boarding School of Madrasah Ibnu Mas`ud, Segamat, Johor, Malaysia'" 8, no. 1 (n.d.): 97–108.

¹⁹ Heri Fadli Wahyudi Moh. Wardi, Mudiuddin, "The Experience of Dhikr and Contemplation in the Spiritual Guidance of the Tijaniyah Tarekat in Madura, Indonesia," *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2024); Muhammad Itsbatul Haq, "Tasawwuf (Sufism) as The Basis for Internalizing Humanist Character of Indonesian Muslims (Case Study of Pesantren in Yogyakarta and Madura)," *Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization* 2, no. 2 (2019): 235–62.

²⁰ Boy Arief Rochman, Achmad Mudrikah, and Supyan Sauri, "Implementation of Tariqah Dhikr in Strengthening the Character of Tahfidz Santri in Al-Qur`an Al-Falah Islamic Boarding Schools and Suryalaya Islamic Boarding Schools" 1, no. 2 (2022): 43–60.



dhikr is positively correlated with the ability to self-control and prosocial behavior.²¹ Thus, *Wirid Lathif* can be understood as a form of *affective pedagogy* in which the values of love and tolerance are internalized not through lectures, but through spiritual habituation that fosters social empathy.

The third theme emphasizes the relevance of *Wirid Lathif* to character education and religious moderation. The caretaker of the pesantren considers that this dhikr is "the most suitable education of the soul for this age," because it trains the heart not to be hasty in judging and not to be arrogant with its own truth. The spiritual experience of the gentle and peaceful students creates a calm, non-reactive, and open person to differences. Ustadz tahfidz added that *Wirid Lathif* is a *hidden curriculum* in pesantren education, because unknowingly, he instills the values of empathy, politeness, and a moderate attitude through daily dhikr habituation. Field observations show that students who are active in wirid tend to mediate conflicts and avoid harsh debates. This indicates a shift from normative religiosity to reflective religiosity—a stage of spiritual maturity that is important in the context of religious moderation.

These findings are in line with the results of A'la's (2024) research which shows that the Sufistic Tarekat community and pesantren play an important role in building a tolerant culture and suppressing the tendency of religious extremism.²² In this framework, *Wirid Lathif* can be seen as a preventive mechanism against ideological radicalism by building meekness and moral wisdom.

If viewed theoretically, these three themes can be understood as a single process of mental transformation. *Wirid Lathif* starts from the individual level, namely by softening the heart and calming himself, then continues to the social realm, through the process of cultivating empathy and love, and finally leads to universal awareness, which is to give birth to religious moderation and spiritual balance. This pattern is identical to the stages of *tazkiyatun nafs* in classical Sufism literature which include purification of the heart (*takhalli*), filling with noble qualities (*tahalli*), and unification of spiritual meaning (*tajalli*). Thus, *Wirid Lathif* functions as a bridge between spirituality and character education, between individual worship and social life.

In the perspective of contemporary Islamic education, these results have broad relevance. Education is not sufficiently oriented to cognitive achievement, but must touch the inner regions of students. *Wirid Lathif* shows how the sufistic approach can be an effective method of character education without having to be in the form of moral indoctrination. It works subtly, internalizing values through habits and emotional experiences. In phenomenological research, the essence of research is to discover the hidden "structure of meaning" in human experience; In this context, the meaning found is that Wirid plays a role as a spiritual pedagogical space where students learn not only to remember Allah, but to become gentle, humble, and tolerant human beings.

²¹ Manuscript Masuk et al., "THE EFFECT OF DHIKR INTENSITY ON SELF-CONTROL IN PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS," *Medina: Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2024): 275–84.

²² Maghfur Ahmad, Abdul Aziz, and Mochammad N Afad, "The Sufi Order against Religious Radicalism in Indonesia Sufi Order Qadiriyyah Wa Naqshabandiyah in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 1–11.



Therefore, *the tradition of Wirid Lathif* at the Tahfidhul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Paciran can be read as a form of integrative sufistic character education. He cultivated *lathifah* (meekness) as the foundation of morality, *mahabbah* (love) as social energy, and *tasamuh* (tolerance) as an expression of maturity of faith. The three combine to form a calm, empathetic, and moderately insightful student personality. In a world that tends to be harsh and fragmentary, this pesantren has shown that inner education through dhikr can be the most effective quiet way to build a civilized humanity.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that *the tradition of Wirid Lathif* at the Tahfidhul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Paciran is not just a formal ritual activity, but a spiritual education system that has a profound role in the formation of the character of students. Through the practice of dhikr that is carried out consistently every morning, students experience the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) which fosters meekness of heart (*lathifah*), inner serenity, and high spiritual awareness. This tradition works affectively through the repetition of words, the calmness of the atmosphere, and the example of the teacher, so as to produce the personality of the students who are humble, patient, and have the ability to control emotions. The intense experience of dhikr also gives rise to a sense of closeness to Allah while opening up a space of reflective awareness that refines the mind and strengthens social empathy.

Furthermore, the results of the study revealed that *Wirid Lathif* functions as a spiritual pedagogy that integrates spiritual, moral, and social aspects in a single praxis of pesantren education. Through the internalization of the values of *mahabbah* (love) and *tasamuh* (tolerance), students not only understand the teachings of Islam intellectually, but also live them in daily behavior that is full of love and tolerance. Thus, this tradition has become a real model of sufistic character education that is relevant to the spirit of religious moderation in the contemporary era—showing that meekness, spiritual balance, and social empathy are important foundations for the creation of civilized people who are knowledgeable, moral, and open to diversity.

Although the field evidence supports the role of wirid in shaping love and tolerance, this study is a local case study so generalizations should be made carefully. Comparative studies between Islamic boarding schools (with variations in wirid practices) and longitudinal quantitative research are needed to test the durability of the wirid effect on tolerance attitudes outside the pesantren environment. In addition, it is important to examine possible side effects (e.g., ritual rigidity if the practice is rigidly institutionalized) so that integration into the realm of education policy must be accompanied by ethical and contextual supervision.

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