



Internalization of Sufi Values in Modern Education to Build Students' Mental Health

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The research examines the integration of Sufi principles into modern education to enhance students' mental health. It talks about how people are becoming more and more worried about students' mental health issues, like stress, anxiety, and depression, which can be made worse by schoolwork and cultural expectations. This study explains the potential of Sufi principles, such as patience, humility, self-control, and remembrance of God (dhikr), in nurturing emotional well-being and providing a holistic approach to mental health. Sufism emphasizes inner peace, the practice of ethics, and spiritual development, which complement cognitive-based education systems that often neglect emotional and spiritual health. The research employed a literature review methodology to examine recent studies concerning Sufism, mental health, and education. The findings indicate that Sufi practices such as mindfulness and self-reflection can alleviate anxiety and regulate emotions. By incorporating these principles into school culture and curriculum, students can learn to handle problems better, become more emotionally intelligent, and develop better attitudes. This study shows that integrating Sufi principles into education can enhance the learning environment, foster student support and satisfaction, and help address academic and mental health challenges. This means that future teaching methods should include the spiritual side of students' well-being, which will help them grow in all areas, including their minds, emotions, and spirits. This method could change how schools work now to improve the mental health of all the students.

Keywords: Internalization, Sufi Values, Modern Education, Mental Health, Students

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INTRODUCTION

Students need to pay more attention to their mental health now than they did a few years ago. School, family, and other social situations have made them stressed out, which has hurt their mental health. Some of the most common problems are feeling sad, stressed out by schoolwork, anxious, bullied, and not knowing who you are. Depression, which is often linked to feelings of hopelessness and lack of motivation, has become a big problem that affects students' grades and social life (Ang et al., 2020). Also, higher expectations for schoolwork could lead to mental health problems because kids worry and stress about their grades and test scores (Misra & McKean, 2000). Anxiety, whether concerning the future, examinations, or social interactions, is a common mental health concern among adolescents today and adversely affects their physical and emotional well-being (Beesdo et al., 2009).

Bullying, which can happen in person, over the phone, or online, is one of the main causes of mental health problems in kids. It makes them feel alone and frightened (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Many teenagers also have trouble figuring out who they are, what their purpose in life is, and where they fit into society (Erikson, 1968). The contemporary education system often focuses on intellectual and competitive methods, with student achievement often judged by grades and class rank. This method puts cognitive capabilities first when measuring performance, while other important skills, such as creativity and social skills, are often left out (Kohn, 1999); (Noddings, 2013). This high level of competition can cause stress and pressure, which can be bad for students' mental health (Dweck, 2006).

So, it's important to think about a more well-rounded education that includes more than just getting good grades. It should also help students become better people and feel better mentally. One possible answer is to teach Sufi ideas in schools. Sufism is a big part of Islamic culture and gives people a full spiritual framework for finding peace within themselves and building their character. Sufism emphasizes the purification of the soul from negative attributes and the cultivation of positive qualities such as patience, humility, and honesty, achieved through practices like dzikr (remembrance of God), tafakkur (meditation), and heart purification (Nasr, 2002). Sufi activities aim to cultivate a deeper connection with God while also significantly enhancing mental and emotional well-being, assisting individuals in coping with worry, stress, and dissatisfaction with life (Hikam, 1999). Sufism fosters qualities such as self-discipline, gratitude, and a broad understanding of existence by promoting the recognition of life's profound significance and the acceptance of divine will (Khomeini, 1999).

Consequently, the incorporation of Sufi principles into modern education could rectify the spiritual and ethical shortcomings prevalent in existing educational frameworks (Abitolkha, 2022). The investigation into the integration of Sufi values into modern education to enhance students' mental health is particularly pertinent, as discourse surrounding Sufism has predominantly concentrated on theological-normative dimensions and has not been substantially linked to education and mental health (Nasr, 2022); (Hidayat, 2021). Many studies show that Sufism is good for mental and spiritual health, but it is still not being used enough in real life. Most of the research focuses on

theoretical aspects instead of providing practical help for how to include Sufi beliefs in the school curriculum. Moreover, contemporary research often overlooks the challenges faced in heterogeneous educational settings, as illustrated by Indonesia, thereby requiring a more contextualized approach (Akmansyah et al., 2025).

The digital era has made these problems worse. For example, students who spend too much time on digital platforms are more likely to feel anxious and depressed (Twenge, 2017). This fast-paced, tech-driven way of life often ignores the spiritual and moral parts of health, which can cause feelings of emptiness and mental health issues (Usman et al., 2020). By incorporating Sufi principles into education, students are anticipated to cultivate a harmony among cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, hence enhancing their mental health (Solihin & Munir, 2017); (Rejeki & Hakim, 2025). This approach has the ability to address the rising mental health challenges and develop a more well-rounded and resilient generation of students by bridging the gap between spiritual practices and modern educational methodologies.

METHODS

This study employs a literature review methodology to identify knowledge gaps and critically assess research findings, thereby offering a comprehensive overview of a specific research topic (Renner et al., 2022). A literature review seeks to acquire theoretical and argumentative evidence through the examination of academic sources, such as books, journals, and government documents (Zed, 2008). This method makes it easier for future research to find patterns, trends, and inconsistencies in current studies. The research review "Internalization of Sufi Values in Modern Education to Build Students' Mental Health: A Literature Review" examines the interplay among educational theories, technological innovations, and the challenges and opportunities posed by social media in the digital landscape.

This study examined information related to Sufi principles, mental health, education, and the impact of technology on students. The chosen literature must be subjected to peer review, demonstrate both theoretical and practical significance, and be derived from recent publications (within the last decade) that focus on multicultural educational settings and the integration of technology. It is also important to find out how Sufism is related to mental health and how it is used in schools. The following are the steps used in the literature review approach:

[Figure 1. about here]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Idea of Sufism

Sufism, commonly known as Islamic mysticism, represents a profound spiritual and ethical aspect of Islam, often misconstrued or oversimplified as mere mysticism or cultural phenomena. Sufism, conversely, is a comprehensive framework for moral development and spiritual purification grounded in Islamic principles (Mannopov et al., 2025). The Qur'anic concept of *ihsan*, which means being the best you can be in worship, character, and inner intention, lies at the heart

of Sufism. This makes it a natural part of Islam, not something that was added later (Meerasahibu, 2024). A lot of Sufi rituals are meant to purify people spiritually and bring them closer to God. These are dzikr (remembering God) and suluk (spiritual battle), and they are all about becoming a better person and a better spiritual person. Sufi poetry and teachings generally promote these activities to facilitate spiritual and moral development (Mannopov et al., 2025). Sufism has significantly influenced Islamic scholarship and practice over the years, particularly in regions such as the Malay world, where it intersects with discussions on aqidah (creed) and fiqh (Islamic law) (Al-Akiti & Halim, 2021).

Malay Sunni Sufi academics have helped Sufism grow by creating structured programs for different levels of spiritual understanding and practice, following the methods of famous thinkers like Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi (Al-Akiti & Halim, 2021). Sufism has also had a big impact on the social, cultural, and religious life of many Muslim communities. For instance, current Sufi teachings have helped spread human values, tolerance, and cultural heritage in Indonesia, affecting both religious activities and everyday life (Robingatun et al., 2024). This shows that Sufism is still important and may be used in modern situations.

Sufism has a long and important history, but it has also had problems and been criticized, especially by reformist parties who say that some Sufi activities go against orthodox Islamic beliefs. Moderate voices within the Sufi tradition, influenced by leaders such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, persist in promoting a balanced approach that synthesizes diverse ideas (Purwanto et al., 2023). Sufism is a complicated field that includes spiritual activities, moral teachings, and intellectual contributions, all of which are meant to help people reach the goal of *ihsan*. It is a living and changing tradition that is still very important to the spiritual lives of many Muslims around the world.

B. Students' Mental Health

Mental health is a very important part of total health that has a big effect on many areas of daily life, such as school performance and personal growth. Mental health difficulties are becoming more common among students, especially those in higher education, and they are becoming a major public health issue. The idea of mental health in students includes their psychological and emotional health, such as how they think, feel, and act. Good mental health helps students deal with the regular demands of life, do their work well, and make meaningful contributions to their communities (Mondal et al., 2025). Nonetheless, the swift societal changes and diverse external demands have adversely affected students' mental health, resulting in disorders such as sadness, anxiety, tension, and dread (Pua et al., 2017);(Calle Müller & Elzomor, 2025). It's scary how many pupils have mental health problems. Research indicates that a significant number of students suffer from anxiety and despair, with some contemplating suicide, which has emerged as the second greatest cause of mortality among university students (Eisenberg et al., 2007).

Factors contributing to students' poor mental health encompass academic stress, financial difficulties, interpersonal interactions, and the transition to adulthood

(Kong, 2020); (Dalky & Gharaibeh, 2019). The stigma around mental health disorders frequently inhibits students from obtaining necessary assistance, hence worsening their conditions (Vornholt & de Choudhury, 2021);(Hyseni Duraku et al., 2023). To help pupils with mental health problems, you need to use a variety of methods. Schools play an important role in helping students by offering counseling, teaching them about mental health, and making the classroom a safe place to learn (Pua et al., 2017);(Kong, 2020); (Hyseni Duraku et al., 2023).

Interventions, including early warning systems, mental health awareness campaigns, and stress management resources, can alleviate the adverse effects of mental health concerns (Schislyeva & Saychenko, 2023);(Chauhan & Mohan, 2024). Moreover, promoting transparent communication and diminishing the stigma associated with mental health are crucial measures for enhancing students' psychological well-being (Veluchamy et al., 2016). In general, students' mental health is a very important part of their overall health and success in school. To create a supportive and healthy school atmosphere, it's important to know what causes mental health problems and to use effective methods to deal with them.

C. Sufi Values that are Good for Mental Health

Sufism, often called Islamic mysticism, is an important part of Islam that has a lot to do with mental wellness. In today's society, when the link between spirituality and mental health is becoming more clear, Sufism's ideas offer a complete and cohesive way to improve mental health. Sufism examines both the link between humanity and God and the interpersonal dynamics among individuals, so rendering it pertinent to mental health research (Solihin & Munir, 2017). *Dhikr*, or remembering God, is one of the most important parts of Sufism. It means saying God's names or certain petitions over and over again. This practice resembles the psychological principle of mindfulness, which emphasizes the enhancement of self-awareness and inner tranquility (Mitha, 2019);(Al-Owidha, 2024).

Research demonstrates that engaging in dhikr can reduce stress and improve emotional health, making it a valuable tool in mental health therapy (Bakri et al., 2025);(Rejeki & Hakim, 2025). Sufism emphasizes the importance of *muraqabah* (self-monitoring), which can be employed in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. This practice involves serious meditation and reflection, which have shown effective in alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression (Isgandarova, 2019). This method can create a more culturally appropriate setting for Muslim patients in therapy, which could make them more comfortable with treatments that fit with their spiritual beliefs (Gul & Jehangir, 2019). Additionally, research demonstrates that Sufi values, such as love and compassion, positively influence mental health. In Sufism, love extends beyond human relationships to include love for God, which can promote psychological and spiritual transformation (Alsaleh & Vasanth, 2024);(Thien Nhan et al., 2025).

This method helps people deal with their inner issues and embrace themselves more, which in turn improves their mental health (Alsaleh & Vasanth, 2024). Incorporating Sufi ideals into mental health treatments

provides a diverse and comprehensive approach to tackling various psychological challenges. This approach integrates spiritual and psychological dimensions, facilitating mental healing and fostering comprehensive holistic well-being (Al-Owidha, 2024);(Rejeki & Hakim, 2025). Consequently, additional study and clinical use of Sufi principles in mental health therapy are essential to formulate more effective and culturally suitable approaches.

D. Incorporating Sufi Values into Education

The incorporation of Sufi values into education seeks to merge the spiritual and ethical principles intrinsic to Sufism with educational frameworks. Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, is a component of Islam that stresses the spiritual and moral aspects of daily life. *Zuhud* (simplicity), *tawakkul* (faith in God), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *sabar* (patience), *syukur* (thankfulness), love, *ridha* (acceptance), tolerance, and non-violence are some of the most important values of Sufism (Hasan, 2023). Education that emphasizes competitiveness frequently overlooks the significance of emotional and spiritual intelligence, thereby impeding the development of students' character and moral evolution (Muhammad et al., 2024). Integrating Sufi ideas into education could serve as an alternative approach to this issue by prioritizing character development in conjunction with academic and spiritual intelligence. In Indonesia, several universities, like Universitas Darul Ulum (UNDAR) in Jombang, have added Sufi ideals to their courses through organized programs such tarekat ceremonies and campus events (Muhammad et al., 2024).

This method not only teaches students about Sufi values in theory, but it also lets them put them into practice in their daily lives, which helps them really understand these values. The integration of pesantren principles into Islamic higher education, exemplified by Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an (UNSIQ) Wonosobo, underscores the significance of merging knowledge and faith to achieve goals aligned with Islamic teachings (Haryanto & Muslih, 2024). Students learn about the good things about a pesantren, like *al-Amanah* (trust), *al-Tawadlu'* (humility), *al-Istiqamah* (steadfastness), and *at-Tasamuh* (tolerance), through their classes and other activities.

This makes graduates who are not only smart but also spiritually strong and morally sound. A big part of pupils' moral and spiritual growth comes from education that focuses on Sufi ideals. The tenets of Sufism are fundamental to moral education due to its psychological, spiritual, and ethical dimensions (Sayin, 2014). Consequently, the integration of Sufi teachings in education can enhance students' character, avert moral decline, and cultivate an appropriate social identity (Gani, 2019). The research included in Table 1 demonstrate that Islam-based intercultural education not only imparts religious knowledge but also promotes the development of a more inclusive, harmonious, and tolerant society. This study investigates the significance of incorporating Sufi beliefs into contemporary education to enhance students' mental health. Sufism, which is about spiritual and moral growth, can help students deal with stress and feel better emotionally.

The primary subjects of this study include Sufi concepts that promote mental health, methods for

integrating these values into pedagogy, and the responsibilities of educators, families, and the environment in facilitating this process. This study examines the beneficial effects of incorporating Sufi principles on students' mental health and presents a conceptual framework that connects Sufism, mental well-being, and contemporary education. As a result, this study seeks to establish a comprehensive educational setting that fosters students' emotional and spiritual growth. Here is the complete explanation.

E. Sufism's Values for Mental Health Support

The incorporation of Sufi ideas into contemporary education to improve students' mental health has gained recognition as a significant domain for research and practice. Sufism, profoundly rooted in Islam, provides a holistic framework for emotional and psychological well-being through ideals that can significantly enhance mental health within educational settings. Some important Sufi values have been found to be good for students' mental health. These include inner tranquility and self-purification (*tazkiyyah al-nafs*), which are important for controlling emotions and dealing with stress and are important parts of Sufi activities. These behaviors help students feel more connected to God, which helps them accept themselves and feel better mentally (Bakri et al., 2025);(Hayat et al., 2025).

Moreover, love (*mahabbah*) and tolerance are essential characteristics in Sufism that foster harmonious relationships and mitigate antagonism among students, thereby establishing a helpful and collaborative learning environment (Lestari et al., 2024). These principles are very important for emotional intelligence, which is very important in today's competitive and frequently stressful schools. Moreover, appreciation and patience, which are fundamental to Sufi teachings, are essential for navigating adversities, fostering resilience, and supporting students' mental health in high-pressure academic environments (Sayin, 2014);(Muhammad et al., 2024).

F. Strategies for Internalization of Sufi Values in Learning and School Culture

Teaching kids about Sufi ideas helps them get acquainted to the school's culture and gives them a well-rounded education. Active learning methods, like group discussions, personal reflections, and experiential learning, are known to be good ways to get students involved both mentally and emotionally, which leads to lasting changes in their behavior (Hasan, 2023). Adding Sufi teachings and practices to the curriculum, along with other disciplines like literature or ethics, can also help students grow spiritually and emotionally. (Muhammad et al., 2024). Mindfulness and meditation, which are in line with Sufi traditions, have been shown to help students control their emotions and lower their stress levels. This gives them tools to take care of their mental health in a supportive school setting (Karmakar et al., 2025);(Bakri et al., 2025).

G. The Function of Educators, Families, and the Surroundings

The roles of teachers, family, and the environment are very important for helping people

internalize these ideals. Teachers exemplify and propagate Sufi values through their conduct and demeanor. Students are inspired to be kind, patient, and tolerant by the way their teachers act, which makes the classroom a place that encourages emotional health (Syarif, 2021). Family support is also very important for maintaining these values at home. It helps make a stable environment where emotional and spiritual growth can happen (Pangastuti et al., 2025). A school environment that encourages tolerance, respect for diversity, and moral behavior aligns with Sufi principles and fosters a sense of belonging and social responsibility among students (Lestari et al., 2024); (Hayat et al., 2025).

Many people know that Sufi principles can help students' mental health, and research shows that following these principles is linked to better mental health. Students who accept these ideas show less anxiety and despair, better emotional health, and more strength when things get tough (Cetinkaya & Billings, 2023). Sufi principles help children become well-rounded people who are not only good at school but also emotionally strong and socially responsible by teaching them emotional intelligence, resilience, and a sense of purpose (Sayin, 2014).

H. Effects on the Mental Health of Students

The incorporation of Sufi principles into modern educational frameworks profoundly affects students' mental well-being. Numerous studies demonstrate that Sufi practices can mitigate psychological stress and enhance pupils' emotional well-being. Sufi practices at the Darul Afskar Islamic boarding school in Klaten, Indonesia have been shown to improve emotional well-being and reduce stress through spiritual experiences such as inner peace, stress reduction, introspection, and beginning to understand oneself (Bakri et al., 2025). In addition, religious education that integrates Islamic values such as patience, gratitude, and trust in God has been shown to be effective in strengthening children's mental resilience in facing challenges arising from less harmonious family situations (Shodiq et al., 2025).

I. A Conceptual Framework for The Integration of Sufism, Mental Health, and Contemporary Education

1. Basic Principles

Integrating Sufism into modern educational institutions can be accomplished by merging Islamic spiritual principles with contemporary psychological techniques. For instance, the concept of mindfulness derived from Sufism, encompassing practices such as focused prayer (*salat khushu*), *dua*, *dzikr*, and *muraqabah*, has been demonstrated to alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and fatigue while enhancing mental health (Rejeki & Hakim, 2025). Moreover, Sufi teachings centered on *maqaṣid al-shariah*, including the preservation of spiritual purity (*hifz al-nafs*) and the devotion to religious doctrine (*hifz al-dīn*), might assist students in developing robust spiritual and ethical competences (Akmansyah et al., 2025).

2. Implementation Strategis

Universitas Darul Ulum Jombang has created a curriculum that includes Sufi values in higher education. This can make education more well-rounded (Muhammad et al., 2024). Interdisciplinary approaches that integrate contemporary technology with Islamic viewpoints, exemplified by the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) project, possess the capacity to augment cross-cultural comprehension and collaborative competencies among students, thereby facilitating more effective responses to mental health challenges (Gunawan et al., 2024).

3. Teaching Methods

Sufi mentors (*mursyids*) use personalized approaches and disciplined dhikr procedures to help students learn Sufi practices. These methods have been shown to be beneficial in connecting Sufi practices with Islamic goals (*shariah*) (Akmansyah et al., 2025). Incorporating Al-Ghazali's notions of *nafs*, *qalb*, *ruh*, and *aql* into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can fulfill students' spiritual deficiencies and enhance their spiritual comprehension (Faqihuddin et al., 2025).

[Figure 2. about here]

The picture shows how to incorporate Sufism into current schooling using a three-step procedure. Basic Principles first focus on blending Sufi ideals with modern psychology to improve mental health. This creates a holistic approach that helps students' emotional and spiritual wellness. Second, Implementation Strategies include creating curricula and cross-disciplinary methods to incorporate Sufi ideals. This encourages schools to include these values in their programs to help students grow in all areas of their lives. Lastly, Teaching Methods stress the necessity of adopting personalized techniques and Sufi ideas to help people understand their spirituality better. They stress the need for specialized teaching methods that help students improve spiritually and emotionally. This framework emphasizes the importance of integrating Sufism into education to enhance mental health, emotional well-being, and holistic development in pupils. In the context of education in Indonesia, these discrepancies in findings necessitate a sophisticated comprehension of the practical application of Sufi values to tackle the distinct issues encountered by pupils in a multicultural and digitized society. Although the incorporation of Sufi practices may foster inner tranquility and personal growth, their implementation must take into account cultural diversity, the pervasive influence of digital media, and the necessity for a comprehensive educational framework that harmonizes intellectual, emotional, and spiritual health (Abitolkha, 2022); (Usman et al., 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

This study underscores the significance of incorporating Sufi beliefs into contemporary education to enhance students' mental well-being. Sufism provides a holistic framework for emotional well-being, advocating ideals such as inner serenity, self-purification, love, tolerance, and patience, which assist pupils in managing stress, regulating emotions, and cultivating resilience. Adding these principles to the curriculum, along with active teaching methods and mindfulness practices, can help enhance mental health, lower anxiety and depression, and build emotional intelligence. Teachers, families, and the school environment are all important for teaching these values and making sure that students have a safe place to grow emotionally and spiritually. Studies show that accepting Sufi ideas makes people better at solving problems and makes them more responsible in their communities. The proposed conceptual framework amalgamates Sufi principles with modern psychology to provide a holistic methodology for education.

Integrating Sufi principles into education offers a balanced approach that promotes both academic success and emotional resilience, thereby facilitating students' comprehensive development and mental well-being. For the mental wellness of pupils, educational officials and academics should include Sufi ideals like dhikr and meditation in the curriculum. Teachers should learn how to be alert and control their emotions. Schools should work with families through seminars and make spaces for reflection that are safe and welcoming. Future research ought to concentrate on the pragmatic implementation of Sufi values within multicultural educational contexts, particularly in Indonesia. Policymakers must to contemplate the integration of social-emotional learning (SEL) frameworks that resonate with Sufi ideas into national curriculum to foster a more comprehensive educational methodology.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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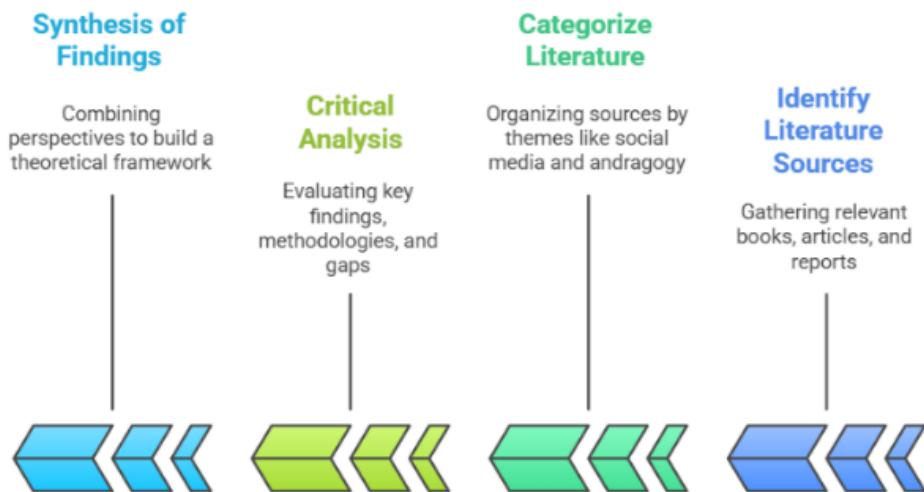


Figure 1 / Literature Review Process

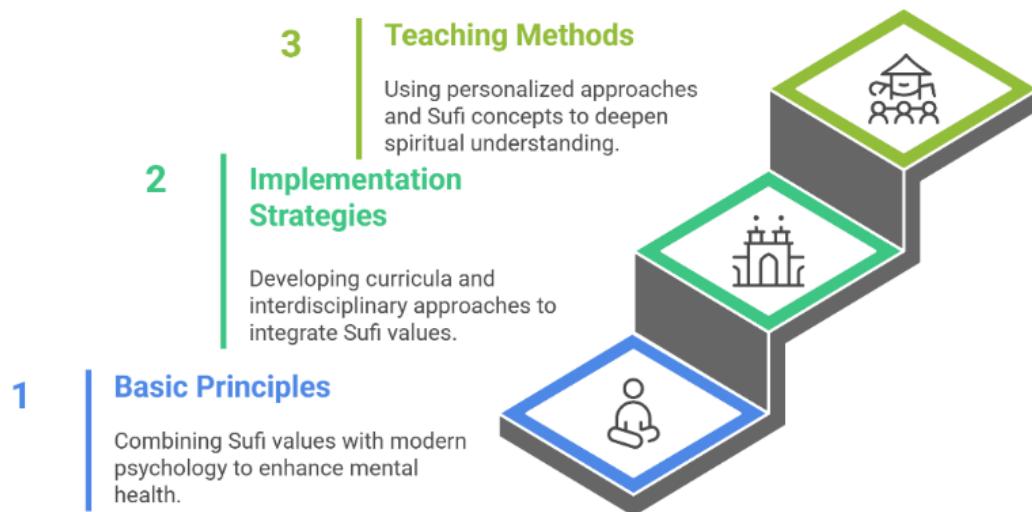


Figure 2 / Integrating Sufism in Education