

https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.29.2026.352			
Received:	24 November 2025	Accepted:	13 March 2026
Revised:	28 January 2026	Published:	15 June 2026
Volume:	29 (June)	Pages:	57-74
To cite: Gazali Gazali, Yelfi Dewi S, Rina Rehayati & Rahmad Tri Hadi. 2026. Digitalization of the teachings of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah in Indonesian urban society. <i>International Journal of Islamic Thought</i> . Vol. 29 (June): 57-74.			

Digitalization of the Teachings of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah in Indonesian Urban Society

GAZALI GAZALI*¹, YELFI DEWI S², RINA REHAYATI³ & RAHMAD TRI HADI⁴

ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore how the teachings of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi Tariqah are being digitalized and disseminated within Indonesian urban society. It highlights the transformation of Sufi practices in digital spaces and the role of information technology in bridging spiritual teachings with modern urban life. The study employs a qualitative approach using digital ethnography. Data were collected through participant observation on digital platforms (YouTube, WhatsApp, and other social media), in-depth interviews with disciples and tariqah administrators, and content analysis of digital materials produced by the Naqshbandi Haqqani community. The main focus is on how digital da'wah is conducted and how the tariqah's messages are received and interpreted by an urban, digitally connected audience. The findings show that digitalization has opened new spaces for the expansion of the tariqah in major Indonesian cities. Spiritual teachings, dzikr (remembrance), and sermons are now instantly accessible, blurring the boundaries between sacred and profane spaces. Digital media not only serves as a means of dissemination but also shapes new ways of experiencing spirituality in the modern era. Moreover, the use of symbols, visual language, and the distinctive aesthetics of the tariqah strengthens the community's digital identity. In conclusion, digitalization is not merely a tool for dissemination but has become an integral part of the reformation of Sufi identity in contemporary urban society.

Keywords:

Digitalization, Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah, tariqah teachings, urban society.

¹ **GAZALI GAZALI*** (Corresponding Author), Ph. D. Assoc. Professor at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab and Dakwah, State of Islamic University Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Jln. Gurun Aur Kubang Putih Bukittinggi, INDONESIA. Email: gazali@uinbukittinggi.ac.id [ORCID Id: 0009-0005-1617-1992].

² **YELFI DEWI S**, Ph. D. Assoc. Professor at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab and Dakwah, State of Islamic University, Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Jln. Gurun Aur Kubang Putih Bukittinggi, INDONESIA. Email: yelfidewi@uinbukittinggi.ac.id, [ORCID id: 0000-0001-9963-8386].

³ **RINA REHAYATI**, Ph. D. Assoc. Professor at the Faculty of Ushuluddin Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Riau INDONESIA. E-mail: rina.rehayati@iain.suka.ac.id [ORCID id: 0000-0002-3639-6911].

⁴ **RAHMAD TRI HADI**, Ph. D. candidate at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab and Dakwah, State of Islamic University, Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Jln. Gurun Aur Kubang Putih Bukittinggi, INDONESIA. E-mail: 40324008@uinbukittinggi.ac.id, [ORCID id: 0000-0003-3022-4171].

Introduction

The spread of *tariqah* (religious order) teachings in urban communities has undergone a noticeable transformation in response to digitalization. Technological advancements, particularly in communication and social media, have had a significant influence on the practice of Sufism. Traditionally, *tariqah* teachings were practiced in physical, real-world settings. However, these practices have increasingly shifted to online platforms. This shift has been reinforced by the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, who encouraged *Sufi* scholars to utilize social media in their outreach efforts (Nuraini, 2019). Since the introduction of Islam to Indonesia, various *tariqahs* have developed and integrated into local culture and socio-political dynamics, contributing to the rich history of *tariqah* in the country. The number of active *tariqahs* in Indonesia is estimated to be in the hundreds. However, only 45 *tariqahs* are officially recognized by Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia (Farhan & Faiq, 2023; Indrawati, 2022). Among these, the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah, which has been active in Indonesia since 1997, is one of the fastest-growing *tariqahs*, particularly due to its use of digital technology to expand its reach (Estuningtiyas, 2022; Siswoyo & Fahrurrozi, 2023).

Several studies have explored various aspects of *tariqah* or Sufism. These studies can be categorized into three main patterns. *First*, there are conceptual studies that explore the theoretical aspects of *tariqah* teachings (Karjoo-ravary et al., 2023; Prasetia & Najiyah, 2021; Sahin & Asroor, 2021). *Second*, there are studies that focus on the role of *tariqah* as a solution to various social issues (Abdurahman, 2018; Azis et al., 2024; Efendi et al., 2023). These studies highlight the role of *tariqah* teachings in promoting religious moderation and reducing the risks of intolerance and radicalism. *Third*, some studies investigate the opportunities and challenges of practicing *tariqah* teachings in the technological age (Hidayat & Zein, 2022; Milani & Possamai, 2015; Piraino, 2016). This body of work examines the relationship between *tariqah* and technological developments, as well as the impact of digitalization on the transmission of *tariqah* teachings. Despite these contributions, few studies have specifically examined the use of information technology in the practice of *tariqah* rituals, such as initiation (*bay'ah*), *wirid*, *dhikr*, and the commemoration of Islamic holidays.

In line with the literature review presented above, this paper aims to explore the various forms of digitalization within the teachings of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah. The ongoing technological advancements and innovations have prompted a shift in how these spiritual teachings are implemented. This paper specifically seeks to: *first*, identify the forms of digitalization adopted by the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah in providing spiritual services to its followers; *second*, analyze how the digitalization of the *tariqah* has contributed to a decline in the authority of teachers and the erosion of moral values among students in relation to their teachers and peers; and *third*, examine the implications of digitalization for the sustainability of these teachings. These three objectives offer fresh insights into the dynamics and transformations occurring within *tariqah* teachings as a result of digitalization.

This paper is based on two key arguments. *First*, online spiritual education diminishes the authority of *tariqah* teachers over their students and followers. *Second*, the use of social media platforms to teach and practice *tariqah* will lead to the degradation of students' moral values towards their teachers and peers. In-person practice of *tariqah* teachings remains essential for ensuring that these teachings are correctly followed. The physical presence of the teacher, as a *sunnah* (tradition) in *tariqah* practice, serves as a model for students to emulate.

Digitalization

Digitalization refers to the utilization of digital technologies and opportunities, characterized by the widespread use of electronic devices, which have significantly transformed various aspects of

human life (Kamphake, 2020; Kraft & Drerup, 2023). This digital transformation is systematically restructuring economies, institutions, and societies, fundamentally altering the ways people live, work, and interact with one another (Kumar et al., 2023). Technology acts as a tool that facilitates human needs, fostering creativity, innovation, and new opportunities driven by the sophistication of various applications. The internet and technology have also enabled grassroots nationalist activities, particularly in the dissemination of information and mobilization for collective action (Schmidt et al., 2016). Digitalization has given rise to a new type of individual—one who is highly reliant on digital skills yet may experience social isolation despite being connected to vast networks (Hidalgo, 2020). Moreover, digitalization allows religion to be shaped in novel ways through digital media and culture.

Digitalization facilitates the intersection of technology and culture, particularly in the blending and integration of online and offline religious practices (Amin et al., 2023). In this context, the emergence of digitalization has introduced new media into the teachings of the *tariqah* (Taufik & Taufik, 2021). This has resulted in the production of educational content regarding *tariqah* teachings, encompassing its principles, history, and associated spiritual practices (Burhanuddin et al., 2019). Such content takes various forms, including articles, videos, and podcasts, which are regularly uploaded on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube (Umam & Suryadi, 2019). Interactive features on social media, such as live streaming, are employed to engage followers directly, answer questions, and offer spiritual guidance in real-time. These platforms also foster the creation of online social communities, such as groups or forums, where followers of the *tariqah* can share experiences, discuss teachings, and provide mutual support (Biyanto, 2017; Zamhari, 2013). Thus, the advent of digitalization has reinforced its role as an integral element of the contemporary Islamic revival.

Tariqah Teachings

Tariqah teachings, as explored in various studies, focus on spiritual practices and the pursuit of a balanced life (Latif, 2020). Conceptually, the term “*tariqah*” refers to a mystical tradition that provides a pathway and guidance for individuals or groups seeking to draw closer to God and His Messenger (Mufid & Mohad, 2022). A teacher, or *mursyid*, is responsible for imparting these teachings, guiding students in their worship and helping them draw nearer to Allah Almighty through the practice of *dhikr* and prayer as instructed (Umam & Suryadi, 2019). Sufism, as a broader mystical tradition within Islam, encompasses various dimensions, including philosophy, ethics, spiritual practices, and methodologies aimed at achieving heightened spiritual awareness (Gulamova, 2019). In contemporary times, *tariqah* has strengthened its presence through social media, utilizing digital platforms for *da'wah* or proselytism (Howell, 2001).

The digital era has diversified the methods of conveying *tariqah* teachings, with cyberspace providing numerous channels for spreading spiritual messages. *Da'i* (preachers) are required to demonstrate creativity and innovation in their approach to *da'wah* (Taufik & Taufik, 2021). One notable example of this is the Idrisiyyah Tariqah, which disseminates religious studies, lectures, and meditation videos via platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Cloete, 2016). The advent of digitalization has also facilitated reductions in the time and costs associated with managing congregations, allowing for greater allocation of resources toward social and spiritual activities (Evolvi, 2022). However, the digitalization of *tariqah* practices is not without its risks. Congregations must be vigilant in upholding moral and ethical values when using digital media, particularly by refraining from sharing content that is inconsistent with the teachings of the *tariqah* (Ess, C., Kawabata & Kurosaki, 2007; Tsai, 2015). By leveraging digital media, *tariqah* teachings can remain relevant and accessible in the globalized world, enabling religious studies to reach a wider audience.

Urban Society

Urban society is often characterized by modernity, marked by the ability to transition from local contexts to urban settings (Diab et al., 2022). This type of society is predominantly shaped by

economic dimensions and modern, health-conscious lifestyles rather than by cultural or religious influences (Seda et al., 2020). Urban society also plays a significant role in shaping social life, contributing to the development of city centers and forming the organizational structures that accompany the rise of urbanism (Laksono et al., 2020). Furthermore, the phenomenon of urban society is intricately linked to the era of digitalization. The digitalization of urban life has prompted a transformation in religious behavior, with smartphones introducing a new culture in which religious practice is no longer confined to private interactions between individuals and their God but is often displayed on digital devices (Kamaludin, 2021; Suhandi & Jaafar, 2020; Ulya, 2019).

Traditionally, religious activity has been viewed as a personal matter rather than a public one, with most religions teaching that religious rituals—whether conducted vertically between humans and God or horizontally within a community—are to be performed solely for divine reward (Laskar, 2023). However, with digitalization, religious practice has undergone a process of “smartphonization,” wherein the characteristics and logic of smartphones have begun to shape religious behavior in the digital age (Luger, 2018). Urban society increasingly favors quick, accessible religious solutions over more direct spiritual engagements. As a result, practical, concise, and engaging content that aligns with personal preferences has become the new logic of religious practice for urban communities (Li, 2007; Urban, 2000). In addition to the commodification of religion by mass media, religious institutions themselves have begun to produce various religious artifacts for consumption. Many religious institutions now offer online courses in spiritual teachings and practices (Martino, 2020), allowing urbanites to pursue spiritual development without needing to travel to specific locations or meet with teachers in person (Al-Zaman, 2022). Certain *tariqahs* offer streaming services for rituals and lectures, providing followers with practical tools for daily worship and spiritual practice (Grishaeva & Shumkova, 2020). In this context, virtual culture, particularly through smartphones, offers users new opportunities to manage and construct their religious identity according to their preferences.

Methods

The study investigates the digital practices of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah in Indonesia using a qualitative methodology with an ethnodigital approach. As a relatively new *tariqah* in the Indonesian context, its teachings have gained traction among urban communities due to their simplicity, accessibility, and inclusivity across social and economic backgrounds. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the *tariqah's* adoption of digital platforms such as Zoom Meetings, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok for conducting religious activities. Even prior to the pandemic, the *tariqah* had utilized earlier forms of communication like email, Facebook, and SMS to reach followers across various regions. These digital adaptations were widely accepted by both local followers and international representatives, maintaining the continuity of the spiritual teacher-student relationship in a virtual format.

The research employs an ethnodigital method, which integrates ethnographic observation with digital media analysis to understand religious practices in online environments. This method is justified by the *tariqah's* heavy reliance on digital platforms as the primary medium for religious transmission, allowing for both participatory observation and content analysis. The data were gathered from three primary digital platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Zoom Meetings, which were selected due to their high level of user engagement and significance in disseminating the *tariqah's* teachings. These platforms not only facilitate spiritual instruction but also function as spaces for community interaction and guidance. The types of data collected include videos, photos, and written teachings from *tariqah* leaders in Indonesia and abroad. However, the sampling strategy remains unclear; the study does not specify how respondents or interactions were selected or whether they are representative of the broader follower base. For future research clarity, the methodology should outline participant observation strategies and sampling

techniques to ensure the robustness of the findings and justify the integration of both primary and secondary digital content.

Table 1. Digital Platforms Used by the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah and Their Functional Roles

No.	Platform	Account Name	Account Link	Primary Function	Interaction Scope
1.	Facebook	Naqshbandi Haqqani	https://www.facebook.com/naqshbandiyyahaqqaniyya	Community building, dakwah	Global followers, multi-age
2.	Instagram	Haqqani Indonesia	https://www.instagram.com/haqqaniindonesia/	Visual preaching, event promo	Youth-centric, national
3.	Zoom Meeting	Zoom Meetings	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8161963144	Live ritual & teachings	Regular members, international

Facebook is used by the Naqshbandi Haqqani Tariqah as a primary medium for building virtual communities and disseminating religious teachings through narratives, video links, and other reflective content. With its inclusive nature and wide reach across various age groups and geographic areas, Facebook serves as a strategic platform for fostering spiritual connections while expanding the global outreach of the *tariqah's* teachings. Meanwhile, Instagram is utilized to engage the urban youth with a visual, aesthetic, and communicative approach. Through photo posts, event posters, and short video clips, the Haqqani Indonesia Instagram account reinforces the image of the *tariqah* as a spiritual movement that remains relevant within the dynamics of contemporary digital culture. This platform is effective in attracting millennials and Gen Z, who are accustomed to consuming fast-paced visual content. On the other hand, Zoom Meeting is employed as a medium for direct interaction in the form of virtual religious gatherings, collective *dhikr* sessions, and real-time *Sufi* teachings with the *murshid* (spiritual guide). Its function goes beyond simple communication, emerging as a new spiritual space that ensures the continuity of the teacher-disciple relationship despite physical distance. The simultaneous use of these three platforms demonstrates how the Naqshbandi Haqqani Tariqah successfully adapts to digital transformation while preserving the essential values of Sufism.

This research also utilizes data sourced from observations, interviews, and participation in various *tariqah* activities, such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *suluk* (spiritual retreat), and Islamic holiday commemorations. To explore the relationship between teachers and students, as well as interactions among followers in offline settings, the authors conducted participant observations at several events, including *dhikr*, *suluk*, and Islamic holiday gatherings. For online activities, observations were made during Zoom Meetings, focusing on participants' adherence to the rules of *dhikr* in an online setting. The authors attended three live Zoom Meetings (not recorded) on different dates and at different locations. While attending these meetings, the authors also conducted interviews with participants before the start of the *tariqah* activities. Additional interviews were conducted with four teachers and four students regarding the use of social media in the *tariqah* they follow. These interviews were conducted in person at each of their respective Zawiyahs. Moreover, online interviews were conducted during Zoom Meetings with two Zoom Meetings hosts, discussing the execution of the meetings, the participants involved, and the hosts' perspectives on the devotion or solemnity (*khushoo'*) of the followers in performing the *tariqah* rituals.

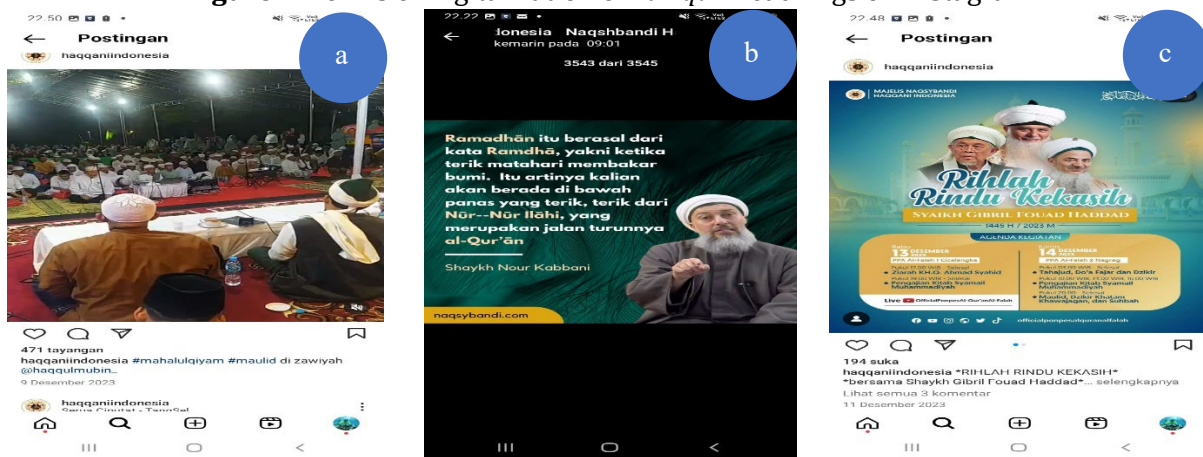
The collected data were analyzed qualitatively using Spradley's (1997) model, which comprises four analytical methods. *First*, domain analysis was conducted to provide a general

understanding of the common practices of the *tariqah* on social media. *Second*, taxonomic analysis focused on the various components involved in the process of learning and practicing the *tariqah*. *Third*, componential analysis examined potential differences between domains, allowing for an exploration of whether discrepancies arose from improper usage of online learning tools, such as digital media. *Lastly*, thematic analysis was employed to investigate the interrelation between domains and to provide a comprehensive understanding of *tariqah* practices.

Forms of Digitalization of *Tariqah* Teachings

The Naqsyabandhi Haqqani *Tariqah* utilizes several digital platforms to disseminate its teachings and institutional practices. These platforms include Instagram, which the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani joined in March 2014, Facebook, which was launched on November 28, 1977, and Zoom Meetings. The forms of digitalization reflected in the practices and activities of the *tariqah* across these platforms can be seen in the following figures:

Figure 1. Forms of Digitalization of *Tariqah* Teachings on Instagram



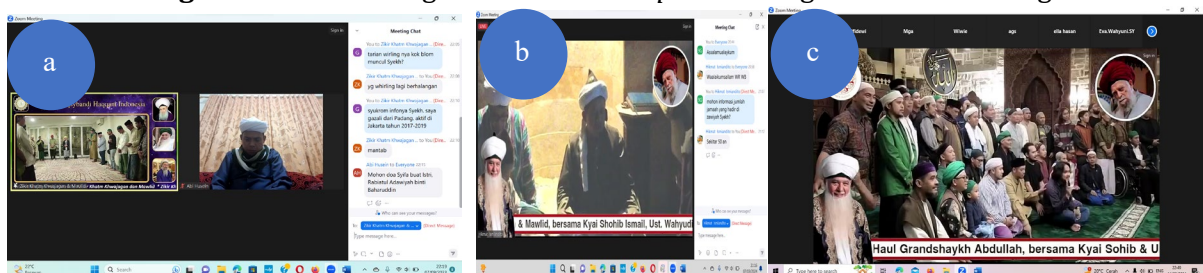
Images: a) Khatam Khawajaghan *dhikr*; b) advice; c) pilgrimage

Instagram is one of the platforms used by the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani *Tariqah* to disseminate its teachings and practices. The account used is Haqqani Indonesia, which can be accessed via the following link: linktr.ee/naqsybandihaqqani. The account contains 3,645 photos, has 196,000 followers, and is followed by 312 users. The content ranges from announcements to video recordings of various *tariqah* activities. On average, each post is liked by approximately 100 to 500 followers. Through this platform, the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani *Tariqah* in Indonesia is able to spread its teachings, promote activities, and provide information regarding upcoming events. In addition to Instagram, the *tariqah* also propagates its teachings and conducts online practices via Facebook.

Figure 2. Forms of Digitalization of *Tariqah* Teachings on Facebook

Images: a) Invitation to Khatam Khawajaghan *dhikr*; b) Online lecture of *tariqah* teachings; c) Learning of *adab* (spiritual etiquette) within the *tariqah*

Facebook is one of the most important social media platforms for the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah. The account, Naqsyabandhi Haqqani, can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/NaqshbandiID>. The Facebook page shows that the account has 20,000 followers, with 19,000 likes. Among the information posted by the Facebook admin are live streams of weekly *dhikr* sessions, such as Khatam Khawajaghan, celebrations of Islamic holidays, lectures from various *tariqah* teachers around the world, and announcements of events organized by the Haqqani Foundation, usually publicized two or three days before the event. In addition to Instagram and Facebook, the *tariqah* is also actively engaged in online activities through the Zoom Meetings platform.

Figure 3. Forms of Digitalization of *Tariqah* Teachings on Zoom Meetings

Images: a) Khatam Khawajaghan *dhikr*; b) Khatam Khawajaghan *dhikr* and pre-Ramadhan 1404 H lecture; c) Commemoration of a Naqsyabandhi Haqqani teacher's memorial

Zoom Meetings have become a crucial instrument for the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah in Indonesia, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the use of Zoom Meetings for online meetings. Through Zoom Meetings, the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani teachers can continue to interact with their students in various activities such as the taking of *bay'ah* (spiritual allegiance), weekly *dhikr* sessions, and commemorations of Islamic holidays. On September 7, 2023, a Khatam Khawajaghan *dhikr* session was held, along with the commemoration of the Isra and Mi'raj of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The event was attended by 33 online participants and 60 offline participants. The use of Zoom Meetings has bridged the physical distance between teachers and students, expanding the flexibility of time through the utilization of this information technology.

The activities of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah, such as the weekly Khatam Khawajaghan *dhikr* sessions and the commemoration of Islamic holidays (Isra' Mi'raj, Mawlid of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, Islamic New Year, and other festive gatherings), are traditionally held offline at Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Zawiyahs or spiritual centers. The atmosphere of the *dhikr* space, filled with the scent of incense and other spiritual fragrances, enhances the solemnity of

the followers during *dhikr*. The longing of the students to meet their teachers is fulfilled when they gather in one place, experiencing the discipline and example set by the teachers. However, such conditions have transformed into uncontrolled, free-form settings due to the use of digital devices.

Factors Underlying the Digitalization of *Tariqah* Teachings

There are two factors that initiated the use of digital platforms in the dissemination of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani *Tariqah*'s teachings, namely internal and external factors. These factors are outlined in the following table:

Table 2. Thematic Synthesis of Factors Underlying Digitalization in the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani *Tariqah*

No.	Theme	Indicators	Interpretation
1	Geographical and Accessibility Barriers	Followers are scattered across Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi; traffic congestion; distance from Zawiyah	Digital platforms reduce logistical barriers and enhance inclusivity
2	Temporal Flexibility	Recordings of rituals enable followers to access teachings asynchronously	Technology extends the window of religious engagement
3	Health Crisis (COVID-19)	Shift to online activities during physical distancing policies	Pandemic catalyzed digital adaptation as a new normal
4	Spiritual Practice and Continuity	Online <i>bay'ah</i> , <i>suluk</i> alternatives, <i>dhikr</i> , <i>Dalail al-Khayrat</i> readings	Digitalization supports continuity of practice, though with acknowledged limitations
5	Technological Opportunity for Da'wah	Expansion of Islamic teachings through IT	Digital media serves as a means for broader spiritual dissemination
6	Limitations of Digital Spirituality	Acknowledgement that spiritual essence cannot always be replicated digitally	Critical awareness of digital media's boundaries in transmitting experiential dimensions of <i>tariqah</i>

Source: Interview data processed by authors

The digitalization of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani *Tariqah*'s teachings can be better understood through the lens of religious mediatization theory, which examines how religious institutions adapt to and are reshaped by media logic (Campbell, 2010; Hjarvard, 2008). Rather than simply acting as neutral tools, digital platforms reconfigure the modes of religious authority, ritual practice, and communal belonging. In the case of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani *Tariqah*, both internal and external factors have influenced this transformation. Externally, geographical distance, urban congestion, and the COVID-19 pandemic created structural barriers to in-person gatherings, compelling the *tariqah* to adopt digital tools as compensatory mechanisms. Internally, the *tariqah*'s commitment to inclusivity and accessibility aligns with the affordances of social media, allowing greater flexibility in spiritual engagement and the preservation of community across fragmented spaces.

However, this shift is not merely technical—it carries significant theological and sociological implications. Drawing from Campbell's (2012) framework on "networked religion," the *tariqah* now operates within a hybrid religious ecosystem where ritual authority is both decentered and recontextualized. While Zoom, Facebook, and Instagram offer broader access and allow *murids* to receive *ijazah* remotely, the transformation risks diluting the embodied

dimensions of *Sufi* training, which traditionally emphasize face-to-face transmission, spiritual presence (ḥuḍūr), and affective bonding between *murshid* and *murid*. The sense of immediacy and intimacy central to *Sufi* pedagogy is potentially undermined when mediated through screens.

Moreover, the digitalization of religious authority also raises critical issues regarding spiritual legitimacy and control over doctrine. As Cheong et al. (2012) argue, the democratization of information through social media can disrupt traditional hierarchies and introduce alternative interpretations, especially in a context where *bay'ah* and spiritual instructions can be accessed publicly. The authors' heavy reliance on unfiltered quotations, though rich in narrative texture, lacks critical interpretation—particularly on how digital mediation reconfigures the charismatic authority (Weberian sense) of the *tariqah's* leaders and the collective experience of the sacred.

Instead of merely describing the logistical benefits of digital platforms, a more analytical engagement would explore how symbolic capital (Bourdieu) is redistributed in online religious networks, where visibility, technological proficiency, and media savviness begin to complement or even rival traditional credentials of spiritual mastery. Furthermore, the *tariqah's* ability to adapt to these technological shifts reflects not only resilience but also raises fundamental questions about the future of Islamic education and *Sufi* epistemology. Can online rituals preserve the transformative essence of the *suluk*? Will the digital *murid* develop the same ethical refinement and spiritual discipline as their offline counterparts?

In sum, while the digitalization of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah responds pragmatically to spatial and temporal constraints, it also illustrates a broader phenomenon of religious transformation in the age of media. A critical analysis that integrates digital religion studies and *Sufi* theology is necessary to understand not just how the *tariqah* survives in digital space, but how it is inevitably being reshaped by it.

Implications of the Digitalization of *Tariqah* Teachings

The development of technology, which has led to the digitalization of *tariqah* practices, has had several implications. The shift from conventional practices (based on physical spaces) to digital (virtual) spaces has brought about changes—both positive and negative. *First*, the openness and boundlessness of the internet and digital platforms allow anyone to join and become a member of the *tariqah*. This has led to the lack of screening of those who join the group. *Second*, the nature of digital platforms, which can be accessed by anyone, opens up opportunities for the dissemination of incorrect information related to *tariqah* activities. *Third*, digitalization also poses risks for the misuse of technology. The details of these implications can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of the Implications of Digitalizing Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah Teachings

Thematic Category	Phenomenon	Representative Quote	Impact Analysis
Membership Dynamics	Plurality of social backgrounds without sufficient spiritual orientation	"Members come from various backgrounds, such as street vendors, scavengers, street children, urban executives, entrepreneurs, and celebrities."	Creates superficial engagement and reduces depth of spiritual formation.
	Lack of emotional connection between <i>murshid</i> and <i>murid</i>	"There is no strong emotional bond between the teacher and the student because the teacher's physical presence is absent..."	Weakens spiritual loyalty and increases dropout rates.

Communication Issues	Leakage of internal teachings through digital media	“Information about internal and confidential <i>tariqah</i> activities is published and becomes public knowledge.”	Breaches of privacy; misrepresentation of teachings; trust erosion.
	Fragmentation due to varying interpretations	“The speed of information technology has caused divisions among the students.”	Encourages ideological rifts and disunity among followers.
Ethical and Ritual Decline	Disrespect for ritual decorum in digital sessions	“...did not have time to change into the appropriate attire as suggested by the Zoom Meetings admin.”	Erosion of traditional etiquette and reverence in rituals.
	Loss of community cohesion	“Most of the members attending the Zoom Meetings are from diverse regions and do not know one another.”	Reduced sense of brotherhood (<i>ukhuwah</i>); depersonalization of spiritual bonds.
	Casual dishonesty about participation	“...I sometimes lie about not attending because of an important matter.”	Undermines moral integrity and commitment to spiritual discipline.

The digitalization of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah in Indonesia marks a significant shift in the structure and practice of *Sufi* religiosity, reflecting broader global patterns of religious mediatization (Campbell, 2012; Hjarvard, 2008). Through the lens of mediatization theory, which posits that digital media not only transmits but reshapes religious authority and practice, the *tariqah's* embrace of platforms such as Zoom, Facebook, and Instagram represents not merely a tool of communication but a reconfiguration of spiritual engagement and transmission. The traditional *Sufi* dynamic, which prioritizes the embodied presence and charisma of the *murshid* (spiritual guide) in cultivating spiritual discipline among *murid*, faces fragmentation when mediated through impersonal, screen-based interaction. The intimate, affective relationship foundational to *Sufi* pedagogy, central in theories of embodied religious authority is diluted when followers engage asynchronously and anonymously.

The adoption of digital platforms, while enabling scale and access, opens the *tariqah* to unintended consequences is a widening of membership base without adequate spiritual filtration. Drawing on Campbell's (2010) model of “networked religion,” digital platforms foster new forms of spiritual individualism that risk detaching the practice from collective structures of discipline and *adab*. The *tariqah's* popularity among heterogeneous demographics, ranging from urban elites to marginalized street workers, exemplifies inclusivity but also signals potential for religious commodification and performativity. Without structured vetting or spiritual mentoring, members may engage for utilitarian or identity-based reasons rather than sincere spiritual yearning. This aligns with Cheong's et al. (2012) observation that online religiosity is susceptible to fragmentation, miscommunication, and bricolage spirituality.

Moreover, the digitalization of *tariqah* rituals introduces ethical and epistemological dilemmas. The relaxation of *Sufi* etiquette (*adab*), such as dress code, presence, and intentionality, underscores a shift from communal accountability to individualized piety. The notion of sacred space becomes dislocated from the *Zawiyah* and embedded instead within the domestic or mobile screen environment, raising questions about the sanctity and discipline of practice. Such a shift is not merely technical but ontological: the screen becomes a new locus of divine encounter, though arguably less embodied and immersive. In this light, Bunt's (2009) concept of “iMuslim” religiosity, characterized by fragmented authority and hypertextual engagement, resonates strongly with the trajectory of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah.

Furthermore, the flow of esoteric knowledge online raises serious concerns about interpretive authority and confidentiality. The *tariqah*, like many traditional *Sufi tariqah*'s, relies on oral, coded, and experiential modes of teaching. Making these accessible to a wide, often unvetted public challenges the symbolic capital of the *murshid* and weakens traditional gatekeeping mechanisms. This not only risks doctrinal dilution but also fosters factionalism among loosely connected followers, as interpretations become detached from verified chains of transmission (*silsilah*). Such fragmentation mirrors what Campbell (2012) terms the "decentralization of religious authority," where the teacher no longer holds epistemic monopoly over religious meanings.

Despite these challenges, the *tariqah*'s digital expansion should not be viewed purely through a pessimistic lens. It reflects a resilient adaptation to socio-technological change, especially under extenuating circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During lockdown periods, Zoom Meetings-based *suluk* and nightly *dhikr* preserved community connection and sustained spiritual practice amid national isolation. This adaptability demonstrates the *tariqah*'s potential to integrate modern infrastructures while retaining its spiritual core. The challenge lies not in rejecting digital tools, but in cultivating critical digital literacy, theological depth, and institutional frameworks that reassert ethical and spiritual discipline.

Ultimately, the future of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah, and digital Sufism more broadly, rests on its ability to balance access with authenticity, and innovation with tradition. As Islamic education and Sufi praxis continue to evolve in digital ecosystems, there is an urgent need to develop pedagogical models and theological reflections that speak to this hybrid religiosity. Without such frameworks, there is a risk that Sufism may lose its epistemological depth and transformative power in favor of mere spiritual consumerism.

Discussion

This study, which investigates the digitalization of *tariqah* teachings in urban society, highlights three significant findings. *First*, the digitalization of *tariqah* teachings is evident in practices conducted on digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Zoom Meetings. *Second*, the factors driving this digitalization include both internal and external influences, each shaping the use of digital platforms in distinct ways. *Third*, the digitalization of Sufism has contributed to a decline in the authority of the teacher, as well as a degradation of moral teachings between teachers and students, and among students themselves. This shift risks reducing the level of obedience to teachers and transforming the teacher-student relationship from a traditionally paternalistic one to a more egalitarian dynamic, potentially threatening the continuity and authenticity of *tariqah* teachings. The decrease in direct teacher-student interactions, which historically reflected the teacher's authority, serves as an example of this. Reducing reliance on information technology could be a preventive measure to maintain the continuity of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah (Piraino, 2016).

The digitalization of *tariqah* teachings presents the risk of technological misuse in the dissemination of *tariqah* practices. Not only do spiritual values become shallow due to self-learning, but there is also no guarantee that worshippers practice the teachings authentically (Salsabila et al., 2021). The teacher's role as a catalyst within the student body is diminished, replaced by digital devices, leading to a further decline in the teacher's authority. This reduced level of teacher oversight may result in misunderstandings of religious teachings or even outright denial. Many concepts and understandings within *tariqah* knowledge require the guidance of a teacher (*ulama*). Teachers play an essential role in religious activities (Mardiana et al., 2021). In the context of *tariqah* knowledge, teachers or *ulama* are crucial in preserving and transmitting

religious teachings to the community (Ridwan, 2022). The diminishing presence and authority of *ulama* in digital-based *tariqah* teachings therefore risks leading to a superficial and potentially misguided understanding of religion.

The shift from conventional to digital-based *tariqah* practices marks an evolution and adaptation of *tariqah* in response to modern societal changes and needs (Dudoignon, 2020). The communication and interaction patterns of urban communities, which are increasingly digital, necessitate technology-based media that accommodate spiritual needs, including religious teachings (Cheong, 2017; Suraiya et al., 2019). This development also signals a shift in authority: in traditional *tariqah* practices, the teacher held absolute authority, whereas digital media now allow for access to teachings without boundaries, available to anyone (Hidayat, 2023; Mudin, 2015). The use of social media for *tasawwuf* learning serves as a way to make *tasawwuf* teachings, which are often seen as difficult and esoteric, more accessible and appealing to users and spirituality enthusiasts (Munir et al., 2024).

This research aligns with several previous studies. It shares commonalities with Hidayat's (2023) study, which explores the rise of *tariqah* within the context of the digital public sphere. Both studies highlight how digital adoption introduces challenges, such as differential access among followers. However, Hidayat's work focuses on the use of the Eshaykh website to disseminate *tariqah* teachings, while this study examines more contemporary digital platforms, including social media and Zoom Meetings. Furthermore, this research supports the findings of studies on the use of social media as a tool for enhancing literacy among pilgrims and promoting, informing, and disseminating knowledge about Islam and Sufism (Hidayat, 2023; Taufik & Taufik, 2021). The Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah's use of the Eshaykh website, which offers teaching content and registration services for new followers, demonstrates how digital tools facilitate access for worshippers. Nevertheless, the loss of *ulama* authority remains a concern (Mudin, 2015). Learning through social media also faces challenges, including the absence of empirical guidance from *tariqah* teachers, which increases the likelihood of differing interpretations and practices among *tariqah* students (Anshori et al., 2021).

The shift of *tariqah* teachings into virtual spaces not only reflects the ongoing process of technological adaptation but also highlights potential risks that must be addressed. Preventive measures are essential, particularly by raising awareness about the negative impacts of misusing digital media. Increased digital literacy is also required, especially for those disseminating *tariqah* teachings and for urban Muslim society, to ensure that technology is used appropriately in the practice of *tariqah*. Additionally, regular in-person meetings between teachers and students, as well as among worshippers, need to be prioritized over digital mediation. This approach will help safeguard the authenticity of *tariqah* teachings and maintain the teacher's authority over their disciples. Careful screening of prospective students before they join a *tariqah* group is another preventive measure to preserve the integrity of the *tariqah*. Conducting spiritual education in person provides an authentic means to evaluate each student's spiritual progress, ensuring a more accurate understanding of their level of development.

The digitalization of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah in urban contexts can be critically understood through the lens of mediatisation theory (Hjarvard, 2008), which suggests that religious practices increasingly adapt to the logic of digital media. This transformation does not merely reflect a change in medium but reshapes the religious institution itself, including its power structures, ritual formats, and social dynamics. Within this framework, three key findings emerge from this study.

First, the migration of *tariqah* rituals and teachings to platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Zoom Meetings illustrates what Campbell (2012) terms the "networked religion" phenomenon, where religious life is reconfigured through digital media logics such as immediacy, portability, and personalization. While such platforms expand access and engagement, they also destabilize the traditional structures that have long governed *tariqah* pedagogy, particularly the

teacher-student relationship. In this context, religious authority becomes decentralized and subject to contestation, as digital access does not require initiation or direct guidance (Cheong et al., 2012).

Second, both internal and external factors drive this digital shift. Internally, there is a need for scalability and inclusivity, particularly for urban Muslims constrained by geography and schedules. Externally, the COVID-19 pandemic functioned as an accelerant, pushing tariqah institutions to rely on digital platforms to maintain communal worship and continuity. However, this shift does not occur in a vacuum. As Bunt (2009) notes, the adoption of online platforms by Islamic movements creates a “virtual ummah,” which may foster greater connection across space but also risks fragmentation due to the lack of embodied interaction.

Third, the digital mediation of *Sufi* teachings contributes to what can be interpreted as a decline in the charismatic authority of the *murshid*, in line with Weberian sociological models. Previously characterized by face-to-face interactions rooted in trust and emotional discipline, this bond is increasingly replaced by asynchronous engagement and self-directed learning. Such transformations challenge the integrity of spiritual transmission (*barakah*), which, in *Sufi* epistemology, is considered experiential and embodied rather than informational. Campbell (2010) argues that online religious learning often promotes individualized spirituality, and this study confirms that digital *tariqah* participation has led to a more egalitarian, but potentially diluted as form of discipleship.

Moreover, the weakening of ritual *adab*, visible in issues of inappropriate dress, superficial engagement, and weakened communal bonds, signals a broader moral degradation facilitated by digital detachment. These findings echo Anshori et al. (2021), who emphasize that without proper spiritual guidance, digital engagement can lead to misinterpretation, especially in esoteric religious traditions. Without the regulative presence of a teacher, ethical lapses such as dishonesty, apathy, or passive participation become more common, which can, over time, erode the spiritual coherence of the *tariqah*.

This study also highlights the limitations of surveillance and gatekeeping in digital religious environments. While platforms like Instagram and Zoom extend reach, they offer little control over who participates or how teachings are interpreted. As noted by Bunt (2009), digital religion creates both “accessibility” and “ambiguity”, allowing broader engagement while also inviting manipulation, misrepresentation, or commodification of religious content. To address these challenges, this study recommends a hybrid approach is retaining digital tools for outreach while reaffirming in-person pedagogical practices that center spiritual discipline, community, and teacher-guided mentorship. Campbell (2012) advocates for contextual integrity in religious media use, emphasizing that faith traditions must critically assess which aspects of their practices can be mediated and which require physical co-presence.

Finally, this study contributes to the broader discourse on the future of Islamic education and Sufism in digital society. While digitization offers unprecedented access, the findings caution against uncritical adoption. *Tariqahs* must consider the epistemological consequences of media adaptation is how is sacred knowledge preserved when it is transmitted through unstable, often commercialized, digital environments? How can authority be protected in a space structured by algorithms rather than tradition? In conclusion, the digitalization of the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah represents both an opportunity and a disruption. By integrating theoretical insights from digital religion studies and sociological models of authority, this study provides a critical framework for understanding how Islamic spiritual practices are evolving, and how they might be responsibly navigated in the future.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal a degradation of *Sufi* values within the Naqsyabandhi Haqqani Tariqah due to the increasing use of information technology. The lack of adherence to proper use of social media by followers and participants in certain online activities indicates that this *tariqah* has loosened its standards of *adab* (etiquette) in spiritual practice. The teacher's authority has shifted from its traditional spiritual base to one dependent on the functionality of online activities, relying on stable internet connections, sufficient data packages, and consistent electricity.

This research offers new perspectives on the evolving nature of *tariqah* teachings in response to technological advancements. While digital disruption presents opportunities, it also poses risks to the preservation of the core values of *tariqah* practices. The use of digital devices has the potential to dilute the spiritual values integral to the esoteric realm of Islam. Reaffirming traditional *tariqah* practices, where disciples directly engage with teachers, will ensure that Islamic spiritual values remain robust and that followers can practice these teachings as intended by their spiritual guides, rather than through mediated online activities.

The scope of this research is limited to data gathered from social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Zoom Meetings, with a relatively small sample size for each digital medium. Future studies should consider incorporating a broader range of digital platforms and larger sample sizes to provide more comprehensive insights into the digitalization of *tariqah* teachings.

Acknowledgement

This article is the result of research conducted in 2023, funded by the Operational Budget of Syekh M. Djamil Djambek State Islamic University (UIN) Bukittinggi. The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the Rector of UIN Bukittinggi for providing the financial support that made this research and its publication possible. The author also extends thanks to the article supervisor, Prof. Dr. Irwan Abdullah, M.A., and the IAS Yogyakarta Team. May the knowledge they have shared be beneficial to the author and serve as a continuous act of charity (*amal jariyah*) for all who contributed to this article.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. All contributions were made objectively without any personal, financial, or institutional influence that could compromise the integrity of the work.

Author's Contribution Statement

All authors have contributed significantly to the work and approved the final version of the manuscript. We believe that the findings of this study will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in [*relevant field*] and will be of interest to the readership of your journal.

1. **Gazali Gazali:** conceptualized the research idea, designed the study, and supervised the overall project.
2. **Yelfi Dewi S:** conducted the literature review, collected the data, and organized the research materials.
3. **Rina Rehayati:** performed data analysis, interpreted the findings, and prepared the tables and figures.
4. **Rahmat Tri Hadi:** revised the manuscript critically for intellectual content, provided final editing, and coordinated the submission process.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and academic integrity. All procedures were carried out responsibly, with informed consent obtained from participants (when applicable) and strict confidentiality maintained.

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