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Emotional Well-Being in Sufi Practice: Khatam Khawjakan and Spiritual Reflexivity in Madura

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Abstract

Research on Sufi spirituality has associated dhikr with emotional well-being, yet how well-being is subjectively experienced within specific ritual and Sufi contexts remains underexplored. This study examines how followers of the Naqshbandiyah Mudzhariyah Order in Sumenep, Madura, experience and interpret emotional well-being through Khatam Khawjakan dhikr. Using Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, the study draws on in-depth interviews with 10 purposively selected participants. Data were

analyzed through epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation to identify the essential structure of participants' experiences. Emotional well-being emerged as a dynamic psychospiritual experience involving orientation toward Allah, emotional relief, acceptance, reflection, tawakal, repentance, and transformed responses to everyday problems. Khatam Khawjakan was experienced not simply as a means of producing tranquility but as a space for reflexively reorganizing relationships with emotions, difficulties, the self, and God. The study conceptualizes emotional well-being as a relational and reflexive process through which spiritual experience extends into everyday life, highlighting the contextual and intersubjective character of well-being in Sufi practice.

Keywords: Emotional Well-Being; Spiritual Reflexivity; Khatam Khawjakan; Transcendental Phenomenology; Naqshbandiyah Mudzhariyah.

A. INTRODUCTION

Emotional well-being is a dimension of mental health related to positive feelings and an individual's ability to function in daily life (Keyes, 2002; Perugini et al., 2017). In studies of Islamic spirituality, dhikr and Sufi meditative practices have been reported to be associated with stress management, inner peace, and well-being (Hamsyah & Subandi, 2017; Sufya, 2025; Zahir & Qoronfle, 2025). However, a systematic review indicates that while there is a positive association between Sufi spirituality and mental well-being, the methodological quality of the available research remains a concern (Cetinkaya & Billings, 2023). These findings suggest that the relationship between spiritual practices and well-being cannot be fully understood through psychological outcome measures alone; attention must be paid to how practitioners experience, shape, and interpret well-being within specific spiritual contexts. Thus, a key issue in the literature is not merely whether Sufi

practices are associated with well-being, but rather how these emotional experiences emerge within specific ritual structures and spiritual contexts.

In the context of Sufi orders, the experience of *dhikr* takes place within the framework of teachings, the teacher-student relationship, and specific ritual practices. Research on the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya order reveals the dynamics of inner peace through emotional regulation, faith, problem-solving, and the internalization of the *mursyid's* values (Qomariyyah & Saifuddin, 2022). These findings indicate that psychological experiences within Sufi orders do not exist in isolation but are shaped through an individual's engagement with teachings, practices, and spiritual relationships. Meanwhile, studies on the Naqshbandiyah Mudzhariyah in Sumenep focus more on Sufi education, *dhikr* methods, and the role of the *mursyid* (N. faiqah Nalini, 2023; N. F. Nalini et al., 2024). Historical studies also demonstrate the continuity of this Sufi order's development in Madura (Bruinessen, 1992; Kartikasari H., 2016). Thus, the literature on the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah has provided an important foundation for its educational structure, ritual methods, spiritual leadership, and historical development, but has not specifically explained how its followers experience these ritual practices emotionally.

Khatam Khawjakan is one of the spiritual practices in the Naqshbandi-Mudzhariyah tradition. Al-Hinduan (1970) explains its connection to *hudhur*, *khusyuk*, *rabithah*, *wuquf al-qalbi*, and *muraqabah*, while Hoddin (2012) places *khatm khawjakan* within the sequence of *bay'ah*, *tawajjuh*, *rabita*, and *dhikr*. Rahimi's (2012) study indicates that rituals within the Naqshbandi-Mudzhariyah tradition also possess both exclusive and collective dimensions. Thus, while this practice involves complex spiritual and social dimensions,

the emotional experiences of its adherents have not yet been the primary focus of research. This gap is significant because the Khatam Khawjakan is not merely a repetitive act of reciting dhikr, but rather a practice that unfolds through a configuration of consciousness, spiritual presence, guidance, and collective engagement. Therefore, examining emotional well-being within this practice allows research to move beyond a description of ritual structures toward an understanding of the lived experiences that accompany its performance.

Empirical literature indicates that Sufi practices may be associated with a variety of psychological experiences. Wahyudi et al. (2025) identified emotional control, inner peace, catharsis, and resilience; Bakri et al. (2025) identified peace, a connection with God, self-reflection, and self-acceptance. Subandi et al. (2022) also highlighted the role of dhikr in Sufi-based rehabilitation processes. However, Saliyo (2018) noted that the relationship between Sufi spiritual practices and well-being remains controversial, particularly regarding the understanding of teachings and the quality of guidance. Therefore, emotional experiences cannot be assumed to be uniform. Furthermore, these studies tend to identify general psychological outcomes or spiritual experiences, whereas the relationship between specific ritual practices, the context of a particular Sufi order, and emotional well-being—as experienced and interpreted by the practitioners—remains under-explained. It is this gap that distinguishes this study from research that merely links Sufi spirituality to mental health in general.

Based on this gap, this study examines how followers of the Naqshbandiyyah Mudzhariyah Order in Sumenep experience and interpret emotional well-being in the practice of Khatam Khawjakan dhikr. This question is not

intended to determine whether Khatam Khawjakan is effective in enhancing emotional well-being, but rather to uncover the structure of experience that enables followers to feel, recognize, and interpret their emotional changes or states during and after participating in this practice. The study aims to understand the followers' lived experiences and subjective meanings, rather than to test the ritual's causal effectiveness. This phenomenological focus builds upon existing research on dhikr experiences and Sufi rituals (Hussein, 2016; Ridwan et al., 2025; Syam et al., 2026), while also taking into account the local context of the Mudzhariyah, which has its own distinct history, structure, and practices in Madura (Hafifuddin, 2023; Sufriadi, 2022).

On that basis, the novelty of this study lies in three interconnections that have not been adequately explored in previous research: first, Khatam Khawjakan is positioned as a specific ritual practice, not merely a general representation of Sufi dhikr or meditation; second, emotional well-being is examined as a lived experience and subjective meaning, not merely as a measurable psychological outcome; and third, this experience is understood within the specific context of followers of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah Order in Sumenep, taking into account the spiritual and social structures that accompany the practice. This study positions Khatam Khawjakan as a spiritual phenomenon whose emotional experience must be understood from practitioners' perspectives. With this approach, the study does not merely add a new location or group of subjects but offers a phenomenological interpretation of how a specific dhikr practice is experienced as emotional well-being within a particular tarekat. Its novelty simultaneously broadens the dialogue between Sufi studies and psychology by demonstrating that experiences of emotional well-being in

Sufi practices must be understood contextually, embodied, and intersubjectively—rather than assumed to be uniform psychological consequences of dhikr practices. Previous studies have primarily focused on spirituality, mental health, education, history, rituals, and social change (Amrullah et al., 2023; Rosidi et al., 2024; Syamsidar & Syawaluddin, 2026). Thus, this research contributes to bridging both an empirical and conceptual gap: linking the practice of Khatam Khawjakan, experiences of emotional well-being, and the structure of followers' life experiences within a single phenomenological framework.

B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach grounded in Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology to understand how emotional well-being is experienced and interpreted within the Khatam Khawjakan dhikr practice. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 10 participants selected via purposive sampling for their direct involvement in the practice. The analysis began with epoché—the temporary suspension of the researcher's a priori assumptions and knowledge regarding dhikr and emotional well-being—so that the participants' experiences would serve as the foundation for interpreting the phenomena (Husserl, 1982; Moustakas, 1994). Next, phenomenological reduction was conducted through repeated readings of the transcripts, the selection of significant statements, and the grouping of units of meaning representing changes in feelings, emotional responses, experiences of relief, calmness, acceptance, and self-reflection (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1982).

The next stage utilized imaginative variation within the framework of eidetic reduction to identify the essential

structure of the experience of emotional well-being. Variations in participants' narratives were compared in relation to the context of dhikr practice, emotional engagement, spiritual experiences, and changes in feelings during and after Khatam Khawjakan. This procedure allows researchers to distinguish essential characteristics from contingent conditions and then synthesize patterns of experience across participants (Husserl, 1982; Moustakas, 1994). This synthesis aims to explain how emotional well-being manifests as a conscious experience shaped by the interplay between emotional responses, personal reflection, and spiritual experience. Thus, the analysis does not assume the effectiveness of dhikr from the outset but rather uncovers the meaning of the experience based on the participants' structures of consciousness (Giorgi, 2009).

C. Discussion

1. Profile of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah Order in Madura

The Naqshbandi Order is a Sufi tradition that maintains the continuity of its teachings through teacher-student relationships, lineage, initiation (baiat), and the practice of dhikr. As it has developed in Indonesia, this tradition has formed a number of networks and branches, each with distinct modes of transmission. One of these is the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah Order, which has flourished primarily in Madura and Kalimantan. Its continuity is sustained not only by the transmission of doctrine but also by the socio-spiritual relationships between the mursyid, the khalifah, and the disciples, which enable the order's teachings and practices to be passed down across generations (Bruinessen, 1992; Rahimi, 2012).

Genealogically, the term "Mudzhariyah" is attributed to Muhammad Mudzhar al-Ahmadi (Bruinessen, 1992). The

transmission of this Sufi order to the Indonesian archipelago occurred through a network of ulama and khalifahs who connected this tradition to various regions across the Indonesian archipelago. Sufriadi (2022) notes the connection between Ismail Jabal and the spread of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah in Pontianak, as well as between Abd Azim and the development of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah in Bangkalan during the 19th century. This pathway became one of the foundations for the formation of the Mudzhariyah network in the Indonesian archipelago and its subsequent development in Madura (Kartikasari H., 2016).

In Madura, the development of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah order took place through a network of mursyids, khalifas, and disciples, who simultaneously served as the medium for the transmission of knowledge and spiritual practices. (Bruinessen, 1992) demonstrates that the presence of the order in Madura is linked to the authority of the kiai and mursyids, as well as the mechanisms of lineage (*silsilah*) and initiation (*baiat*). Thus, the development of the Mudzhariyah did not merely signify the geographical expansion of the order but also revealed a process of reproducing spiritual authority and knowledge through religious networks that enabled the tradition to be preserved across generations (Bruinessen, 1992).

In Sumenep, this continuity took on a more concrete form through the role of KH. Ali Wafa, who is recognized as one of the key figures in the introduction and spread of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah. Research by N. F. Nalini et al. (2024) indicates that the training of followers is conducted through instruction, regular meetings, *dhikr*, and spiritual education. This pattern demonstrates that the transmission of the Sufi order occurs through a process of spiritual

education that links religious knowledge with the habitual practice of these teachings in the disciples' lives (N. F. Nalini et al., 2024).

Within this network's continuity, Habib Muhsin bin Ali al-Hinduan holds a significant position. Bruinessen (1992) identifies Habib Muhsin Ali al-Hinduan as one of the key figures in the Naqshbandi network in Madura, while Rahimi (2012) highlights his role as a mursyid who continues the teaching and initiation of followers of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah order. This position makes Habib Muhsin relevant to this study, particularly since field data indicate that a number of practices still observed by followers are understood as part of the spiritual legacy transmitted through him (Bruinessen, 1992; Rahimi, 2012).

One important practice in this continuity is the Khatam Khawjakan. In *Nafahātul 'Ambāriyah fī Ṭarīqatin Naqshbandiyah al-Mudzhariyah*, Habib Muhsin bin Ali al-Hinduan describes the Khatam Khawjakan as a practice related to dhikr, ḥuḍūr al-qalb, devotion, and spiritual connection with the mursyid, as well as being related to rābiṭah, wuqūf al-qalb, murāqabah, istimdād, and jadzbaḥ (Al-Hinduan, 1970). Based on field data, the sequence passed down within the research community includes tawasul, istighfar, Al-Fatihah, shalawat, Surah Al-Insyirah, Al-Ikhlās, a number of prayers and dhikr such as Yā Qāḍiyal Ḥājāt, Hasbunallāhu wa ni'mal-wakīl, Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh, and the prayer of Prophet Yunus, and then concluded with Al-Falaq, istighfar, and al-Nas (Bahauddin, n.d.; researcher's field observations).

Thus, in this study, Khatam Khawjakan is positioned as part of the continuity of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah spiritual tradition, particularly within the lineage associated

with Habib Muhsin bin Ali al-Hinduan. This practice is understood not merely as a series of ritual recitations but as a context of spiritual experience that encompasses relational dimensions, inner reflection, and religious contemplation. Since the study focuses on emotional well-being, the relationship between Khatam Khawjakan and emotional states is not assumed from the outset but is explored through the life experiences of the followers: how they experience, internalize, and interpret the practice within their emotional lives.

2. Experiences of Emotional Well-Being in the Khatam Khawjakan Practice

Ritual practices in the Sufi tradition serve not only as a form of repetitive worship but also as a medium for the formation, maintenance, and deepening of inner life. Through ritual, a disciple's connection with God, the teacher, and the spiritual tradition they follow takes on a concrete form in daily experience. Therefore, the experience of participating in Sufi rituals cannot be understood solely through the structure of the recitations or the procedures for their performance, but also through how participants internalize these practices. In the context of this study, Khatam Khawjakan is a significant practice because participants do not describe it merely as a series of dhikr recitations, but rather as a space to direct their awareness toward Allah, cultivate their inner state, and confront the challenges they are currently facing. Khawjakan thus provides a context for experience where spiritual and emotional dimensions intertwine.

The participants' interpretations of Khatam Khawjakan reveal that the same practice can evoke different subjective experiences. Khawjakan is understood as a spiritual practice that connects dhikr, heart cultivation, and

the effort to draw closer to Allah (Al-Hinduan, 1970). P1 describes it as “a space for me to pause for a moment,” P2 as a means to maintain *istiqamah*, while P5 interprets it as “a path to purify the heart.” P3, in a more relational sense, emphasizes the inner experience that connects him to his teacher, the Prophet Muhammad, and Allah (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 2 (P2), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 3 (P3), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 5 (P5), personal communication, September 13, 2026). This distinction is phenomenologically significant because it indicates that the meaning of *Khawjakan* is not entirely inherent in the ritual as a standalone object. This meaning is formed through the ways in which participants are present, experience, and ascribe meaning to the practices they engage in. Thus, *Khawjakan* can be understood as a space for spiritual experience that enables changes in the way participants experience their inner states and life issues.

Table 1. Participants’ Interpretations of the Khatam Khawjakan Practice

Participant	Statement/Interpretation	Unique Meaning
P1	“A space for me to pause for a moment”	A respite from the clutter of thoughts
P2	“A means of maintaining <i>istiqamah</i> ”	Consistency in spiritual practice
P3	“An inner connection with the teacher, the Prophet Muhammad, and Allah”	Spiritual connectedness

Participant	Statement/Interpretation	Unique Meaning
P5	"A path to purify the heart"	Spiritual cultivation and purification

Note. Table 1 shows that participants interpret the same practice in various ways. These differences form the basis for understanding the Khawjakan experience as subjective and contextual.

This diversity of interpretations becomes even more apparent when participants' experiences are considered in light of their emotional states prior to participating in Khawjakan. During the epoché phase, the researcher suspended the assumption that Khatam Khawjakan directly leads to emotional well-being. The data actually showed that participants entered the ritual in a variety of emotional states. P1 experienced a cluttered mind and fatigue, P3 had previously felt a sense of inner emptiness, while P2 sometimes felt reluctant to participate in Khawjakan (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 2 (P2), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 3 (P3), personal communication, September 12, 2026). P6 and P8 also participated in the practice while grappling with personal challenges they were facing (Partisipan 6 (P6), personal communication, September 13, 2026; Partisipan 8 (P8), personal communication, September 13, 2026). These variations indicate that the Khawjakan experience unfolds within a concrete and non-uniform life horizon (Husserl, 1982). In other words, the experience of Emotional Well-Being that arises during or after Khawjakan cannot be

separated from the initial conditions that each participant brings into the ritual.

During the phenomenological reduction stage, attention is directed toward how participants consciously experience the practice. What is evident is not merely a change in mood, but a shift in the direction of attention and the way one experiences one’s inner state. P1, for example, experienced a shift in attention from a cluttered mind toward dhikr until “my heart felt as if it were paying attention too.” P2 described Khawjakan as an opportunity to “pour out what I feel to Allah,” while P8 felt that the problems they were facing became lighter (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 2 (P2), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 8 (P8), personal communication, September 13, 2026). These emotional experiences also do not follow a simple, one-directional path. P3 experienced a sense of deep emotion and regret, which then spurred a desire to repent; P6 felt fear and shame before God when recalling their mistakes; while P1 experienced tears, which were then followed by a feeling of “relief” (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 3 (P3), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 6 (P6), personal communication, September 13, 2026). These findings indicate that the emotional dimension of Khawjakan encompasses not only tranquility but also the process of confronting, acknowledging, and processing emotions through a spiritual orientation.

Table 2. Meaning Units of Experiences During and After Completing Khawjakan

Participant	Experience	Meaningful Unit
P1	Attention shifts to	Change in

Participant	Experience	Meaningful Unit
	<i>dhikr</i> ; then feels a sense of “relief”	consciousness and relief
P2	“Pouring out one’s feelings to Allah”; the heart feels lighter	Emotional awareness and lightness
P3	Emotion, regret, and a drive to repent	Spiritual reflection
P6	Fear and shame before Allah; then felt lighter	Awareness and emotional release
P8	Problems felt lighter	A change in perception of problems
P10	“The problems remain, but the way I deal with them has changed”	A change in response to problems

Note. Table 2 shows that the experience of emotional well-being is not limited to a sense of calm, but also encompasses emotional dynamics, relief, reflection, and changes in how one experiences and copes with problems.

These dimensions of change became increasingly evident in the participants’ experiences following Khawjakan. P1 felt a “sense of relief,” P2 felt lighter and calmer, while P6 felt “lighter and more at ease” (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 2 (P2), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 6 (P6), personal communication, September 13, 2026). However, these experiences do not mean that the problems faced by the participants have been objectively resolved. P1 emphasized that the problems still

exist; P8 stated that the problems were not immediately resolved but felt less burdensome; while P10 explained that the change primarily occurred in the way they dealt with the problems (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 8 (P8), personal communication, September 13, 2026; Partisipan 10 (P10), personal communication, September 14, 2026). This distinction is important for understanding Emotional Well-Being in this study. The well-being that emerges from the Khawjakan experience is not primarily the absence of problems or a consistently positive emotional state, but rather a change in the subjective relationship to problems. Participants continue to face the same reality, but experience it with varying degrees of acceptance, calmness, and reflectiveness.

These changes in perception are closely linked to the processes of self-surrender and spiritual reflection. P4 stated, "I surrender my problems to Allah and ask for a solution." P2 felt more patient and strove to practice *tawakkal*; P3 experienced acceptance accompanied by a drive for self-improvement; while P5 viewed Khawjakan as part of a journey toward self-improvement and drawing closer to Allah. P9 also felt their heart becoming gentler and more humble (Partisipan 2 (P2), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 3 (P3), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 4 (P4), personal communication, September 13, 2026; Partisipan 5 (P5), personal communication, September 13, 2026; Partisipan 9 (P9), personal communication, September 14, 2026). These experiences demonstrate that orientation toward Allah is not merely the normative backdrop of rituals, but rather an integral part of how participants organize their emotional experiences. Surrender, in this

context, is not synonymous with passivity in the face of problems. On the contrary, experiences of tawakal and acceptance are intertwined with patience, self-evaluation, repentance, and the drive to improve.

In the imaginative variation stage, the experiences of P1–P10 were compared to distinguish situational elements from the more fundamental structure of the experience (Giorgi, 2009). This comparison revealed that the emotional form of the experience is not always the same. P4 stated that feelings can “come and go,” P1 experienced changes in devotion depending on the circumstances, while P7 emphasized that the experience depends on the situation and the level of devotion (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 4 (P4), personal communication, September 13, 2026; Partisipan 7 (P7), personal communication, September 14, 2026). Therefore, crying, deep emotion, or the intensity of spiritual absorption cannot be regarded as indicators that must always be present in the Khawjakan experience. What appears to be more consistent is the focus of consciousness on Allah, a shift in the perception of one’s problems, and the emergence of self-reflection. Thus, the structure of the Emotional Well-Being experience in Khawjakan does not lie in specific emotional expressions, but rather in the transformation of how participants experience themselves, their emotions, and the issues they face within their spiritual relationship with Allah.

Table 3. Results of Imaginative Variation

Elements of the experience	Participants	Status
Tears and emotion	P1, P3	Situational
Changes in feelings	P4	Dynamic

Elements of the experience	Participants	Status
Contemplation	P1, P7	Condition-dependent
Focus on God	P2, P3, P4, P5	Structure of experience
Changes in perception of problems	P1, P8, P10	Structure of experience
Reflection and personal change	P2, P3, P5, P9, P10	Structure of experience

Note. Table 3 presents the results of a comparison of experience variations. “Structure of experience” does not refer to statistical frequency, but rather to elements that remain relevant when the form of experience is imagined under different conditions.

This structure of experience does not end when the ritual is over. Some participants described how changes in their experience continued in their daily lives. P1 felt a “pause before I reacted,” P2 became more patient, P3 was motivated to repent, P5 tried to improve themselves, P9 felt their heart had softened, while P10 said that “the heart was like a gentle rebuke” (Partisipan 1 (P1), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 2 (P2), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 3 (P3), personal communication, September 12, 2026; Partisipan 5 (P5), personal communication, September 13, 2026; Partisipan 9 (P9), personal communication, September 14, 2026). These experiences indicate that the significance of Khawjakan for emotional well-being does not primarily lie in the immediate effects following the ritual, but in the potential for these shifts in consciousness to continue and manifest in daily actions and responses. From a phenomenological perspective, this continuity reveals that the ritual experience gains its meaning when it influences the way the subject re-engages with the world of their life.

Based on this overall experience, emotional well-being in the practice of Khawjakan can be understood as a change in the way participants experience their inner state and confront challenges through the orientation of their consciousness toward Allah. The structure of this experience moves from an initial state characterized by mental clutter, fatigue, emptiness, reluctance, or specific problems; toward the focus of attention on dhikr and Allah; then developing into emotional experiences such as relief, a sense of lightness, calmness, deep emotion, fear, shame, or regret; and subsequently continuing in the form of acceptance, tawakal, repentance, reflection, and changes in responses to daily life. Thus, Khawjakan cannot be reduced to a technique for relieving emotional stress. It is a spiritual space where participants reorder their relationships with themselves, their problems, and Allah.

Table 4. Synthesis of Emotional Well-Being Experiences

Structure of the Experience	Findings
Initial State	Cluttered mind, fatigue, emptiness, reluctance, and problems
Focus of Consciousness	Attention directed toward <i>dhikr</i> and Allah
Emotional Experience	Relief, lightness, calmness, deep emotion, fear, shame, and regret
Perception of Problems	The problems remain, but the way of dealing with them changes
Surrender and reflection	Trust in God, acceptance, repentance, and self-improvement

Structure of the Experience	Findings
Daily manifestations	Pausing before reacting, patience, gentleness, and self-awareness

Note. Table 4 summarizes the structure of the experiences of P1–P10, from their initial state, through their experiences during Khawjakan, changes in their perception of issues, to the manifestations of these changes in their daily lives.

Thus, the essence of the identified experiences is not merely the emergence of calmness, but rather relational changes in inner experiences—that is, changes in how participants relate to their emotions, life’s challenges, themselves, and God. Emotional Well-Being in the participants’ experiences manifests through relief, a sense of lightness, calmness, acceptance, reflection, and changes in their responses to situations. These findings also underscore the limits of the study’s interpretation: the data do not indicate that Khawjakan causally produces emotional well-being. Phenomenologically, participants experience and interpret these changes in their inner states within the context of the spiritual practices they engage in.

3. Interpretation and Discussion of Experiences of Emotional Well-Being in the Practice of Khatam Khawjakan

Based on the phenomenological synthesis of P1–P10, emotional well-being in the practice of Khatam Khawjakan appears not as the absence of problems but as a change in how individuals experience and respond to life. P1 describes it as “a pause before I react”; P8 feels that problems have become lighter, while P10 emphasizes that “the problems remain, but the way I deal with them has changed.” These experiences indicate that well-being does not lie in the absence of stress, but in a change in the individual’s relationship with their inner state. This perspective aligns

with Keyes (2002), who defines positive mental health through the presence of positive emotions and positive functioning, rather than merely the absence of disorders.

This change becomes clearer when emotional experiences are not separated from the ability to lead a constructive life. Keyes (2007) through the concept of “flourishing,” situates well-being at the intersection of positive experiences and psychosocial functioning. In the experiences of P1–P10, feelings of relief and calm coexist with patience, acceptance, self-reflection, trust in God, and the ability to pause before reacting. Therefore, Khatam Khawjakan not only brings about a momentary change in mood but also shapes a new way of dealing with inner experiences. Within the framework of Lamers et al. (2011), these experiences also demonstrate the intertwining of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, although this study did not conduct psychometric measurements.

Interestingly, experiences of well-being do not always begin with pleasant emotions. Participant 3 (P3) experienced deep emotion, regret, and an urge to repent, while Participant 6 (P6) felt fear and shame before God upon recalling their mistakes. Participant 1 (P1) cried, which eventually led to a sense of “relief.” These experiences demonstrate that emotions conventionally viewed as negative can actually serve as a gateway to self-discovery. What matters is not whether the emotions are pleasant, but how they are experienced, acknowledged, and processed. Thus, emotional well-being in Khawjakan cannot be reduced to the dominance of positive affect; rather, it encompasses the process by which emotional experiences take on a reflective and spiritual direction.

This direction of experience is evident in shifts in the orientation of consciousness. Participant 1 (P1) described how his mind, which was initially cluttered, shifted toward dhikr until “my heart felt as if it were paying attention.” Participant 2 (P2) experienced Khawjakan as a space to “pour out what I feel to Allah,” while Participant 8 (P8) felt that his problems became lighter. These experiences indicate that attention does not merely shift from the mind to ritual activity but is reorganized through dhikr. This can be linked to the work of Saniotis (2018) and Zahir & Qoronfleh (2025) on spiritual consciousness in dhikr. Hussein (2016) highlights the psychological, emotional, behavioral, and phenomenological dimensions of dhikr, while Widiyanto (2006) emphasizes its subjective meaning within the Naqshbandi tradition.

However, this shift in consciousness does not mean that life’s problems disappear. P1 states that problems “certainly still exist,” P8 emphasizes that problems are not immediately resolved, while P10 indicates that the change primarily occurs in how one deals with them. It is here that the Khawjakan experience gains a deeper meaning: the ritual does not erase problematic realities, but rather transforms the subject’s position when confronting them. These findings align with those of Hamsyah & Subandi (2017) regarding the relationship between dhikr and happiness, Sufya (2025) on stress management, as well as Juniarni et al. (2022) and Anwar et al. (2024) on mental health. This study expands upon them through a phenomenological description of the shift in the experience of these problems.

Changes in how these issues are addressed are intertwined with a transcendental orientation. P4 states, “I entrust my problems to Allah and ask for a solution”; P2

links this to patience and tawakal; while P5 interprets Khawjakan as “a path to purify the heart.” This surrender does not manifest as passivity, as it goes hand in hand with reflection, self-evaluation, repentance, and the drive for self-improvement. These findings align with those of AbdAleati et al. (2016), who demonstrated a link between religiosity or religious practice and mental health through how individuals cope with stress and find meaning and purpose in life. Thus, orientation toward Allah becomes part of how participants organize their emotional experiences.

This orientation, in turn, leads to the cultivation of inner qualities. P9 felt their heart become gentler and more humble, while P3 was motivated to repent. These experiences indicate that emotional well-being does not end with a sense of relief after the ritual but can continue as an awareness that helps one assess and improve oneself. These findings align with those of Subandi et al. (2022) regarding the psychotherapeutic dimensions of Sufi practice, N. Faiqah Nalini (2023) regarding the development of inner qualities, and N. F. Nalini et al. (2024) regarding education in the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah order through dhikr. Therefore, the sense of calm in the participants’ experiences is better understood as part of spiritual cultivation—namely, an increasingly reflective relationship among the individual, their self, life’s challenges, and God.

These experiences also do not arise in isolation. P3 emphasized the inner connection with the spiritual guide; P1 felt that the congregation helped maintain focus, while P10 interpreted Khawjakan as a “point of anchor.” Thus, emotional experiences unfold within a relational space shaped by the student-guide dynamic, the congregation, the lineage, and the transmission of teachings. This can be situated within Bruinessen's (1992) study on the

Naqshbandi network in Indonesia and Rahimi's (2012) work on Naqshbandi Sufi practices. Hafifuddin (2023) highlights the role of the mursyid in the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah order, while Mahyuddin (2013) discusses the development of the Naqshbandi order in the Malay world. Rituals, therefore, become both personal and socio-spiritual experiences.

At the ritual level, the Khatam Khawjakan brings together dhikr, inner attention, spiritual connection, and self-cultivation. This configuration aligns closely with Al-Hinduan's description in Nafahatul 'Ambariyah regarding hudhur al-qalb, wuquf al-qalb, muraqabah, rabithah, and istimdad. Rosidi et al. (2024) highlight the function of spiritual formation in the rituals of the Naqshbandi Khalidiyyah Jalaliyyah order; Syam et al. (2026) demonstrate the transcendental dimensions of the TQN Suryalaya khotaman ritual; while Maulida (2021) discusses Khatm Khwajagan within the context of the Naqshbandi Haqqani order. This comparison situates the Khawjakan within the landscape of Sufi rituals without equating the distinct characteristics of each order. Therefore, the meaning of the ritual must be understood within the lived experience of the community that practices it.

In summary, emotional well-being in the Khatam Khawjakan is formed through three intertwined layers: emotional experiences such as relief, calmness, lightness, deep emotion, fear, shame, and regret; spiritual reflexivity in the form of acceptance, tawakal, repentance, and self-evaluation; and changes in response, such as patience, self-control, tenderness of heart, and the ability to pause before reacting. This structure expands upon the understanding proposed by (Keyes, 2007) and (Lamers et al., 2011) by demonstrating how well-being takes on a specific form

within the context of Sufi life. In the context of the Naqshbandi Mudzhariyah order, well-being is not a single dominant emotion, but rather a process in which emotional experiences are channeled through spiritual awareness and translated into new ways of facing life.

D. CONCLUSION

This study shows that emotional well-being in the practice of Khatam Khawjakan cannot be reduced to tranquility or the predominance of positive emotions, but rather constitutes a dynamic psychospiritual experience. Based on a phenomenological synthesis, this experience consists of the orientation of consciousness toward Allah, emotional immersion, spiritual reflexivity, and a shift in how one responds to problems. Relief, a sense of lightness, tranquility, deep emotion, regret, acceptance, tawakal, and repentance form an intertwined series of experiences. Thus, Khatam Khawjakan is experienced as a space for organizing emotional experiences through a transcendental orientation.

The contribution of this research lies in interpreting emotional well-being as a relational shift within subjective experience, rather than as the absence of problems or a causal outcome of ritual. The structure of these experiences reveals the continuity of meaning from the ritual space into daily life through patience, response regulation, tenderness of heart, reflection, and self-evaluation. These findings expand the spiritual psychology's interpretation of Sufi practices by demonstrating that emotional well-being takes on a specific form through the interconnectedness of inner experience, spiritual cultivation, Sufi relationships, and orientation toward God. Future research could examine the transferability of this experiential structure to different Sufi communities and cultural contexts.

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