



Existential Anxiety and Spiritual Coping in the Contemporary Digital Landscape: A Dialogue with Buya Hamka's Sufism

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Abstract: Existential anxiety has emerged as a growing concern in contemporary digital society, yet its spiritual dimension remains insufficiently explored. This study examines manifestations of existential anxiety and spiritual coping through the philosophical framework of Buya Hamka's *Tasawuf Modern*. Using a qualitative interpretive approach, it integrates digital content analysis of publicly accessible narratives from TikTok, X, Instagram, and Threads with philosophical textual analysis of *Tasawuf Modern*. The findings reveal three major manifestations of existential anxiety: loss of meaning in life, digital isolation, and uncertainty about the future, alongside four forms of spiritual coping: gratitude (*shukr*), contentment (*qanā'ah*), trust in God (*tawakkal*), and remembrance of God (*dhikr*). These findings highlight the relevance of Hamka's modern Sufism (*Tasawuf Modern*) as a philosophical framework for understanding spiritually grounded coping with existential anxiety in the digital era.

Contribution: This article contributes to the growing scholarship on existential anxiety by integrating empirical digital narratives with Buya Hamka's *Tasawuf Modern*. Rather than treating Hamka's thought as an empirically tested intervention, the study positions *Tasawuf Modern* as an interpretive philosophical framework for understanding contemporary forms of spiritual coping in digital society.

Keywords: existential anxiety; digital society; modern Sufism; spiritual coping; Buya Hamka.

Introduction

Existential anxiety, as a profound psychological issue influencing the quality of life in modern digital society, remains relatively underexplored within the realm of spiritual studies, particularly through the lens of Sufi mysticism.¹ Philosophical and psychological perspectives largely dominate contemporary discourse on existential anxiety, while the spiritual dimension, which may offer a more holistic approach to addressing such concerns, is frequently neglected. This is particularly concerning, as modern society, increasingly shaped by materialism, individualism, and rapid technological change, is in urgent need of spiritual resources to confront experiences of meaninglessness, alienation, and uncertainty. In this context, exploring existential anxiety through the perspective of Sufi spirituality becomes increasingly relevant for understanding contemporary human experiences and identifying alternative approaches to psychological well-being.

Several interconnected factors contribute to the growing prevalence of existential anxiety in contemporary digital society. Social comparison facilitated by social media encourages individuals to evaluate themselves against idealized representations of success, lifestyle, and personal achievement, often resulting in dissatisfaction and reduced psychological well-being.² Empirical studies further indicate that upward social comparison on social media significantly predicts anxiety among young adults.³ At the same time, information overload and excessive engagement with digital platforms expose users to continuous uncertainty and emotional exhaustion, particularly through constant exposure to economic instability, political conflicts, environmental crises, and rapid technological change. Research has shown that information overload contributes to social media fatigue, fear of missing out (FOMO), and heightened psychological distress.⁴ Existential anxiety is further intensified by concerns

¹ Vincent Van Bruggen et al., "Systematic Review of Existential Anxiety Instruments," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 55, no. 2 (April 7, 2015): 173–201, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167814542048>.

² Jean. M. Twenge, "More Time on Technology, Less Happiness? Associations between Digital-Media Use and Psychological Well-Being," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 28, no. 4 (2019): 372–78, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721419838244>.

³ Jinrui Tian, Boxuan Li, and Ronghua Zhang, "The Impact of Upward Social Comparison on Social Media on Appearance Anxiety: A Moderated Mediation Model," *Behavioral Sciences* 15, no. 1 (December 26, 2024): 8, <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15010008>.

⁴ Kai Li et al., "Mechanism Study of Social Media Overload on Health Self-Efficacy and Anxiety," *Heliyon* 10, no. 1 (January 2024): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e23326>.

regarding mortality, freedom, uncertainty, and the search for meaning in life.⁵ Moreover, the inability to construct a stable sense of meaning has been associated with higher levels of existential anxiety and lower psychological well-being.⁶ Collectively, these factors contribute to experiences of meaninglessness, alienation, and uncertainty that characterize existential anxiety in the digital era.

To date, existing studies have predominantly remained within empirical and rational domains. First, the philosophical approach explores how existential thought, with its emphasis on individual freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning, can offer a deeper understanding of the anxiety individuals experience.⁷ Second, studies within the psychological domains reveal correlations between existential anxiety and various mental health disorders, such as depression and generalized anxiety.⁸ Third, other studies employing a humanistic-existential counselling approach, focusing on self-understanding and the development of meaning, have proven effective in helping individuals cope with existential anxiety. These findings suggest that counselling grounded in

⁵ David E. Reed, Rachel E. Williamson, and Robert E. Wickham, "Memento Mori: Understanding Existential Anxiety through the Existential Pathway Model," *Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology* 5, no. 1 (January 17, 2021): 14–25, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts5.79>.

⁶ Laura Teodora David and Camelia Truța, "Well-Being and Internal Resources during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Relation to Meaning in Life and Existential Anxiety," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (August 25, 2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1168641>.

⁷ Steven L. Berman, Carl F. Weems, and Timothy R. Stickle, "Existential Anxiety in Adolescents: Prevalence, Structure, Association with Psychological Symptoms and Identity Development," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 35, no. 3 (2006): 285–92, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-006-9032-y>; Dyah Ayu Prameswari and Linusia Marsih, "Forms of Existential Crisis in Haruki Murakami'S Norwegian Wood: Toru Watanabe Analysis," *Prosodi* 17, no. 2 (2023): 171–75, <https://doi.org/10.21107/prosodi.v17i2.19821>; Han Wu, "Existentialist Philosophies of Anxiety: A Comparative Exploration of Kierkegaard and Heidegger," *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media* 61, no. 1 (2024): 85–89, <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/61/20240475>.

⁸ Vincent van Bruggen et al., "The Existential Concerns Questionnaire (ECQ)-Development and Initial Validation of a New Existential Anxiety Scale in a Nonclinical and Clinical Sample.," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 73, no. 12 (December 2017): 1692–1703, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22474>; Elyas Nikoy Kouhpas et al., "The Relationship Between Existential Anxiety and Demoralization Syndrome in Predicting Psychological Well-Being of Patient With Cancer," *Practice in Clinical Psychology* 8, no. 3 (2020): 175–82, <https://doi.org/10.32598/jpcp.8.3.515.1>; Sulistyani et al., "Application of a Humanistic Existential Counseling Approach to Reducing Adolescents' Anxiety for the Spiritual Future," *Indonesian Journal of Advanced Research* 2, no. 8 (2023): 1209–40, <https://doi.org/10.55927/ijar.v2i8.5484>.

humanistic principles can support individuals in discovering personal meaning and alleviating anxiety related to future uncertainty.⁹

Based on a comprehensive review of previous studies on existential anxiety, it is evident that the spiritual-transcendental dimension, particularly from the perspective of Islamic Sufism, has received limited scholarly attention. Existing research has largely approached existential anxiety through philosophical, psychological, and counseling frameworks, while the potential contribution of spiritual resources remains underexplored. Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) analyze the manifestations of existential anxiety in the digital era; and (2) examine the relevance of Buya Hamka's modern Sufism (*Tasawuf Modern*) as a spiritual framework for addressing such conditions. Drawing upon key values articulated in Hamka's modern Sufism, including gratitude (*shukr*), contentment (*qanā'ah*), remembrance of God (*dhikr*), and trust in God (*tawakkal*), this study seeks to contribute to contemporary discussions on existential well-being from an Islamic perspective. The study proceeds from the working assumption that the internalization of these spiritual values may help individuals cope with feelings of meaninglessness, alienation, and uncertainty, thereby fostering a more meaningful and resilient response to existential anxiety in contemporary digital life.

Literature Review

Existential Anxiety

Existential anxiety refers to a fear triggered by core threats to human existence, such as death, meaninglessness, and fundamental loneliness.¹⁰ It can be defined as a form of distress that arises from profound questioning about the meaning of life, individual identity, and human existence. According to Rollo May, such anxiety emerges when individuals feel alienated and are unable to find meaning in their lives, which may lead to pathological symptoms.¹¹ This type of anxiety often surfaces when individuals face uncertainty and challenges that threaten their understanding of self and life purpose, potentially exacerbating

⁹ Diana Zumrotus Sa'adah, "Konseling Eksistensial Humanistik Untuk Mengurangi Kecemasan Terhadap Masa Depan," *Procedia : Studi Kasus Dan Intervensi Psikologi* 8, no. 3 (2020): 112–18, <https://doi.org/10.22219/procedia.v8i3.14303>.

¹⁰ Berman, Weems, and Stickle, "Existential Anxiety in Adolescents: Prevalence, Structure, Association with Psychological Symptoms and Identity Development," 285–92; Reed, Williamson, and Wickham, "Memento Mori: Understanding Existential Anxiety through the Existential Pathway Model," 14–25.

¹¹ Sa'adah, "Konseling Eksistensial Humanistik Untuk Mengurangi Kecemasan Terhadap Masa Depan," 112–118.

mental health conditions such as depression and generalized anxiety.¹² Existential anxiety reflects a complex psychological challenge that permeates multiple dimensions of human life.

Existential anxiety can be understood through various interrelated forms and dimensions. This type of anxiety is often associated with fate or death, where individuals experience an absolute threat to their existence due to the uncertainty of the future.¹³ Another dimension involves emptiness and meaninglessness, reflecting the fear that life lacks a clear purpose or direction, thereby engendering a sense of inner void. Existential anxiety also encompasses feelings of guilt and condemnation, in which individuals feel morally and ethically threatened, potentially destabilizing their sense of identity.¹⁴ These categories of anxiety reveal the multifaceted nature of human experience about profound existential questions about meaning and being.

Spiritual Coping

Spiritual coping refers to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral efforts through which individuals draw upon spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and transcendent values to understand and respond to stressful or existential life experiences. Contemporary studies describe spiritual coping as a process of seeking meaning and emotional strength through one's relationship with the sacred, enabling individuals to reinterpret suffering, uncertainty, and adversity within a broader spiritual framework.¹⁵ Positive spiritual coping has consistently been associated with greater psychological well-being, resilience, emotional regulation, and life satisfaction, particularly among individuals confronting existential concerns such as loneliness, uncertainty, and the search for meaning.¹⁶

¹² Khafifah, Wilson Wilson, and Agustina Arundina Triharja Tejoyuwono, "Hubungan Tingkat Stres, Kecemasan, Dan Depresi Dengan Konstipasi Fungsional Pada Mahasiswa Kedokteran," *Jurnal Penyakit Dalam Indonesia* 11, no. 1 (2024): 24–34, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jpdi.v11i1.1529>.

¹³ Berman, Weems, and Stickle, "Existential Anxiety in Adolescents: Prevalence, Structure, Association with Psychological Symptoms and Identity Development," 285–292.

¹⁴ Berman, Weems, and Stickle, 285–292.

¹⁵ Lidia Graca and Tânia Brandão, "Religious/Spiritual Coping, Emotion Regulation, Psychological Well-Being, and Life Satisfaction among University Students," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 52, no. 3 (2024): 342–58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00916471231223920>.

¹⁶ Jemimal Joys Joseph et al., "Mapping the Landscape of Religious Coping: Review and Bibliometric Analysis of Theocentric and Non-Theocentric Practices," *Journal of Religion*

Religious and spiritual coping strategies, such as problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, are associated with better emotional regulation and reduced psychological distress.¹⁷ Spiritual coping encompasses a wide range of religious and spiritual practices, including gratitude, prayer, trust in God, acceptance, remembrance of God, and meaning-making. Rather than eliminating suffering, these practices help individuals reinterpret difficult experiences from a transcendent perspective while fostering hope, inner peace, and existential resilience.¹⁸ Consequently, spiritual coping has increasingly been recognized as an important conceptual framework for understanding how individuals respond to existential challenges in contemporary society.

Buya Hamka's Modern Sufism

Buya Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, 1908–1981) was one of Indonesia's most influential Muslim scholars, philosophers, novelists, and reformist thinkers. His intellectual contributions encompass Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic ethics, literature, and modern Islamic thought, with a distinctive emphasis on integrating spirituality into everyday life.¹⁹ Raised in the family of Haji Rasul, a prominent Islamic reformist scholar in West Sumatra, Hamka's intellectual outlook was shaped by both his religious upbringing and his engagement with Islamic reformist thought, particularly the ideas of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. These intellectual influences led him to reinterpret Sufism not as a withdrawal from worldly affairs but as an ethical and spiritual orientation that enables individuals to cultivate inner purification while remaining actively engaged in family, work, and society.²⁰ This perspective has established Hamka

and Health 65, no. 1 (February 10, 2026): 290–313, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-025-02466-5>.

¹⁷ Cindel J. M. White and Abigail Ramos, "God, Are You There? Coping and Emotion Regulation Among Religious, Never Religious, and Formerly Religious People Experiencing a Spiritual Crisis," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 36, no. 1 (January 2, 2026): 270–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2025.2521574>.

¹⁸ Graça and Brandão, "Religious/Spiritual Coping, Emotion Regulation, Psychological Well-Being, and Life Satisfaction among University Students," 342–358.

¹⁹ Ai Fatimah Nur Fuad, "Navigating Modernity: Hamka's Responses To The Challenges Of Secularism And Materialism," *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora* 25, no. 2 (September 21, 2024): 81–90, <https://doi.org/10.23917/humaniora.v25i2.23487>.

²⁰ Fathor Rahim and Hasnan Bachtiar, "Hamka's Neo-Sufism in the Context Modern Society," *Journal of Social Studies (JSS)* 19, no. 1 (April 5, 2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jss.v19i1.57513>; Fuad, "Navigating Modernity: Hamka's Responses To The Challenges Of Secularism And Materialism."

as one of the leading figures in the development of modern Islamic spirituality in Indonesia.²¹

Among Hamka's most influential works is *Tasawuf Modern* (Modern Sufism), first published in 1939, which reinterprets Sufism as a practical, ethical, and spiritual guide for modern life.²² Rather than advocating ascetic withdrawal from society, the book emphasizes the cultivation of moral character, psychological balance, and spiritual maturity through values such as gratitude (*syukur*), contentment (*qanā'ah*), trust in God (*tawakkal*), patience (*ṣabr*), sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*), and remembrance of God (*dhikr*).²³ Contemporary scholarship likewise recognizes these values as central to Hamka's vision of an active and socially engaged spirituality capable of addressing the moral and psychological challenges of modern society.²⁴ Accordingly, this study adopts *Tasawuf Modern* as its primary philosophical framework because its ethical and spiritual principles provide a relevant perspective for interpreting contemporary expressions of existential anxiety and spiritual coping in digital environments.

Sufism can be interpreted as a “path of return,” a spiritual journey formed through the accumulated experiences and knowledge of successive generations striving to live in harmony with what they perceive as the divine path of life. According to Hamka, Sufism serves as a potential solution to the challenges posed by modernity in contemporary society, offering guidance toward true happiness in both the worldly and eternal realms.²⁵ In navigating life, it is essential to harmonize the worldly and spiritual dimensions.²⁶ A worldly life that neglects spiritual and religious values often gives rise to a materialistic, hedonistic, and

²¹ Rahim and Bachtiar, “Hamka’s Neo-Sufism in the Context Modern Society,” 1–14.

²² Buya Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, ed. Muh. Iqbal Santosa (Jakarta: Republika Penerbit, 2015), 1–377.

²³ Hamka, 1–377.

²⁴ Rahim and Bachtiar, “Hamka’s Neo-Sufism in the Context Modern Society,” 1–14; Fuad, “Navigating Modernity: Hamka’s Responses To The Challenges Of Secularism And Materialism,” 81–90.

²⁵ Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, “Sufism in Contemporary Contexts: Spirituality, Subjectivity, and the Limits of Modern Rationality,” *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 50, no. 1 (February 4, 2026): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v50i1.1566>.

²⁶ Muhammad Syauqi, “Tasawuf Sebagai Terapi Menemukan Makna Spiritual Dalam Hidup Modern,” *Ameena Journal* 1, no. 4 (2023): 359–70, <https://ejournal.ymal.or.id/index.php/aij/article/view/40%0Ahttps://ejournal.ymal.or.id/index.php/aij/article/download/40/37>.

consumerist lifestyle. Modern Sufism offers a framework for balancing physical and spiritual needs, while also reviving religious and spiritual values.²⁷

Modern Sufism encompasses several aspects that are highly relevant to the current social and spiritual conditions of society. First, according to Hamka, it is essential to promote a form of Sufism that is positive and dynamic, one that aims to refine moral character and purify the inner self without withdrawing from social life. Second, Sufism cultivates a tangible concept of *iḥsān*, emphasizing not only personal spiritual experience but also harmonious social interaction. In this sense, Sufism serves as a viable solution to the moral and spiritual crises facing modern society.²⁸ Third, Hamka distinguishes between *tasawuf amali* (practical Sufism) and *tasawuf falsafi* (philosophical Sufism), where the former focuses on improving individual morality, while the latter enriches intellectual insight to confront contemporary challenges.²⁹ Thus, modern Sufism provides a relevant framework for understanding and addressing contemporary issues within the Islamic context.

Method

This study employed a qualitative interpretive design combining digital content analysis with philosophical textual analysis. Rather than evaluating the effectiveness of Buya Hamka's teachings, the study interprets contemporary expressions of existential anxiety and spiritual coping through the philosophical perspective of *Tasawuf Modern*. Accordingly, social media narratives constitute the primary empirical data, while Hamka's *Tasawuf Modern* serves as the interpretive framework for understanding the spiritual values reflected in those narratives.

The primary data consisted of two sources: (1) *Tasawuf Modern* by Buya Hamka as the principal philosophical text and (2) publicly accessible posts,

²⁷ Lukman Wawan Sopiyan, "Contribution Of Contemporary Tasawuf As An Alternative Solution To Overcoming Religious Spiritual Drought," *El-Ghiro: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 22, no. 2 (2024): 209–19, <https://doi.org/10.37092/el-ghiroh.v22i2.892>.

²⁸ Nilyati, "Peranan Tasawuf Dalam Kehidupan Modern," *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 14, no. 1 (2015): 119–42, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v14i1.24>; Didin Komaruddin, "Konsep Tasawuf Modern Dalam Pemikiran Nasaruddin Umar," *Syifa Al-Qulub* 2, no. Januari (2019): 96–111, <https://doi.org/10.15575/saq.v3i2.3535>.

²⁹ Salihin, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Hamka Dan Relevansinya Bagi Kehidupan Modern," *Manthiq* 1, no. 2 (2016): 179–90, <https://doi.org/10.29300/mtq.v1i2.344>; Mario Excel Elfando Tobing, Nurwahidin, and Anggi Setiawan, "Relevansi Tasawuf Amali Dan Tasawuf Falsafi Pada Masa Modern," *Nizham* 11, no. 2 (2023): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.32332/nizham.v11i02.7103>.

comments, captions, and short videos collected from TikTok, X, Instagram, and Threads through purposive sampling over a one-month period. These platforms were selected because they are widely used as spaces for public self-expression, enabling users to share personal experiences, emotional conditions, and religious reflections through textual, visual, and audiovisual content. Secondary data included scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other academic publications related to existential anxiety, digital culture, religious coping, Islamic spirituality, and contemporary Sufism.

The selection of digital content followed predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Included data consisted of publicly accessible narratives explicitly expressing experiences related to existential anxiety, such as loss of meaning in life, digital isolation, uncertainty about the future, fear of failure, and fear of death, as well as narratives describing spiritual coping practices, including gratitude, acceptance, trust in God, remembrance of God, prayer, and other forms of religious reflection. Commercial advertisements, political campaigns, institutional announcements, duplicated content, and posts unrelated to the research objectives were excluded from the analysis. To minimize theoretical bias, keywords representing Hamka's philosophical concepts, such as *qanā'ah*, *tawakkal*, and *shukr*, were not used during the data collection process.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.³⁰ The collected narratives were first coded inductively to identify recurring themes of existential anxiety and spiritual coping. These codes were subsequently organized into seven thematic categories, namely loss of meaning in life, digital isolation, uncertainty about the future, gratitude, acceptance, trust in God, and remembrance of God. After the thematic analysis had been completed, the concepts of *shukr*, *qanā'ah*, *tawakkal*, and *dhikr* derived from *Tasawuf Modern* were applied deductively as interpretive categories to examine the conceptual correspondence between the empirical findings and Hamka's philosophical thought. Consequently, this study does not claim that social media users consciously apply Hamka's teachings or that his concepts have been empirically proven effective in reducing existential anxiety. Rather, Hamka's modern Sufism functions as a philosophical framework for interpreting contemporary forms of spiritual coping expressed in digital narratives.

³⁰ Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications., 2000), 338.

Results and Discussion

Manifestations of Existential Anxiety in Digital Spaces

The analysis of social media content collected from TikTok, X, and Instagram identified three recurring manifestations of existential anxiety in contemporary digital spaces: loss of meaning in life, digital isolation, and uncertainty about the future. These themes emerged consistently across users' narratives, comments, and posts describing their everyday experiences. The collected data consist of users' narratives, comments, and posts that publicly express emotional distress, personal concerns, and everyday existential experiences across social media platforms. Although originating from different digital platforms, the retrieved narratives were consistently grouped into three recurring themes. Table 1 presents representative social media narratives classified according to the three manifestations of existential anxiety identified in this study.

Table 1. Manifestations of Existential Anxiety in Digital Spaces

Theme	Representative Narrative	Manifestation Identified	Source
Loss of Meaning in Life	"Kenapa hidupku gini banget ya?"	Dissatisfaction with one's present life condition and uncertainty regarding personal life direction.	https://x.com/mofroe/status/1864829987859370340
	"...bahagia kok susah banget ya."	Feelings of emotional emptiness and difficulty attaining genuine happiness due to continuous comparison with others.	https://x.com/ianhugen/status/1853095176434012261
Digital Isolation	"Kadang capek, tapi nggak punya tempat cerita."	Loneliness resulting from the absence of trusted interpersonal relationships.	https://vt.tiktok.com/ZS6FNtXnM/
	"Sekarang teman paling setia cuma HP."	Emotional dependence on digital devices accompanied by feelings of social isolation.	https://vt.tiktok.com/ZS6FNqbj/

	<i>Aku rasa satu hal yg mesti dihadapi begitu lewat usia remaja adalah kesepian is real. Masalah hidup makin kompleks, mau curhat ke orang jg dia blm tentu ngerti, sirkel makin kecil. Perjuangan2 hidup harus dijalani sendiri dgn banyak hal yg nggak bisa diceritakan ke siapa2</i>	Loneliness experienced while confronting personal struggles without meaningful emotional support.	https://x.com/ikanatassa/status/1861601523035406608
	<i>Gua merasa hidup lebih lega ketika gua bisa mengurangi ekspektasi dan ketergantungan diri ke orang lain deh. Capek sih, apa-apa sendirian. Suka kesepian juga. Tapi kadang lebih capek juga nurutin kemauan orang lain</i>	Feelings of loneliness despite remaining socially connected through digital interaction.	https://x.com/introcudd/status/1865355629399011422
Uncertainty About the Future	<i>Ah, mau kerja. semoga secepatnya ada keajaiban dari Allah aku udah capek diusia segini masih jd beban sedangkan ortu udah tua, aku satu satunya harapan tp kenapa gagal mulu. apa dosa ku banyak bgt?</i>	Concerns regarding employment opportunities and future financial security.	https://x.com/worksfess/status/1719968834998972472
	<i>Apa-apa pengen sendiri, ngerasa bisa ngelakuin apapun sendiri, bisa melewati masa-masa up and down sendiri sampai untuk menangis pun</i>	Pressure arising from social expectations and uncertainty about achieving personal goals.	https://x.com/jejakrasa/status/1852097792694718589

<i>kamu rela mencari tempat yang sepi supaya tidak diketahui.</i>		
<i>Kapan sih, ada hari dimana kita ga, perlu takut gagal, takut gajadi apa apa, takut sama masa depan, takut sama hal yg belum tentu terjadi</i>	Fear and uncertainty concerning future life conditions.	https://x.co m/Azizik/stat us/17855864 9435232299 3

As presented in Table 1, loss of meaning in life was reflected in narratives describing dissatisfaction with everyday routines, emotional emptiness, overthinking, and repeated comparison with the achievements of others. Users frequently questioned the direction of their lives and expressed difficulties in experiencing genuine happiness despite continuous efforts to improve themselves. These narratives appeared repeatedly across the retrieved TikTok and X content and were classified under the theme of loss of meaning in life. Similarly, digital isolation was reflected in narratives portraying loneliness, emotional distance, the absence of trusted interpersonal relationships, and limited opportunities to share personal struggles. Several users described digital devices as their primary companions, whereas others reported feeling emotionally disconnected despite remaining active on social media. Comparable narratives were consistently identified across both TikTok and X.

The third theme, uncertainty about the future, encompassed narratives describing concerns regarding employment opportunities, financial stability, personal achievement, family expectations, failure, and death. Several users also expressed uncertainty about future life trajectories and worries about fulfilling personal and social expectations. Similar expressions appeared repeatedly throughout the analyzed dataset and were categorized under the theme of future uncertainty. Overall, the collected narratives were consistently classified into three dominant manifestations of existential anxiety: loss of meaning in life, digital isolation, and uncertainty about the future. Although originating from different digital platforms, similar expressions repeatedly emerged throughout the dataset, illustrating recurring patterns of existential anxiety documented in this study.

Spiritual Coping Expressions in Digital Spaces

Following the manifestations of existential anxiety identified in the previous section, the collected social media content also documented various forms of spiritual coping employed by users in responding to emotional distress and existential concerns. Rather than remaining within narratives of fear, loneliness, and uncertainty, several users described religious and spiritual practices that helped them regain emotional stability and a sense of inner peace. These practices appeared consistently across TikTok, X, Instagram, and Threads, and were grouped into four recurring forms of spiritual coping: gratitude, acceptance, trust in God, and remembrance of God. Table 2 presents representative narratives illustrating these coping practices identified in the collected digital content.

Table 2. Spiritual Coping Expressions in Digital Spaces

Spiritual Coping	Representative Narrative	Manifestation Identified	Source
Gratitude (Shukr)	<i>"...jangan terus merasa kurang, tapi perbanyak rasa shukr."</i>	Gratitude as a means of reducing dissatisfaction and cultivating inner contentment.	https://x.com/BarakahVibes/status/2063985597761642916
Acceptance (Qanā'ah)	<i>"Hari ini saya membaca semua yang pernah ditulis oleh Hamka tentang qanā'ah. Hati perlu sentiasa merasa cukup namun tangan tidak boleh berhenti berusaha."</i>	Acceptance of present circumstances while maintaining continuous effort.	https://x.com/fakhrifadzli/status/1779716597516775855
	<i>"Sikap tidak FOMO itu adalah salah satu bentuk rezeki karena sifat qanā'ah akhirnya melahirkan sakinah."</i>	Self-acceptance through contentment and freedom from excessive social comparison.	https://x.com/allebarraa11eb/status/2067493352682197499
	<i>"...keberhasilan bukanlah garis finish yang datang tiba-tiba, melainkan buah dari keteguhan hati untuk</i>	Appreciation of life's process despite uncertainty and delayed outcomes.	https://www.instagram.com/p/DXodvTek89J/

	<i>terus mencoba dan berikhtiar."</i>		
Trust in God (Tawakkal)	<i>"Currently in my 'Qadarullah' era. Berhentilah mengulang-ulang kekhawatiran di kepalamu. Takdir Allah tidak menunggu cemasmu, dan tidak berubah karena takutmu. Trust and move on."</i>	Reliance upon God's decree while letting go of excessive worry about the future.	https://x.com/rofiiiiah/status/2067954936265298234
	<i>"Tawakal tidak sama dengan berdiam diri saja tanpa usaha... Tidaklah termasuk tawakal bila kita tidur di bawah pohon..."</i>	Trust in God accompanied by personal effort rather than passive resignation.	https://www.threads.com/@deden_ruhia/post/DZQ6YXNknQQ
Remembrance of God (Dhikr and Prayer)	<i>"Luruskan niat, tawakkal (ikhtiar; sabar; doa), nikmati proses, hasil serahkan Allah."</i>	Prayer and remembrance of God as spiritual guidance during uncertainty.	https://x.com/_teduhku/status/2069433646419980373
	<i>"...Terus berdoa, berusaha, dan tawakkal sama Allah... Jangan menyerah."</i>	Prayer and spiritual reflection as responses to emotional distress and life challenges.	https://x.com/brutallyst/oopid/status/2069118518214455417

As presented in Table 2, gratitude emerged through narratives describing appreciation for present circumstances despite ongoing personal difficulties. Several users expressed that shifting attention from personal deficiencies toward existing blessings contributed to greater emotional calmness and a more positive outlook on life. These narratives appeared across both Threads and Instagram and were consistently grouped under the category of gratitude. Similarly, acceptance was represented by narratives describing willingness to embrace personal

circumstances without continuously comparing oneself to others. Users frequently expressed acceptance of life's process, recognition of individual limitations, and reduced dependence on external validation. Comparable expressions appeared repeatedly across the analyzed X posts and were classified under the category of acceptance.

Another recurring form of spiritual coping was trust in God. Narratives grouped under this category described surrendering uncertain outcomes to God after making personal efforts. Users frequently described entrusting uncertain outcomes to God while continuing personal effort in facing employment uncertainty, personal challenges, and future concerns. Similar narratives were consistently identified throughout the retrieved X content. The fourth category identified in the collected data was remembrance of God. Narratives within this theme described prayer, remembrance, and religious reflection as everyday practices performed during periods of emotional distress and uncertainty. These expressions frequently portrayed spiritual activities as part of users' responses to difficult life situations and appeared consistently across the analyzed social media content.

Overall, the collected narratives revealed four recurring forms of spiritual coping: gratitude, acceptance, trust in God, and remembrance of God. Although expressed through different digital platforms and individual experiences, these coping practices repeatedly appeared throughout the dataset and represent the principal forms of spiritual responses identified in this study.

Discussion

While the findings above demonstrate how existential anxiety is expressed through digital platforms, they also reveal that social media functions not only as a space for expressing distress but also as a medium through which individuals seek meaning, comfort, and spiritual support. Several digital narratives identified in this study indicate attempts to cope with anxiety through religious practices such as prayer, gratitude, self-reflection, and trust in God. Recent studies have shown that spirituality and meaning-centered coping contribute significantly to psychological well-being and resilience when individuals face existential uncertainty and emotional distress. David and Truta found that meaning in life and internal psychological resources play an important role in reducing existential anxiety and promoting well-being.³¹ Likewise, other studies demonstrated that

³¹ David and Truța, "Well-Being and Internal Resources during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Relation to Meaning in Life and Existential Anxiety," 1–11.

meaning-centered spiritual interventions positively affect psychological health, spirituality, and quality of life among individuals experiencing existential distress.³² Furthermore, research on religious and spiritual coping during vulnerable situations indicates that spiritual resources can strengthen hope, emotional regulation, and subjective well-being in the face of uncertainty.³³ Therefore, the relevance of Buya Hamka's modern Sufism in this study is not presented merely as a normative religious doctrine, but as a spiritual framework whose core values resonate with empirical patterns of coping and meaning-making found in contemporary digital narratives. In this sense, Hamka's concepts can be understood as spiritual resources that potentially assist individuals in responding to experiences of meaninglessness, alienation, and uncertainty in the digital era.

Happiness and Religion: A Path Toward Meaning in Life

The collected social media narratives reveal that one of the dominant manifestations of existential anxiety in contemporary digital spaces is the loss of meaning in life. Users frequently expressed emotional emptiness, dissatisfaction with everyday routines, persistent social comparison, and uncertainty regarding personal purpose. At the same time, many narratives also described spiritual practices such as gratitude, prayer, remembrance of God, and trust in God as ways of responding to these experiences. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that social media increasingly functions as a space for escapism and external validation. Features such as instant notifications and continuous connectivity encourage excessive engagement with digital platforms, often reinforcing emotional dependency while reducing opportunities for self-reflection.³⁴ This tendency reflects an underlying need to avoid self-awareness that

³² Mimi Sun et al., "Effects of Meaning Therapy on Spirituality, Psychological Health, and Quality of Life in Patients with Cancer: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing* 11, no. 4 (April 2024): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apjon.2024.100388>.

³³ Victor Counted et al., "Hope and Well-Being in Vulnerable Contexts during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Does Religious Coping Matter?," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 70–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2020.1832247>; Graça and Brandão, "Religious/Spiritual Coping, Emotion Regulation, Psychological Well-Being, and Life Satisfaction among University Students."

³⁴ Berhan Akdağ and Cansu Ünsal, "The Mediating Role of Self-Esteem Between Meaning in Life and Social Media Addiction," *ADDICTA: The Turkish Journal on Addictions* 11, no. 1 (March 15, 2024): 99–104, <https://doi.org/10.5152/ADDICTA.2024.23126>.

can intensify existential discomfort.³⁵ Consequently, unresolved existential anxiety may contribute to heightened stress, depression, and diminished self-worth.³⁶

From the perspective of Hamka's modern Sufism, these empirical findings resonate with his understanding that genuine happiness is inseparable from religion.³⁷ For Hamka, religion is not merely a system of rituals but a spiritual orientation that enables individuals to rediscover life's meaning by strengthening their relationship with God.³⁸ Within this framework, gratitude (*shukr*) is understood as a remedy for the soul that nurtures inner tranquility, while supplication (*munājāt*), remembrance of God (*dhikr*), and trust in God (*tawakkal*) represent interconnected spiritual disciplines that cultivate psychological stability amidst life's uncertainties.³⁹ The spiritual coping practices identified in the collected social media narratives exhibit strong conceptual correspondence with the spiritual values articulated in Hamka's modern Sufism. Rather than suggesting that social media users consciously apply Hamka's teachings, these findings indicate that the coping practices documented in digital spaces reflect spiritual values that are philosophically consistent with his conception of Islamic spirituality.

This interpretation is also consistent with broader discussions within existential psychology. Frankl argues that the primary human motivation lies in the search for meaning, suggesting that existential anxiety frequently emerges when individuals fail to construct a meaningful orientation toward life. From this perspective, the expressions of gratitude and remembrance of God identified in the collected social media narratives may be interpreted as attempts to reconstruct existential meaning rather than merely reduce emotional discomfort.⁴⁰ Likewise, Pargament explains that religious beliefs and spiritual practices enable individuals to reinterpret stressful experiences within a transcendent framework, thereby

³⁵ Pelin Kesebir and Tom Pyszczynski, "The Role of Death in Life: Existential Aspects of Human Motivation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Human Motivation* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 43–64, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195399820.013.0004>.

³⁶ David and Truța, "Well-Being and Internal Resources during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Relation to Meaning in Life and Existential Anxiety," 1–11.

³⁷ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, 57.

³⁸ Hamka, 27.

³⁹ Hamka, 266–67.

⁴⁰ Viktor E Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning* (Beacon Press, 2017).

strengthening psychological resilience.⁴¹ Recent empirical research further demonstrates that spiritual mindfulness, which shares important characteristics with Hamka's emphasis on gratitude (*shukr*) and remembrance of God (*dhikr*), contributes positively to psychological resilience while reducing dependence on external digital validation.⁴² Furthermore, religious communities function as important social safety nets capable of restoring existential meaning through shared spiritual experiences and communal support.⁴³

The contemporary relevance of Hamka's perspective has also been acknowledged by contemporary Indonesian Muslim scholars. Ahmad Najib Burhani argues that *Tasawuf Modern* remains highly relevant for younger generations because it successfully integrates rational reflection with spiritual awareness within the context of modern life.⁴⁴ Likewise, Salihin regards Hamka's Sufism as an important spiritual resource for responding to the materialistic tendencies that increasingly characterize contemporary society.⁴⁵ These scholarly perspectives reinforce the interpretation that Hamka's modern Sufism provides a relevant philosophical framework for understanding the forms of spiritual coping identified in this study, rather than functioning merely as a normative religious prescription. Hamka says: "*Untuk mencapai bahagia menurut agama, jikalau telah mencapai empat perkara yaitu, i'tiqād yang bersih, yakin, iman, dan agama.*"⁴⁶

Within Hamka's philosophical framework, these four elements constitute the foundation of authentic happiness. A purified *I'tiqad* (creed) provides moral orientation amidst the fragmented values of digital culture; *yaqin* (certainty of faith) strengthens confidence in God's wisdom despite uncertainty; *iman* (faith),

⁴¹ Allan M. Josephson, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred*, *Journal of Psychiatric Practice*, vol. 15 (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.pra.0000348370.26795.a0>.

⁴² Jingjin Li, Karen Anne Cochrane, and Gilly Leshed, "Beyond Meditation: Everyday Mindfulness and Technology Use Among Experienced Practitioners," in *CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems Extended Abstracts*, vol. 1 (New York, NY, USA: ACM, 2022), 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3491101.3519820>.

⁴³ Hidayatul Azizah Gazali and Sefri Auliya, "Social Relations in Minangkabau Society from Hamka's Perspective in Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Sophist : Jurnal Sosial Politik Kajian Islam Dan Tafsir* 6, no. 1 (2024): 20–50, <https://doi.org/10.20414/sophist.v6i1.114>.

⁴⁴ Tia Agnes Astuti, "Tasawuf Modern Karya Buya Hamka Rekomendasi Bacaan Buat Anak Muda," *detikhot*, 2026, <https://hot.detik.com/book/d-6638788/tasawuf-modern-karya-buya-hamka-rekomendasi-bacaan-buat-anak-muda>.

⁴⁵ Salihin, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Hamka Dan Relevansinya Bagi Kehidupan Modern" (Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Bengkulu, 2016), 179–90.

⁴⁶ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, 57–58.

expressed through thought, speech, and action, nurtures gratitude and moral responsibility; while religion functions as a comprehensive way of life that transforms everyday activities, including digital engagement, into spiritually meaningful practices.

Overcoming Digital Isolation through Spiritual Contentment

The collected social media narratives reveal that digital isolation constitutes one of the dominant manifestations of existential anxiety in contemporary digital life. Users frequently described loneliness, emotional distance, the absence of trusted interpersonal relationships, and feelings of disconnection despite remaining continuously connected through digital platforms. Alongside these experiences, other narratives expressed attitudes of acceptance, contentment, and freedom from excessive social comparison, indicating that some individuals employ spiritual coping practices to respond to the psychological pressures of digital environments. These findings suggest that existential anxiety in digital spaces is shaped not only by technological connectivity but also by the weakening of meaningful interpersonal relationships and the increasing tendency to evaluate oneself through external validation.

These findings are consistent with broader discussions concerning the social consequences of digital culture. Although digital technology promises greater connectivity, it often produces a paradoxical form of isolation by replacing meaningful face-to-face relationships with superficial online interactions.⁴⁷ Similarly, Juan José Mora Galeote explains that digital society encourages continuous self-performance, compelling individuals to construct idealized identities in pursuit of recognition and approval. Such pressure frequently results in emotional exhaustion and a diminished sense of authentic selfhood.⁴⁸ Maroje Visic further characterizes contemporary interpersonal relationships as liquid relationships, which are easily established yet equally fragile, reducing

⁴⁷ Md. Memon Ali, Mahbuba Akter Shanta, and Shihab Uddin Suman, "Hyper-Connectivity and Loneliness: A Thematic Analysis of Digital Relationships in the Modern World," *Contemporary Family Therapy*, March 4, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-026-09779-x>.

⁴⁸ Juan José Mora Galeote, "From the Aesthetics of Existence to the Supernormal Aesthetics of Existence: The Birth of a Projected-Digital Self," *Revista de Humanidades*, no. 56 (September 1, 2025): 149–78, <https://doi.org/10.5944/rdh.56.2025.43851>; Fathul Qorib and Mert Gürer, "Digital Identity Formation Among Generation Z in Turkey: A Mixed-Methods Study in Manuel Castells' Network Society," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 42, no. 1 (March 31, 2026): 203–21, <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2026-4201-12>.

opportunities for deep emotional attachment.⁴⁹ Collectively, these perspectives provide a broader context for understanding why digital environments frequently become spaces in which loneliness, alienation, and social comparison intensify.⁵⁰

From the perspective of Hamka's modern Sufism, these empirical findings may be interpreted through the concept of *qanā'ah*, which emphasizes contentment while continuing to strive responsibly. For Hamka, *qanā'ah* should not be understood as passive resignation or withdrawal from worldly affairs. Rather, it represents a spiritual attitude that enables individuals to appreciate what they possess without becoming enslaved by endless desires or excessive comparison with others.⁵¹ Hamka explains that *qanā'ah* encompasses several interconnected dimensions, including sincerely accepting one's circumstances, seeking lawful sustenance, exerting continuous effort, remaining patient with God's provision, placing trust in Him, and avoiding excessive attachment to worldly attractions.⁵² Viewed alongside the empirical findings, the expressions of acceptance and freedom from excessive comparison identified in the collected social media narratives closely correspond to these principles. Rather than indicating that users consciously practice Hamka's teachings, these findings suggest that similar spiritual attitudes emerge as meaningful responses to experiences of loneliness, social comparison, and digital alienation.

This interpretation is further supported by contemporary scholarship on Hamka's thought. Recent evidence suggests that Sufi spiritual practices contribute to psychological well-being, resilience, and meaning-making in contemporary society.⁵³ Likewise, Zabidi et al. and Mitha argue that *Tasawuf Modern* remains particularly relevant for contemporary generations because it integrates rational reflection with spiritual awareness, allowing individuals to navigate modern life

⁴⁹ Maroje Visic, "Bauman's Metaphors in Motion: The Tourist Metaphor and Digital Nomadism," *Sociologija* 67, no. 3 (2025): 362–77, <https://doi.org/10.2298/SOC2503362V>.

⁵⁰ Robert B. Markum and Kentaro Toyama, "Digital Technology, Meditative and Contemplative Practices, and Transcendent Experiences," in *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (New York, NY, USA: ACM, 2020), 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376356>.

⁵¹ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, 266–67.

⁵² Hamka, 267.

⁵³ Merve Cetinkaya and Jo Billings, "Systematic Review of the Relationship between Islamic-Sufi Spirituality and Practice and Mental Well-Being," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 26, no. 10 (November 26, 2023): 1065–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2023.2256265>.

without losing their existential orientation.⁵⁴ Taken together, these perspectives reinforce the philosophical relevance of Hamka's concept of *qanā'ah* for interpreting the attitudes of acceptance and contentment identified in this study.⁵⁵

Ultimately, *qanā'ah* may be understood not as a call to withdraw from digital society but as a spiritual orientation that reshapes one's relationship with it. Within Hamka's philosophical framework, contentment encourages individuals to reduce excessive dependence on external validation, appreciate their own circumstances, and cultivate more authentic relationships with themselves, others, and God.⁵⁶

Responding to Future Uncertainty through Trust in God

The collected social media narratives reveal that uncertainty about the future constitutes another dominant manifestation of existential anxiety in contemporary digital life. Users frequently expressed concerns regarding employment opportunities, financial stability, personal achievement, family expectations, failure, and death. These narratives illustrate that future-oriented anxiety extends beyond economic insecurity, encompassing broader existential concerns about life's direction, purpose, and ultimate meaning. At the same time, the collected data also show that many individuals respond to these uncertainties through spiritual coping practices, particularly by entrusting future outcomes to God while continuing their personal efforts. These findings suggest that religious coping has become one of the ways individuals seek psychological stability amidst the uncertainty generated by contemporary digital society.

These findings are consistent with broader discussions within existential philosophy and psychology. Human beings are fundamentally motivated by the search for meaning, and existential anxiety emerges when individuals are unable to establish a meaningful orientation toward the future.⁵⁷ Modern society has been widely criticized for encouraging individuals to pursue security through material success and social recognition, often at the expense of authentic selfhood. Within

⁵⁴ Ahmad Fakhurrazi Bin Mohammed Zabidi et al., "Thematic Analysis of the Need for Sufism Education: Muslim Entrepreneurs' Perspectives in Achieving a Prosperous Life," *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, December 31, 2025, 237–54, <https://doi.org/10.7187/GJATSI122025-16>; Karim Mitha, "Sufism and Healing," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 21, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 194–205, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2018.1464423>.

⁵⁵ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, 297.

⁵⁶ Hamka, 279.

⁵⁷ Sonah Kho, "Waiting Amidst Uncertainty: A Humanistic-Existential Approach to Anxiety," *The Journal of Humanistic Counseling* 65, no. 1 (April 19, 2026): 2–10, <https://doi.org/10.1002/johc.70024>.

digital environments, these pressures are intensified by constant exposure to idealized representations of achievement, productivity, and success, encouraging individuals to evaluate themselves according to unrealistic social standards.⁵⁸ Achievement-oriented behaviour has also been interpreted as a symbolic attempt to overcome the deeper fear of mortality.⁵⁹ Together, these perspectives help explain why uncertainty concerning employment, social status, personal success, and death repeatedly appeared throughout the collected social media narratives.

From the perspective of Hamka's modern Sufism, these empirical findings may be interpreted through the concept of *tawakkal*, which emphasizes wholehearted trust in God after sincere personal effort. For Hamka, *tawakkal* should not be understood as passive resignation or withdrawal from responsibility. Rather, it represents a spiritual attitude in which individuals strive to the best of their abilities while recognizing that the outcome remains within God's wisdom.⁶⁰ Such an understanding encourages individuals to distinguish between responsibilities that remain within human control and outcomes that ultimately lie beyond it. Viewed alongside the empirical findings, the expressions of trust in God identified in the collected social media narratives closely correspond to Hamka's understanding of *tawakkal*. Rather than indicating that users consciously practice Hamka's teachings, these findings suggest that similar spiritual attitudes emerge as meaningful responses to uncertainty, fear of failure, and concerns regarding the future.

This interpretation is also supported by contemporary scholarship. Fakhruddin Faiz argues that Hamka's modern Sufism continues to provide an important spiritual resource for individuals who experience psychological exhaustion and lose their existential orientation amidst materialistic modern life.⁶¹ Likewise, Wasitaatmadja emphasizes that Hamka successfully reinterprets Sufism as an active spiritual path in which devotion to God does not require withdrawal from worldly responsibilities but instead encourages ethical engagement with

⁵⁸ Asa Ismia Bunga Aisyahrani et al., "A Concept of Materialism and Well-Being," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* 9, no. 1 (March 1, 2020): 62, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i1.20424>.

⁵⁹ Chengli Huang and Chao Hu, "The Terror Management and Sorrow Management of Death Consciousness," *Acta Psychologica Sinica* 55, no. 2 (2023): 318, <https://doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1041.2023.00318>.

⁶⁰ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, 285–86.

⁶¹ MJS Channel, *Ngaji Filsafat 477: Buya Hamka - Tasawuf Modern*, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erx0qIGgu8&t=1052s>.

everyday life.⁶² From Hamka's philosophical perspective, trust in God may be understood not as a rejection of planning or personal responsibility but as a spiritual orientation that reshapes individuals' responses to uncertainty. Within this framework, *tawakkal* encourages individuals to continue striving while accepting that not every outcome can be controlled.

Spiritual Awareness and Emotional Regulation

The collected social media narratives indicate that many individuals respond to existential anxiety through practices of prayer, remembrance of God, and spiritual reflection. These expressions frequently appeared alongside narratives describing uncertainty, emotional exhaustion, loneliness, and dissatisfaction with everyday life. Rather than merely expressing religious identity, users described these practices as ways of attaining inner calmness, reducing emotional distress, and maintaining psychological balance amidst the pressures of contemporary digital life. These findings suggest that spiritual awareness constitutes an important dimension of existential coping in digital environments, complementing other forms of spiritual responses such as gratitude, contentment, and trust in God.

These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the relationship between spirituality and emotional well-being. Spiritual coping enables individuals to reinterpret stressful experiences within a transcendent framework, allowing them to perceive adversity as part of a broader spiritual journey rather than as meaningless suffering. Likewise, recent empirical studies demonstrate that spiritual mindfulness contributes positively to emotional regulation, psychological resilience, and subjective well-being while reducing dependence on external validation and excessive emotional reactivity. These perspectives suggest that spiritual practices not only function as religious rituals but also facilitate adaptive psychological responses to existential challenges.

From the perspective of Hamka's modern Sufism, these empirical findings may be interpreted through the practices of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) and *munājāt* (supplication).⁶³ For Hamka, remembrance of God is not merely the repetitive recitation of sacred words but a continuous cultivation of spiritual

⁶² Rahmatullah Al-Barawi, "Buya Hamka, Penyelamat Tasawuf Dari Pemaknaan Yang Menyimpang," *ibtimes.id*, 2024, <https://ibtimes.id/buya-hamka-penyelamat-tasawuf-dari-pemaknaan-yang-menyimpang/>.

⁶³ Mansur Afifi et al., "Dzikr and Meditation in Tashawwuf: Spiritual Disciplines, Psychological Benefits, and Their Contemporary Relevance," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 49, no. 2 (December 10, 2025): 400–422, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v49i2.1485>.

awareness that strengthens one's relationship with God and nurtures inner tranquility.⁶⁴ Prayer represents an intimate dialogue between the individual and the Creator through which anxiety, fear, and uncertainty are transformed into hope and spiritual confidence. Viewed alongside the empirical findings, the expressions of prayer and remembrance identified in the collected social media narratives closely correspond to Hamka's understanding of Islamic spirituality.⁶⁵ Rather than indicating that users consciously practice Hamka's teachings, these findings suggest that similar spiritual attitudes emerge as meaningful responses to emotional distress and existential uncertainty.

This interpretation is further reinforced by contemporary scholarship. Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury argues that Hamka successfully reformulated Sufism as a practical spirituality that remains fully compatible with active participation in modern social life.⁶⁶ In addition, Bekzhan A Azhimov observes that *Tasawuf Modern* continues to resonate with contemporary society because it integrates spiritual awareness with rational engagement in addressing the challenges of modernity.⁶⁷ Accordingly, spiritual awareness may be understood not simply as a devotional activity but as a way of cultivating emotional balance and existential resilience. Within Hamka's philosophical framework, prayer and remembrance of God encourage individuals to maintain awareness of the Divine amidst uncertainty, thereby reducing excessive dependence on external validation and fostering a more authentic orientation toward life.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, 249.

⁶⁵ Ade Jamarudin, Asmal May, and Ofa Ch Pudir, "The Prospect of Human in the Exegetical Work: A Study of Buya Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Ulumuna* 23, no. 1 (June 28, 2019): 24–47, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v23i1.360>.

⁶⁶ Chowdury, "SUFISM IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS: Spirituality, Subjectivity, and the Limits of Modern Rationality"; Syafwan Rozi, Nurlizam, and M. Zubir, "The Reception of Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar within Social Religious Issues in the Malay World," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 25, no. 2 (August 30, 2024): 247–72, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i2.5406>.

⁶⁷ Bekzhan A Azhimov et al., "Researching a New Religious Phenomenon of the Central Asia: Digital Sufism," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 46, no. 1 (January 1, 2026): 90–110, <https://doi.org/10.55221/2693-2229.2710>; Robingatun, Fidias Astuti, and Abdul Wasik, "Sufism Revisited: A Comprehensive Analysis of Emha Ainun Najib's Philosophical Contributions to Modern Society," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 14, no. 1 (June 14, 2024): 352–71, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.141.21>.

⁶⁸ Aamer Aldbyani, "Islamic Mindfulness: A Response to Mindfulness and Religion," *Mindfulness* 17, no. 3 (March 16, 2026): 972–77, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-026-02759-0>; Syefriyeni Syefriyeni and Dindin Nasrudin, "The Construction of Environmental Philosophy Rooted in Religiosity," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 2 (August 25, 2023): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.8442>.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that existential anxiety in the digital era is primarily manifested through the loss of meaning in life, digital isolation, and uncertainty about the future. The analysis of social media narratives also reveals that individuals respond to these experiences through various forms of spiritual coping, including gratitude, acceptance, trust in God, and remembrance of God. Interpreted through Buya Hamka's *Tasawuf Modern*, these coping practices exhibit substantial conceptual correspondence with the values of *shukr*, *qanā'ah*, *tawakkal*, and *dhikr*. Rather than suggesting that individuals consciously apply Hamka's teachings, the findings indicate that his modern Sufism provides a relevant philosophical and spiritual framework for understanding how Islamic spirituality may contribute to meaning-making and existential resilience in contemporary digital life.

This study is limited by its reliance on publicly available social media narratives and its interpretive qualitative design, which does not examine the causal effectiveness of Hamka's teachings. Future research may employ ethnographic approaches or mixed-methods designs to explore how individuals internalize these spiritual values in everyday life and to further investigate the relationship between Islamic spirituality and existential well-being in the digital era.

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