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Reconstructing Qana'ah in HAMKA's Modern Sufism: An Ethical-Spiritual Framework for Desire Regulation, Moderation, and Social Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

This study examines HAMKA's concept of *qana'ah* within his formulation of modern Sufism and reconstructs its significance as an ethical-spiritual framework for navigating contemporary life. While previous scholarship has addressed HAMKA's moral thought and critique of materialism, *qana'ah* has rarely been examined as an integrated, multidimensional concept linking inner spirituality, desire regulation, ethical moderation, and social engagement. Methodologically, this study relies on qualitative textual and conceptual analysis centered on HAMKA's Tasawuf Modern as the primary text. Secondary literature encompassing academic monographs, peer-reviewed articles, and classical comparative Islamic ethics was purposively selected based on their thematic focus on modern Sufism, Islamic economic ethics, and psychological well-being. The findings reveal that HAMKA's formulation of *qana'ah* comprises four interconnected dimensions: spiritual contentment, regulation of desire, ethical moderation, and social responsibility, which systematically transition from inner cultivation to active worldly conduct. Rather than advocating ascetic withdrawal or economic fatalism, HAMKA defines *qana'ah* as a dynamic state of spiritual independence that curbs excessive materialism while fostering social duty. Theoretically, this study clarifies the conceptual links between *qana'ah* and inner psychological well-being, demonstrating how spiritual equilibrium functions conceptually to mitigate modern existential anxiety and consumerism. Because these insights are derived from textual and philosophical reconstruction rather than empirical measurement, their psychological and behavioral effects are offered as theoretical implications warranting future empirical verification. This research contributes to HAMKA scholarship by offering a distinct conceptual framework that positions *qana'ah* not as passive surrender, but as an active, socially responsible ethic of modern Sufism.

Introduction

HAMKA was an influential Islamic thinker whose works contributed significantly to the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia. His intellectual legacy encompasses Qur'anic interpretation, Islamic ethics, literature, and modern Sufism, with a consistent emphasis on spirituality, moral discipline, and the balance between worldly and spiritual life (Aliman et al., 2022; Anwar, 2013; Hutama et al., 2021). One important concept in HAMKA's ethical and spiritual thought is *qana'ah*. In his understanding, *qana'ah* is not merely passive acceptance of circumstances but a spiritual disposition that enables individuals to appreciate God's provision, regulate their desires, and maintain inner stability while continuing to engage actively in worldly life (Hamka, 2016; Hutama et al., 2021).

The concept of *qana'ah* is closely connected to HAMKA's broader conception of modern Sufism. Rather than encouraging withdrawal from worldly affairs, HAMKA develops a form of Sufism that integrates spiritual development with active participation in social and economic life. Modern Sufism, in this sense, emphasizes balance between worldly interests and the hereafter while maintaining spiritual independence from material possessions (Aliman et al., 2022; Hutama et al., 2021). This orientation makes *qana'ah* particularly significant for understanding how HAMKA responds to the challenges of modernity and materialism.

The relevance of *qana'ah* becomes increasingly apparent in contemporary consumer culture. Consumption is closely related to religion because religious beliefs can function as a worldview that shapes attitudes, values, lifestyles, and patterns of consumption. In the Islamic context, faith provides normative principles that influence how individuals understand material needs and pursue satisfaction. Material consumption is therefore not separated from spiritual considerations, because Islamic teachings encourage believers to pursue material well-being while maintaining ethical and spiritual objectives (Frastiawan Amir Sup et al., 2026). From this perspective, *qana'ah* can provide an internal ethical orientation for moderating excessive consumption and preventing material possessions from becoming the primary measure of happiness.

Derived from Islamic teachings, *qana'ah* can function as a spiritual and ethical response to materialism by encouraging individuals to distinguish between legitimate needs and excessive desires. HAMKA's conception emphasizes that happiness cannot be reduced to the accumulation of wealth or possessions. Instead, inner contentment is related to gratitude, spiritual dependence on God, and the ability to control desire (Hamka, 2016). Recent scholarship on HAMKA similarly indicates that his Sufi thought emphasizes moral formation and the cultivation of spiritual qualities as a response to contemporary moral challenges (Aliman et al., 2022; Ihsan et al., 2026).

The significance of *qana'ah* also extends to contemporary discussions of ethical consumption and sustainability. Islamic ethical consumption emphasizes moderation, responsible use of resources, and avoidance of excessive consumption. Recent scholarship identifies *qana'ah* alongside principles such as moderation and the avoidance of *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* as important ethical responses to contemporary consumerism, including consumer behavior shaped by digital environments (Anwar, 2025). Similarly, research on Islamic ethical consumption argues that a frugal lifestyle in Islam is grounded not merely in economic restraint but in faith, moral responsibility, social balance, and concern for well-

being in this world and the hereafter. Within this context, HAMKA's concept of *qana'ah* offers a significant framework for examining the relationship between spirituality, desire, consumption, and ethical living. However, *qana'ah* should not be interpreted simply as an instruction to possess less. Its deeper function lies in transforming the individual's relationship with possessions and desires. A person may possess material resources while maintaining *qana'ah* when those resources do not become the ultimate source of identity and happiness. Conversely, material limitation alone does not necessarily constitute *qana'ah* if an individual remains dominated by dissatisfaction and uncontrolled desire (Hamka, 2016; Hutama et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study examines HAMKA's concept of qana'ah as an ethical-spiritual framework within his modern Sufi thought, specifically analyzing how it functions as spiritual contentment, desire regulation, ethical moderation, and social responsibility. Existing scholarship has extensively highlighted modern Sufism as an antidote to contemporary dilemmas; for instance, Masitho and Fauziyah (2025) position contemporary Sufism as a restorative response to the dehumanization, identity crises, and diminished well-being caused by modern materialism. Focusing directly on HAMKA, Amir and Maksum (2021) demonstrate that Tasawuf Modern offers a grounded, progressive response to spiritual aridity by redefining asceticism not as passive isolation, but as dynamic engagement for personal and social happiness. Furthermore, Ihsan et al. (2026) explore HAMKA's tazkiyatun nafs as a holistic solution to modern psychological insecurity, though their analysis positions qana'ah merely as an auxiliary element alongside ikhlas and tawakkal within the broader stages of soul purification.

Despite these valuable contributions, previous studies have generally focused on the overarching characteristics of HAMKA's Sufism, moral education, or broad spiritual-therapeutic functions (Aliman et al., 2022; Fahru, 2020; Hutama et al., 2021). Qana'ah has not yet been systematically reconstructed as an integrated, multidimensional framework that organically connects inner spiritual contentment with desire regulation, ethical moderation, and active social responsibility. Moreover, prevailing discussions on Islamic consumption tend to treat qana'ah as a generic normative virtue rather than unpacking how it uniquely emerges from HAMKA's distinct synthesis of classical Sufi ethics and modern social life. This study addresses that gap by reconstructing these four interrelated dimensions through textual analysis of Tasawuf Modern, demonstrating the continuing conceptual relevance of HAMKA's thought for contemporary critiques of materialism and consumer culture.

This study addresses that gap by reconstructing these four interrelated dimensions. This gap is significant because understanding *qana'ah* merely as "contentment" may obscure its broader function within HAMKA's thought. For HAMKA, contentment does not necessarily require the rejection of wealth, economic activity, or worldly achievement. Rather, the central issue is the individual's spiritual relationship with these things. Consequently, *qana'ah* can be interpreted not simply as a state of being satisfied with what one possesses but as a mechanism for regulating desire, maintaining spiritual independence, establishing ethical limits on consumption, and developing responsibility toward others (Hamka, 2016; Ihsan et al., 2026). Such a reconstruction provides a more

comprehensive understanding of why *qana'ah* remains relevant to contemporary discussions of materialism and ethical consumption.

Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in its systematic reconstruction of HAMKA's concept of *qana'ah* as a multidimensional ethical-spiritual framework. Rather than treating *qana'ah* solely as an individual virtue or a form of resistance to materialism, this study identifies its interconnected dimensions and traces their conceptual relationship: spiritual contentment provides the foundation for regulating desire; regulated desire produces ethical moderation; and ethical moderation develops into social responsibility. This framework places *qana'ah* within HAMKA's broader project of modern Sufism, in which spiritual purification is integrated with active participation in worldly and social life (Aliman et al., 2022; Fahru, 2020; Hutama et al., 2021). The study therefore contributes to the contemporary discussion of Islamic ethics by demonstrating how a classical Islamic virtue can be reconstructed as an active ethical framework for negotiating material needs, personal desires, consumption, and social responsibility.

Based on this research gap and theoretical orientation, this study aims to examine how HAMKA conceptualizes *qana'ah* and how the concept functions within his ethical and spiritual thought. More specifically, the study addresses two questions: (1) What are the principal dimensions of *qana'ah* in HAMKA's thought? and (2) How are these dimensions related to HAMKA's understanding of spirituality, human desire, ethical moderation, and social responsibility? By addressing these questions through qualitative textual analysis, the study seeks to clarify the conceptual structure of *qana'ah* in HAMKA's modern Sufism and to demonstrate its relevance to contemporary discussions of materialism and ethical living

Method

This study employs a qualitative library research approach to examine HAMKA's concept of *qana'ah* and its ethical and spiritual significance. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on interpreting meanings, concepts, and ideas contained in textual sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary analysis focuses on HAMKA's *Tasawuf Modern*, which discusses spirituality, ethics, happiness, wealth, and the relationship between human beings and God (Hamka, 2016).

The data consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary source is HAMKA's *Tasawuf Modern*, particularly passages concerning *qana'ah*, gratitude, wealth, happiness, human desires, and spiritual life (Hamka, 2016). Secondary sources include scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles addressing HAMKA's thought, modern Sufism, Islamic ethics, and *qana'ah*. These sources provide theoretical and contextual support for interpreting HAMKA's ideas (Aliman et al., 2022; Hutama et al., 2021).

Data were collected through document analysis by identifying, recording, and organizing relevant passages from the primary source. Particular attention was given to discussions of *qana'ah* in relation to material wealth, gratitude, happiness, self-control, and dependence on God. Relevant secondary literature was also examined to contextualize and support the interpretation of the primary data.

The data were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis following the stages of identifying relevant textual units, coding recurring concepts, grouping codes into themes,

and interpreting their relationships (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis focused on themes such as contentment, gratitude, moderation of desire, spiritual dependence, ethical conduct, and happiness. These themes were subsequently interpreted within HAMKA's broader ethical and spiritual framework to reconstruct the meaning and significance of *qana'ah* in his thought.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of HAMKA's major writings, particularly *Tasawuf Modern*, *Falsafah Hidup*, *Renungan Tasawuf*, and relevant discussions in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, reveals that *qana'ah* occupies an important position in his ethical and spiritual thought. The analysis identifies four interconnected dimensions of *qana'ah*: **spiritual contentment, regulation of desire, ethical moderation, and social responsibility**. These dimensions indicate that HAMKA does not conceptualize *qana'ah* as passive acceptance of one's circumstances. Rather, it functions as an active spiritual-ethical disposition through which individuals regulate their relationship with God, material possessions, personal desires, and society (Hamka, 2016; Aliman et al., 2022).

The findings further demonstrate that the four dimensions are not independent. They form a conceptual sequence in which spiritual contentment provides the foundation for regulating desire; regulated desire produces ethical moderation; and ethical moderation extends into social responsibility. Accordingly, *qana'ah* can be understood as an integrative concept within HAMKA's modern Sufism. This interpretation is consistent with scholarship describing HAMKA's modern Sufism as an attempt to integrate spiritual values with active engagement in worldly life rather than separating religious devotion from social reality (Fahru, 2020; Hutama et al., 2021).

Qana'ah as Spiritual Contentment

The first finding concerns the spiritual foundation of *qana'ah*. HAMKA places inner contentment, gratitude, and dependence upon God at the center of a meaningful Islamic life. In *Tasawuf Modern*, he emphasizes that genuine happiness cannot be determined solely by material possessions. Human beings may pursue wealth and worldly success, but these achievements do not automatically produce inner tranquility. Happiness is instead connected to the condition of the heart and its relationship with God (Hamka, 2016). This orientation reflects HAMKA's broader attempt to formulate a modern Sufism in which spiritual fulfillment remains central while worldly activity is not rejected (Fahru, 2020; Hutama et al., 2021).

From the textual analysis, *qana'ah* therefore represents a state in which individuals recognize the sufficiency of God's provision while continuing to fulfill their legitimate worldly responsibilities. Contentment does not mean that individuals cease striving for improvement. Rather, it prevents worldly achievement from becoming the ultimate source of meaning and happiness. In this sense, *qana'ah* provides an internal form of spiritual security that is distinct from economic possession.

Recent scholarship specifically examining HAMKA's thought supports this interpretation. Ihsan et al. (2026) explain that HAMKA's concept of *qana'ah* emphasizes contentment with divine provision while maintaining a balance between worldly endeavor and spiritual fulfillment. Their study further relates *qana'ah* to the cultivation of sincerity, patience, trust in God, and the control of greed and excessive ambition. Thus, *qana'ah* can be understood as a form of "wealth of the heart," in which spiritual sufficiency becomes more important than unlimited material accumulation (Ihsan et al., 2026).

This finding is consistent with the broader orientation of HAMKA's modern Sufism. Fahru (2020) describes HAMKA's Sufism as a moderate approach that seeks to integrate worldly interests and the hereafter. In this framework, worldly life is not rejected but becomes a medium through which

individuals can pursue spiritual development. The analysis consequently positions *qana'ah* as an inner orientation rather than merely an external lifestyle.

A person can possess substantial material resources while maintaining *qana'ah* if those resources do not control the person's desires or spiritual priorities. Conversely, limited material possessions do not necessarily indicate *qana'ah* if the individual remains dominated by envy, dissatisfaction, or an uncontrolled desire for more. Thus, the first dimension of *qana'ah* is fundamentally spiritual: it concerns the ability to locate ultimate dependence in God rather than in possessions, social status, or economic achievement (Hamka, 2016; Ihsan et al., 2026).

Qana'ah as Regulation of Human Desire

The second finding shows that *qana'ah* functions as a mechanism for regulating human desire. HAMKA does not treat wealth, work, or economic activity as inherently contrary to spirituality. His concern is excessive attachment to material possessions and the transformation of material success into the primary measure of human worth. In this respect, *qana'ah* establishes an ethical distinction between **legitimate need and excessive desire**. Legitimate needs may be pursued through work and productive activity, whereas excessive desire emerges when consumption is no longer directed toward genuine needs but toward status, comparison, pleasure, or social recognition (Hamka, 2016).

This distinction is central to HAMKA's modern Sufism. The modern Sufi is not necessarily someone who withdraws from economic and social life. Instead, the modern Sufi participates actively in society while maintaining spiritual independence from material possessions. HAMKA consequently reconstructs Sufi values in a way that enables Muslims to work, build families, pursue education, and participate in economic life without becoming spiritually dependent upon worldly achievement (Fahru, 2020; Hutama et al., 2021).

Recent scholarship reinforces this interpretation. Zulkifli and Rhosyidy (2024), in their study of the *maqāmāt* in HAMKA's *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, demonstrate that HAMKA's modern Sufism incorporates classical Sufi concepts while relating them to contemporary ethical and spiritual life. This supports the interpretation of *qana'ah* as an active spiritual discipline rather than an instruction to withdraw from worldly affairs.

The analysis therefore demonstrates that *qana'ah* is not equivalent to economic passivity. Instead, it regulates the psychological and spiritual orientation behind economic activity. The decisive issue is not whether individuals possess or seek wealth, but whether wealth becomes an object of excessive attachment. In this respect, *qana'ah* operates as an internal mechanism of desire regulation, complementing external ethical rules concerning permissible and excessive consumption.

Qana'ah as Ethical Moderation

The third finding concerns the ethical implications of *qana'ah*. Contentment is translated into concrete moral dispositions, including moderation, simplicity, gratitude, self-restraint, and avoidance of extravagance. The textual evidence indicates that HAMKA's conception of spirituality cannot be separated from everyday ethical conduct. Within this framework, *qana'ah* influences the way individuals evaluate material consumption. Material goods should be assessed according to their legitimate function rather than merely according to their capacity to produce social prestige or symbolic status (Hamka, 2016).

This principle creates an ethical boundary between appropriate consumption and excessive consumption. Such an interpretation is compatible with HAMKA's broader emphasis on moral formation through Sufism. Aliman et al. (2022) demonstrate that HAMKA's Sufi thought is closely associated with moral education and the cultivation of ethical character. Accordingly, spiritual values

are expected to become visible through concrete patterns of conduct rather than remaining purely theoretical or contemplative.

The relationship between *qana'ah* and moderation has become increasingly relevant in contemporary discussions of Islamic consumption ethics. Anwar (2025) argues that *qana'ah*, moderation, and the avoidance of *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* provide important normative principles for responding to contemporary consumerism, particularly within digital environments. Similarly, contemporary research on Islamic ethical consumption emphasizes that responsible consumption is grounded in faith, moral discipline, social balance, and concern for well-being rather than unrestricted individual desire.

The present findings complement this literature by demonstrating that HAMKA provides a specifically Sufi-ethical foundation for such moderation. While the prohibition of extravagance establishes an external normative boundary, *qana'ah* works internally by transforming the individual's orientation toward desire. Thus, ethical moderation becomes more sustainable when it is supported by inner contentment. This distinction is important because ethical consumption in HAMKA's framework is not merely a matter of reducing consumption; it involves cultivating a spiritual disposition that changes how individuals understand possession, sufficiency, and happiness.

Qana'ah as Social Responsibility

The fourth finding demonstrates that HAMKA's *qana'ah* has implications beyond individual spirituality. Contentment can influence social behavior by reducing excessive competition for material status and encouraging humility, generosity, and concern for others. HAMKA's formulation of Sufism emphasizes that spiritual purification must produce ethical behavior. A person's relationship with God is therefore reflected in relationships with other people (Aliman et al., 2022; Hamka, 2016).

The spiritual quality of *qana'ah* becomes socially meaningful when it encourages responsible use of resources, reduces excessive attachment to status, and opens space for generosity and social concern. In this respect, contentment is not an exclusively private psychological condition. It can become a moral disposition that shapes how individuals relate to possessions, other people, and the wider community.

This finding corresponds with recent scholarship on HAMKA's moral thought. Aliman et al. (2022) emphasize the connection between HAMKA's Sufi thought and moral formation, particularly the role of spiritual values in shaping ethical character. The present study extends this discussion by identifying *qana'ah* as one of the mechanisms through which inner spirituality can be translated into social ethics.

The social dimension is also consistent with contemporary research on Islamic ethical consumption. Research on Islamic ethical frugality argues that Islamic consumption differs from purely individualistic forms of frugality because it is grounded in faith, social balance, and concern for well-being in both this world and the hereafter. In this framework, moderation is not simply a strategy for personal economic efficiency but part of a broader ethical orientation toward responsible living. Thus, HAMKA's *qana'ah* should not be reduced to an individual's private psychological condition. It possesses a relational dimension because the regulation of personal desire can influence how individuals treat resources, other people, and society.

Qana'ah and the Structure of HAMKA's Modern Sufism

The four findings can be synthesized into a conceptual structure in which *qana'ah* operates across four levels:

Table 1

Dimensions of Qana'ah in HAMKA's Thought

Dimension	Core Meaning	Primary Function
Spiritual	Contentment with God's provision	Develops gratitude and spiritual dependence
Personal	Regulation of desire	Prevents excessive attachment to possessions
Ethical	Moderation and simplicity	Guides responsible consumption
Social	Responsibility toward others	Encourages generosity and social concern

The table demonstrates that *qana'ah* is an integrated concept rather than an isolated virtue. The spiritual dimension provides the foundation, the personal dimension regulates desire, the ethical dimension translates contentment into conduct, and the social dimension extends that conduct toward broader communal responsibility.

This structure also clarifies HAMKA's understanding of modern Sufism. Rather than defining spirituality through withdrawal from worldly life, HAMKA places spiritual discipline within everyday existence. *Qana'ah* becomes one of the mechanisms that allows individuals to remain engaged with the world without becoming dominated by it.

The final finding concerns the contemporary relevance of *qana'ah*. The analysis indicates that HAMKA's critique of excessive material attachment can be read as an ethical response to consumer culture. Contemporary consumption is increasingly shaped by digital media, social comparison, online advertising, and rapidly changing trends. In such an environment, the distinction between need and desire becomes increasingly difficult to maintain. Recent research supports the relevance of *qana'ah* to this problem. A 2025 quantitative study involving 202 students found a statistically significant negative relationship between *qana'ah* and consumptive behavior, suggesting that stronger *qana'ah* is associated with lower levels of consumptive behavior in the studied population. A separate 2025 phenomenological study found that Islamic values including *qana'ah*, *isrāf*, *maslahah*, *zuhd*, and *tawakkul* can function as mechanisms for controlling consumption among Muslim consumers in the digital era.

These studies do not establish the empirical effect of HAMKA's thought specifically, but they provide contemporary evidence for the broader ethical relationship between contentment and consumption. This distinction is important because the present study is a textual study. Its contribution lies in reconstructing HAMKA's conceptual framework rather than empirically testing behavioral outcomes. Taken together, the results demonstrate that *qana'ah* in HAMKA's thought is best understood as a comprehensive ethical-spiritual orientation. It begins with spiritual contentment, regulates desire, produces moderation, and ultimately supports responsible social behavior.

DISCUSSION

The findings contribute to the understanding of HAMKA's Islamic thought by showing that *qana'ah* functions as a connecting concept between spirituality, ethics, and social life. Rather than representing passive resignation, *qana'ah* is situated within HAMKA's broader project of modern Sufism, which seeks to reconcile spiritual discipline with active engagement in worldly affairs. HAMKA's formulation of Sufism emerged within the broader transformation of Islamic thought in Indonesia, in which religious renewal involved efforts to respond to modern social and intellectual conditions while maintaining Islamic ethical foundations (Azra, 2013a; Federspiel, 2009; Laffan, 2011). Consequently, spiritual contentment in HAMKA's thought should be understood not as

withdrawal from society but as an ethical orientation that regulates how individuals engage with worldly life.

Reinterpreting *Qana'ah* Beyond Passive Acceptance and the Relationship between *Qana'ah* and Materialism

The first important implication concerns the meaning of *qana'ah* itself. In simplistic interpretations, contentment may be understood as accepting one's circumstances without attempting to improve them. The findings indicate that such an interpretation does not adequately represent HAMKA's position. His understanding of Sufism does not require Muslims to abandon productive activity, material responsibility, or social participation. Instead, spiritual purification is integrated with responsible engagement in worldly affairs (Hamka, 2016; Federspiel, 2003; Barton, 2010). This characteristic distinguishes HAMKA's modern Sufism from forms of asceticism that emphasize withdrawal from ordinary social life.

The compatibility between spiritual contentment and worldly activity is also consistent with the broader intellectual orientation of HAMKA. His religious thought developed within an Indonesian Muslim environment experiencing social transformation, modernization, and intellectual reform (Azra, 2014; Barton, 2004; Suryadinata, 1996). In this context, *qana'ah* should not be interpreted as opposition to economic activity or social advancement. Rather, it regulates the individual's orientation toward such activities. A person may work, pursue education, seek economic improvement, and participate actively in society while maintaining independence from excessive attachment to material outcomes (Azra, 2013a; Liddle, 2010).

The significance of this finding lies in its ability to distinguish *qana'ah* from economic passivity. If *qana'ah* were interpreted as rejection of worldly effort, it would conflict with HAMKA's broader conception of modern Sufism, which attempts to integrate spiritual purification with everyday life (Bruinessen, 2003; Federspiel, 2003). Instead, *qana'ah* determines the ethical orientation of worldly activity. Individuals may seek improvement, but their identity and ultimate happiness are not made dependent upon material achievement.

This distinction is particularly important in understanding HAMKA's response to modernity. Modernity expands opportunities for economic activity, education, social mobility, and material consumption, but it can simultaneously intensify competition and attachment to worldly status. HAMKA's response is not a wholesale rejection of modern life. His approach instead seeks to provide spiritual discipline through which Muslims can participate in modern society without allowing material success to become the ultimate measure of human worth (Azra, 2013a; Kersten, 2015; Liddle, 2004). In this sense, *qana'ah* operates as an internal ethical mechanism for negotiating the tension between worldly achievement and spiritual independence.

The second major issue concerns the relationship between *qana'ah* and materialism. The findings demonstrate that HAMKA does not construct a simple opposition between spirituality and material possession. A more precise interpretation distinguishes between **possession** and **attachment**. Material possessions can function as legitimate instruments of human life, whereas excessive attachment can transform them into objects of psychological and spiritual dependence. *Qana'ah* primarily addresses the latter problem.

This interpretation is closely related to discussions of *qana'ah* and materialism in HAMKA's intellectual legacy. Azra (2013b) places *qana'ah* within HAMKA's critique of materialistic orientations, while Noor (2007) interprets the concept as a form of spiritual fulfillment that cannot be reduced to material accumulation. Suryadinata (2010) likewise highlights HAMKA's concern with the relationship between materialism and spiritual contentment. These perspectives support the

interpretation that the central issue is not the possession of material goods itself but the degree to which material goods determine one's conception of happiness and fulfillment.

Accordingly, *qana'ah* does not necessarily require a reduction in the quantity of possessions. Rather, it changes the individual's relationship with possessions. This distinction is theoretically important because it allows *qana'ah* to function within an economically active society. Material resources may be acquired and utilized, but they remain subordinate to spiritual and ethical purposes. HAMKA's emphasis on balance between material success and spiritual fulfillment reflects this orientation (Barton, 2013; Liddle, 2010).

Contemporary Islamic scholarship on consumption provides a useful context for this interpretation. Islamic ethical approaches to materialism generally distinguish legitimate consumption from excessive attachment, waste, and consumption motivated primarily by status or desire. Recent research on Islamic consumption has similarly emphasized the role of religiosity and Qur'anic ethical principles in shaping consumer behavior (Frastiawan Amir Sup et al., 2026). The significance of HAMKA's thought therefore lies in its articulation of a spiritual foundation for such moderation.

HAMKA's contribution is distinctive because he frames the problem of materialism through the language of modern Sufism. Materialism is not merely an economic or behavioral problem but also a problem of the orientation of the heart. When material possessions become the dominant source of happiness, the individual remains vulnerable to dissatisfaction even when material conditions improve. In this sense, *qana'ah* can be interpreted as a form of spiritual resistance to materialism. Its objective is not poverty for its own sake, but freedom from excessive dependence upon material acquisition (Azra, 2013b; Noor, 2007; Suryadinata, 2010).

Qana'ah and the Psychology of Contentment and Digital Consumer Culture

The findings also have implications for understanding the relationship between Islamic spirituality and subjective well-being. HAMKA's emphasis on inner contentment suggests that happiness should not be reduced to material achievement. This perspective corresponds with his broader ethical and Sufi orientation, in which purification of the self and spiritual balance constitute important dimensions of human fulfillment (Hamka, 2000, 2016; Barton, 2010). His conception of spiritual life therefore provides a framework for understanding happiness in terms that extend beyond possession and external success.

The conceptual relationship between spirituality and contentment has also received attention in contemporary Islamic psychological research. Recent research on Islamic spirituality and subjective well-being has examined contentment with life as a mediating dimension, indicating that contentment is increasingly being investigated as a component of Islamic approaches to well-being. Such research does not constitute empirical evidence for HAMKA's theory, but it provides a contemporary context in which his emphasis on inner contentment can be further examined.

The present study therefore contributes at the conceptual level by demonstrating why *qana'ah* occupies an important position within HAMKA's framework. Contentment provides a mechanism through which individuals can prevent their sense of worth from being continuously determined by external achievement. This interpretation is consistent with HAMKA's wider emphasis on spiritual purification and ethical self-discipline (Federspiel, 2003; Bruinessen, 2012). However, methodological caution is necessary. The present study cannot claim that HAMKA's *qana'ah* directly reduces psychological stress or increases subjective well-being because such claims require empirical measurement. What the textual analysis establishes is that HAMKA conceptualizes contentment as an important condition for inner peace and spiritual stability.

This distinction separates HAMKA's normative theory from empirical claims about psychological outcomes. Future empirical studies may examine whether individuals who internalize HAMKA's formulation of *qana'ah* display particular patterns of well-being, consumption, or psychological resilience. Such outcomes, however, should not be presented as findings of the present library research. The contribution of this study lies in reconstructing the philosophical and ethical structure from HAMKA's writings.

The contemporary relevance of this framework becomes particularly visible in digital consumer culture. Digital platforms have transformed consumption by making products, advertising, social comparison, and purchasing opportunities continuously accessible. Within such an environment, the regulation of desire becomes increasingly significant. Islamic ethical perspectives on consumption emphasize that material satisfaction should remain subject to moral and spiritual considerations rather than being driven solely by unrestricted desire (Frastiawan Amir Sup et al., 2026).

This environment gives new significance to HAMKA's understanding of *qana'ah*. If contemporary consumer culture continually produces new objects of desire, then *qana'ah* can function as an internal criterion for distinguishing genuine needs from excessive wants. The concept consequently provides an ethical vocabulary for questioning whether consumption serves a legitimate human purpose or merely reproduces dissatisfaction.

Recent empirical research on *qana'ah* and consumer behavior strengthens the relevance of this conceptual relationship. Research on students has examined the relationship between *qana'ah* and consumptive behavior, while other studies have explored Islamic values in controlling Muslim consumption behavior in digital contexts. These studies should not, however, be conflated with the present textual analysis. Their significance lies in demonstrating that the relationship between contentment and consumption is currently subject to empirical investigation, whereas the present study provides a philosophical and ethical reconstruction of the concept in HAMKA's thought.

A particularly relevant recent study explicitly revisits HAMKA's concept of *qana'ah* in the Society 5.0 context and interprets it as a socio-spiritual response to materialism and technological development. This interpretation is compatible with the present findings. However, the present study develops the discussion further by reconstructing *qana'ah* into four interconnected dimensions: spiritual contentment, regulation of desire, ethical moderation, and social responsibility. Thus, rather than treating *qana'ah* simply as one characteristic of HAMKA's modern Sufism, the study identifies its connective function across several domains of human life.

Qana'ah as a Bridge between Individual Ethics and Social Ethics

A particularly important contribution of the findings is the identification of the social dimension of *qana'ah*. Much discussion of contentment focuses on the individual: whether a person is satisfied with what he or she possesses. HAMKA's broader ethical framework suggests that the implications extend beyond individual satisfaction. Spiritual discipline has consequences for conduct toward other people because the regulation of desire can influence attitudes toward status, possession, competition, and social relations (Azra, 2013a; Barton, 2004).

When individuals become less dependent upon status competition and excessive consumption, their relationships with material resources and other people may also be understood differently. The pursuit of social prestige through material possessions can encourage comparison and competition, whereas moderation can create greater space for generosity and responsible use of resources. This interpretation places *qana'ah* within a broader Islamic ethical framework in which individual moral cultivation is connected to social responsibility.

The social dimension is also consistent with the historical character of HAMKA's Islamic thought. HAMKA's intellectual contribution cannot be separated from his engagement with Indonesian society, Islamic reform, literature, education, and public religious discourse (Azra, 2014; Barton, 2004; Heins, 2017; Nata, 2016). His Sufi orientation therefore should not be understood as an exclusively private spiritual project. The purification of the self is related to the formation of ethical individuals capable of participating constructively in social life (Federspiel, 2003; Bruinessen, 2013).

Thus, *qana'ah* can be conceptualized as a bridge between inner ethics and social ethics. The transformation begins within the individual but does not end there. Spiritual contentment affects patterns of desire; patterns of desire influence consumption; consumption affects relationships with resources and other people; and these relationships contribute to the ethical character of society. This conceptual sequence is consistent with HAMKA's broader understanding of Sufism as a form of spiritual cultivation that should manifest itself in ethical conduct (Hamka, 2016; Barton, 2010).

Another implication concerns sustainability. The relationship between *qana'ah* and sustainability should be formulated carefully. HAMKA's primary concern was spiritual and ethical rather than the development of a modern environmental policy. Nevertheless, his emphasis on moderation and restraint provides a conceptual point of dialogue with contemporary discussions of responsible consumption.

The connection between Islamic ethics and environmental responsibility has increasingly been explored in contemporary Islamic scholarship. Islamic approaches to sustainability emphasize moderation, avoidance of waste, responsible resource use, and the ethical consequences of human consumption (Bruinessen, 2019). Within the specific context of HAMKA's thought, Barton (2012) similarly discusses *qana'ah* in relation to social and environmental virtue, while Azra (2016) provides a practical perspective on communities influenced by HAMKA. These sources allow the environmental relevance of *qana'ah* to be discussed without attributing a fully developed contemporary sustainability theory to HAMKA.

Contemporary Islamic ethical-consumption scholarship likewise connects moderation and avoidance of excessive consumption with broader concerns about sustainable development. Recent studies of Qur'anic consumption ethics have examined the relationship between moderation, avoidance of waste, and contemporary consumerism. The significance for HAMKA's thought is therefore indirect but conceptually relevant. If *qana'ah* encourages individuals to distinguish legitimate needs from excessive wants, it can provide an ethical basis for moderation in consumption. Reduced unnecessary consumption may consequently have implications for resource use and waste.

However, it would be methodologically inappropriate to claim that HAMKA developed a modern environmental theory of sustainability. The more defensible argument is that HAMKA's ethical principle of moderation can be placed in dialogue with contemporary sustainability discourse. This distinction preserves the historical specificity of HAMKA's thought while allowing its conceptual relevance to contemporary problems to be explored.

Relationship with Previous Studies and Theoretical Contribution

The findings extend previous scholarship on HAMKA by shifting the analytical focus from *qana'ah* as an isolated moral virtue toward its function within an integrated ethical-spiritual framework. Earlier scholarship has examined HAMKA's modern Sufism, his reformist orientation, his Qur'anic interpretation, and his engagement with Indonesian Islamic thought (Azra, 2013a; Barton, 2010; Federspiel, 2009; Noor, 2005). These studies provide an important foundation for understanding HAMKA's intellectual project as an attempt to connect Islamic spirituality with the realities of modern Indonesian society.

Studies of HAMKA's Sufism also emphasize that his approach cannot simply be equated with classical asceticism. His modern Sufism involves the reformulation of spiritual practices in a way that remains relevant to contemporary social conditions (Bruinessen, 2003; Federspiel, 2003; Liddle, 2004). The present findings reinforce this interpretation by demonstrating that *qana'ah* itself contains an orientation toward active worldly life rather than withdrawal from it.

The analysis also develops the specific discussion of materialism in HAMKA's thought. Existing interpretations have associated *qana'ah* with spiritual fulfillment, moderation, and resistance to excessive materialism (Azra, 2013b; Noor, 2007; Suryadinata, 2010). The present study builds upon this scholarship by showing that the relationship between *qana'ah* and materialism can be understood through the distinction between possessing material goods and becoming psychologically dependent upon them. This distinction helps explain how *qana'ah* can coexist with productive economic activity.

Recent research has further expanded the study of HAMKA's spiritual thought by examining *maqāmāt* in *Tafsir Al-Azhar* and the relevance of HAMKA's concepts to contemporary spiritual and social challenges (Zulkifli & Rhosyidy, 2024). Other recent research has directly reconsidered *qana'ah* in relation to materialism in the Society 5.0 era. These studies demonstrate the continuing relevance of HAMKA's spiritual vocabulary for contemporary questions concerning material desire and technological change.

The present study contributes to this literature by narrowing the analytical focus specifically to *qana'ah* and reconstructing its internal structure. Rather than treating *qana'ah* merely as one characteristic of HAMKA's modern Sufism, the analysis demonstrates that it performs a connective function between spirituality, personal desire, ethical moderation, and social responsibility. The resulting conceptual structure can be represented as:

No.	Dimension	Core Orientation	Transformative Process	Implication for Human Conduct
1	Spiritual Contentment	Inner satisfaction rooted in spiritual values	Contentment shifts the source of fulfillment from material possession to spiritual meaning	Develops spiritual independence and inner stability
2	Regulation of Desire	Control over excessive wants and attachments	Spiritual contentment regulates the intensity and direction of personal desires	Prevents excessive attachment to wealth, status, and material achievement
3	Ethical Moderation	Balance in pursuing and using worldly resources	Regulated desire leads to moderation in consumption and worldly activity	Encourages responsible use of material possessions and balanced engagement with worldly life
4	Social Responsibility	Awareness of the social consequences of personal choices	Ethical moderation extends individual self-discipline into relationships with others and society	Encourages generosity, responsible resource use, and ethical social participation

This sequence illustrates that *qana'ah* begins as an orientation of the inner self but produces implications for outward conduct. Spiritual contentment regulates desire; regulated desire encourages moderation; and moderation creates the possibility of more responsible relationships with material

resources and society. In this sense, *qana'ah* represents not simply an attitude of acceptance but an ethical mechanism for maintaining equilibrium between spiritual aspirations and worldly life.

The theoretical contribution of the study therefore lies in conceptual reconstruction rather than the proposal of a wholly new doctrine. HAMKA's writings already contain the relevant elements, but their relationship can be clarified by organizing them into an integrated framework. This reconstruction provides a basis for future research that may empirically investigate the relationship between *qana'ah*, consumption behavior, subjective well-being, and social responsibility. Such empirical investigation would complement rather than replace the textual and philosophical analysis undertaken in the present study.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that qana'ah functions within HAMKA's modern Sufism not as passive resignation or an ascetic withdrawal from worldly life, but as an active, multidimensional ethical-spiritual framework. Through textual reconstruction, this concept progresses systematically across four interrelated dimensions: inner spiritual contentment establishes the foundation for desire regulation; regulated desire fosters ethical moderation in material consumption; and moderation culminates in outward social responsibility. For HAMKA, economic pursuit and worldly engagement remain fully legitimate provided that spiritual autonomy from material outcomes is maintained.

The primary theoretical contribution of this study lies in moving beyond prevailing scholarship that treats qana'ah merely as an isolated moral virtue, a therapeutic antidote, or a simple critique of materialism. Instead, this research clarifies how HAMKA systematically bridges the gap between classical Sufi detachment and modern active life, offering an integrative paradigm where inner spiritual transformation directly informs responsible social conduct. By reframing qana'ah as a connective principle, this framework enriches modern Sufi scholarship with an ethical mechanism capable of addressing contemporary consumerism and existential disorientation.

Finally, this study is subject to an important methodological limitation: as a qualitative textual and conceptual analysis, the insights offered regarding psychological equilibrium, desire regulation, and subjective well-being represent conceptual implications rather than empirically verified psychological effects. This research does not measure behavioral shifts, clinical outcomes, or statistically proven mental health impacts. Future studies should therefore pursue empirical investigations—utilizing quantitative psychological scales or field research—to test how these four conceptual dimensions function among contemporary communities navigating modern material and digital pressures.

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