





## Wellness through Sharing: The Trend of Routine Almsgiving in the Mental Health of Modern Muslims

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### Abstract

The rise of digital philanthropy has fundamentally reshaped the practice of almsgiving (sadaqah), integrating it into the modern Muslim lifestyle as a component of holistic wellness. This study investigates the trend of routine, digitally-mediated almsgiving, arguing that it transcends its traditional role as a religious obligation to become a strategic practice for mental and spiritual well-being. Employing a qualitative library research methodology, this article systematically reviews and synthesizes scholarly literature to analyze the psychospiritual dimensions of this transformation. The findings demonstrate that regular giving functions as a potent spiritual coping mechanism, effectively alleviating urban stress and existential anxiety through neuropsychological rewards akin to the 'helper's high.' Furthermore, the convergence of Islamic values, digital platforms, and psychological awareness fosters a novel 'spiritual wellness economy.' Within this paradigm, well-being is redefined: it is no longer anchored in material accumulation but is cultivated through social contribution and a sense of purposeful connectivity. This research concludes that routine digital sadaqah represents an epistemic shift in contemporary Islamic spirituality, effectively merging acts of worship with mental self-care. It signifies the emergence of a reflective wellness practice where true happiness is derived from sharing, offering a critical alternative to the individualistic pressures of digital capitalism. The study bridges discourses on Islamic philanthropy and positive psychology, providing a new framework for understanding faith-based wellness in the 21st century.

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### Introduction

The evolution of lifestyle within contemporary Muslim communities is characterized not only by technological advancements but also by a fundamental shift in how individuals conceptualize well-being as a holistic integration of physical, mental, and spiritual health (Jailani & Adinugraha, 2022; Muheramtahadi & Fataron, 2022; Syahrivar et al., 2020). Within this context,



religious practices such as almsgiving are no longer perceived merely as a moral imperative or social ritual, but rather as a component of a holistic endeavor to maintain life equilibrium. Furthermore, the development of digital media and online philanthropic ecosystems has transformed the manner in which Muslims practice charity, evolving from ceremonial activities into an integrated component of a sustainable spiritual lifestyle (Mansur et al., 2025; Rakhmawati, 2019; Triantoro et al., 2021). This phenomenon is empirically demonstrated by rising participation rates on digital donation platforms such as Kitabisa, Dompot Dhuafa, and Lazismu, which facilitate routine and instantaneous payment of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah through mobile devices. The seamless integration of these platforms has effectively transformed religious giving into a systematized practice that aligns with contemporary digital lifestyles, while simultaneously reinforcing its spiritual significance through technological convenience (Kenang & Gosal, 2021; Lyons et al., 2022; Tarigan, 2023). This emerging pattern demonstrates how acts of giving have become interwoven with the pursuit of life meaning, inner well-being, and religious identity amidst the pressures of fast-paced modern existence. In other words, routine almsgiving now transcends mere religious observance to function as a form of social and spiritual therapy, one that fosters empathy, mitigates stress, and enhances self-awareness (Abelia Dhuwi Juwita et al., 2025; Fauzan et al., 2025; Makhrus, 2018). Thus, in this era of digital disruption and urban psychological strains, almsgiving has emerged as a medium of equilibrium, a bridge between worship and mental health, signaling the rise of a new paradigm: wellness through sharing. This synthesis positions routine charity not merely as a religious duty, but as an actionable mechanism for sociospiritual therapy that addresses the complex challenges of contemporary life

The study of the relationship between religiosity and mental health is not a new topic; however, most existing research remains focused on individual worship dimensions such as prayer, remembrance (dhikr), or fasting, rather than on social practices such as almsgiving (sadaqah). Previous studies have tended to situate almsgiving within the framework of religious economics, that is, as a mechanism for wealth redistribution and social solidarity. (Anugrah, 2023; Danlami et al., 2023; Kashif & De Run, 2015; Latief, 2013; Migheli, 2017), without highlighting the psychological aspects inherent in such practices. Meanwhile, modern psychological research has extensively emphasized the benefits of prosocial behavior for mental health, including increased happiness, life satisfaction, and reduced anxiety (Miles et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). However, the relationship between Islamic prosocial actions such as almsgiving (sadaqah) and wellness has received limited scholarly attention within the context of

contemporary Muslim societies. Much of the existing research on digital philanthropy tends to focus solely on its technological aspects, how digital media facilitate donations, without addressing how this transformation affects the psychological well-being of individuals who regularly give charity. In fact, within the context of modern Muslim life, sharing through digital platforms not only facilitates religious practice but also fosters a calming sense of social and spiritual connectedness. Therefore, there remains a significant research gap between Islamic philanthropic practices and the psychology of well-being, particularly in understanding routine almsgiving as a strategy for maintaining mental health amid the existential and social pressures of modern life.

This study seeks to address this gap by posing a fundamental question: how does the trend of routine almsgiving (*sadaqah*) among modern Muslims contribute to the formation of wellness or mental well-being? This question is grounded in the assumption that the act of giving (giving behavior) in Islam carries complex psychospiritual dimensions, encompassing empathy, self-control, and a sense of meaning in life. Accordingly, this research explores three main focuses. First, how does the transformation of almsgiving practices in the digital era influence the ways in which Muslims understand and internalize the meaning of sharing? Second, how does the routine of giving, whether through digital platforms or direct interpersonal interaction, affect psychological conditions such as happiness, inner peace, and stress reduction? Third, to what extent can the trend of routine almsgiving be understood as part of a modern Islamic wellness movement, characterized by the pursuit of balance between spirituality and mental health. These questions are crucial to address, as the phenomenon of “religious wellness” is increasingly prominent among urban Muslim communities, where values of spirituality, philanthropy, and self-care are deeply intertwined. Through this understanding, the present study aims not only to provide a sociological explanation of religious practices but also to open a space for reinterpreting almsgiving as a form of spiritual therapy that helps maintain psychological balance amid the forces of modern capitalism and individualism.

This study argues that the trend of routine almsgiving (*sadaqah*) among modern Muslims represents a form of spiritual transformation that connects religious values with a new psychological awareness: that happiness and mental health can grow through acts of sharing. Within this framework, almsgiving is not merely a social act but also a spiritual coping mechanism, a strategy for dealing with life’s pressures by doing good for others. According to the helper’s high theory (Post, 2005), the act of giving triggers neuropsychological activity that increases dopamine and oxytocin levels, the hormones associated with

happiness and empathy. In Islam, this concept aligns with the teaching that charity “extinguishes the wrath of Allah” and “brings peace to the heart” (Hadith narrated by Tirmidhi), illustrating the intrinsic connection between social action and spiritual well-being. In the modern context, however, this practice is mediated by digital technology, which enables almsgiving to become a routine and easily accessible activity. Consequently, what may be termed a spiritual wellness economy has emerged, where the act of sharing becomes a lifestyle associated with both religious identity and mental health. This study contends that the significance of this movement lies not merely in its economic or social impact, but in its epistemic transformation: Muslims are beginning to realize that true well-being does not stem from consumption, but from contribution. Thus, the trend of routine almsgiving signifies the emergence of an Islamic wellness paradigm, in which the act of giving becomes a contemplative space for discovering meaning, balance, and inner peace in modern life.

### Research Methodology

This study adopts a library research methodology, a systematic approach to collecting, evaluating, synthesizing, and interpreting existing scholarly literature to investigate the relationship between digital almsgiving (sadaqah) and mental well-being among contemporary Muslims (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Snyder, 2019). Library research is particularly suited to this inquiry as it enables a holistic, contextual, and theory-driven examination of evolving socio-religious practices without the limitations of primary data collection, allowing for deep engagement with interdisciplinary discourses at the intersection of Islamic philanthropy, digital culture, and psychology (Fetterman, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The research process commenced with systematic source identification and selection from diverse academic repositories, including digital databases (Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, BASE), institutional libraries, and curated archives of Islamic and psychological studies (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Keywords and Boolean operators, such as (“digital sadaqah” or “online zakat”), (“mental health” or “spiritual wellness”), (“Islam” or “Muslim”), were used to locate relevant materials published between 2015 and 2025, ensuring contemporary relevance while also integrating seminal works from earlier periods to provide historical and conceptual continuity (Page et al., 2021).

Critical content analysis and thematic synthesis were employed to interpret the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Sources were categorized into emerging themes such as “digital philanthropy as spiritual coping,” “helper’s high in Islamic giving,” and “the spiritual wellness economy.” The analysis was guided by an integrative conceptual framework linking Islamic

theological principles (e.g., maqasid al-shariah, sadaqah as worship), psychological theories (e.g., prosocial behavior, coping mechanisms), and digital sociology (e.g., platform affordances, networked religiosity) (Pargament, 2011; Einolf, 2023). To enhance validity, triangulation of sources was applied by cross-referencing insights from journal articles, books, dissertations, and credible institutional reports, thereby mitigating bias and strengthening interpretive consistency (Carter et al., 2014).

### **The Transformation of the Meaning of Almsgiving: From Moral Obligation to a Practice of Spiritual Wellness**

Almsgiving, or zakat, is fundamentally one of the pillars of Islam that carries a dual function, as both a vertical act of worship (*hablum minallah*) and a social obligation (*hablum minannas*). In the traditional context, zakat has been understood as a moral and spiritual duty aimed at purifying wealth, strengthening social solidarity, and alleviating poverty. However, in modern Muslim life, particularly in urban settings, the meaning of zakat and sadaqah has undergone a significant transformation. It is no longer perceived merely as a formal obligation but as an integral part of the pursuit of life balance, happiness, and mental well-being. This shift reflects a growing awareness among urban Muslims that genuine well-being is not derived solely from material sufficiency, but from harmony between the physical, spiritual, and social dimensions of life. This transformation of meaning is deeply influenced by the development of digital technology and the rise of the online philanthropy ecosystem. Platforms such as Kitabisa, Dompot Dhuafa, Baznas, and Lazismu have become new spaces through which individuals can fulfill their religious and social obligations quickly, transparently, and sustainably. Today, sadaqah can be performed within seconds through a smartphone. More interestingly, however, is the psychological and spiritual reorientation underlying this practice. For many modern Muslims, giving charity is no longer seen merely as a social or economic act but as a spiritual expression that provides meaning and inner peace. Consequently, digital sadaqah has become part of a spiritual wellness lifestyle, a form of religious living that emphasizes inner balance, social empathy, and mental tranquility amid the fast-paced and competitive rhythm of urban life.

Various studies have discussed the relationship between religiosity and mental health. However, most of these studies continue to focus on individual ritual practices such as prayer, remembrance (*dhikr*), and fasting, while social practices like sadaqah are rarely examined in direct relation to psychological well-being. In fact, within Islamic tradition, sadaqah carries a much broader function, it is not only a form of economic redistribution but also a kind of

spiritual therapy. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that “charity extinguishes the wrath of Allah and protects from an ill death” (Hadith narrated by Tirmidhi). This teaching highlights the close connection between the act of giving and inner peace. In modern psychology, this phenomenon is known as helper’s high, a positive emotional state that emerges after performing good deeds toward others (Post, 2005). Acts of giving have been shown to increase the production of dopamine and oxytocin, the hormones associated with happiness, empathy, and social connectedness. Thus, routine almsgiving can be understood as a form of spiritual coping mechanism, a spiritual strategy for managing life’s pressures and stress through prosocial behavior..

Furthermore, for urban Muslims living amid economic, social, and existential pressures, the practice of almsgiving serves as a reflective space for reinterpreting the meaning of life. The growing participation in digital charity indicates that acts of giving are no longer merely ceremonial, but have evolved into contemplative activities integrated into everyday life. (Mulyani et al., 2023) It has been noted that Islamic philanthropic activities in major cities not only enhance the well-being of beneficiaries but also foster new spiritual communities built on mutual support. Studies have found that giving through online platforms strengthens the sense of connectedness and social trust by enabling more personal interactions between donors and recipients. In this context, almsgiving becomes a two-dimensional spiritual experience: it not only benefits others but also heals the giver through a renewed sense of meaning and purpose. (Taylor, 2018) It is further noted that technological advancements have transformed the way Muslims engage in charitable practices by deepening the relational dimension between giver and recipient. Whereas zakat was once regarded as a formal obligation distributed through institutional channels, it has now also become a more direct form of spiritual communication. In the digital space, acts of giving are often accompanied by visual and emotional feedback, such as beneficiary reports, documentary videos, or testimonials. This process strengthens emotional attachment and fosters a profound sense of empathy. Thus, almsgiving is not merely an expression of religious obedience but also a means of cultivating psychological balance through the experience of connectedness.

The religious identity of urban Muslims is likewise redefined through this practice. (Peek, 2005) It is argued that religious identity in modern society is no longer static but is shaped through conscious choices and social interactions. In this context, almsgiving becomes a medium for religious self-actualization. Through the act of giving, modern Muslims affirm their spiritual identity amid an individualistic and capitalistic culture. Sharing thus serves as a subtle form of

resistance against consumerist lifestyles, while simultaneously reaffirming the core Islamic values of social justice and solidarity. On the other hand, research (Awad et al., 2019) shows that charitable actions contribute positively to psychological well-being by enhancing self-esteem and fostering social optimism. Individuals who are actively engaged in philanthropic activities tend to experience lower stress levels and greater life satisfaction.

In addition to being an expression of identity, almsgiving (sadaqah) also reflects a moral commitment to humanitarian values. (Hamdi et al., 2018) found that contemporary Muslim identity often integrates ethno-cultural elements with religious practice, and zakat serves as a bridge between the two. By performing zakat or sadaqah, individuals not only affirm their obedience to Islamic law (sharia) but also reinforce social solidarity as part of a collective moral responsibility. In this sense, sadaqah embodies the two primary dimensions of Islamic spirituality: transcendence (relationship with God) and immanence (relationship with fellow human beings). Consequently, this practice carries not only religious meaning but also profound psychosocial significance. From a sociological perspective, the transformation in the meaning of sadaqah can also be understood through (Bartkowski, 2014) concept of religious evocation. He explains that religious practice serves as a means of regulating the individual's relationship with the sacred while simultaneously strengthening social engagement. Within this framework, zakat and sadaqah function as forms of spiritual actualization that link personal well-being with social responsibility. Every act of giving not only reinforces one's relationship with God but also cultivates a collective awareness that genuine happiness arises from contributing to the common good. Thus, sadaqah transcends its economic function and evolves into a reflective ritual that reaffirms the balance between faith and humanity.

Recent research on the relationship between prosocial behavior and mental well-being supports this argument. (Awad et al., 2019) assert that factors such as ethnic identity, social connectedness, and religious involvement play significant roles in enhancing psychological well-being. Communities actively engaged in charitable activities tend to demonstrate higher levels of social resilience, as the act of giving fosters a sense of belonging and emotional support. In this context, sadaqah serves not only as a mechanism of economic redistribution but also as a social mechanism for building networks of trust and solidarity that strengthen communal mental health. Amid the crisis of meaning and the growing prevalence of psychological distress in modern society, the trend of routine sadaqah among urban Muslims offers a new paradigm for understanding Islamic wellness. Wellness, in this view, is not merely a physical

state free from illness, but a holistic equilibrium between body, mind, and soul. Through sadaqah, Muslims discover a spiritual path to cope with stress, loneliness, and emotional exhaustion often associated with urban life. The act of giving fosters gratitude, deepens empathy, and nurtures a sense of purpose. This makes sadaqah not only a form of social worship but also a spiritual self-care practice that cultivates self-awareness and inner happiness.

Accordingly, the trend of routine sadaqah can be seen as a manifestation of the “spiritual wellness economy”, a phenomenon in which acts of giving become a lifestyle that integrates religious values, psychological awareness, and social sensitivity. In this spiritual economy, happiness is not measured by consumption but by contribution. Modern Muslims increasingly realize that true well-being does not come from possessing more, but from giving more. This paradigm marks an epistemic shift in how Muslims conceptualize worship and well-being: from ritual to reflection, from obligation to consciousness. In conclusion, sadaqah in the modern era has transcended its traditional function as a socio-religious obligation. It has become part of a reflective spiritual lifestyle that unites the dimensions of worship, psychology, and culture. Within the context of urban Muslim society, the practice of routine sadaqah not only strengthens social solidarity but also serves as a source of inner peace and psychological resilience. Thus, sadaqah fulfills a dual role: as an act of worship that deepens one’s relationship with God, and as a form of social therapy that nurtures mental well-being. This phenomenon signifies the emergence of a new paradigm in modern Islamic spirituality, that true wellness can be found through the act of giving.

### **Digital Philanthropy Ecosystem and the Emergence of the “Spiritual Wellness Economy”**

The rise of digital platforms such as Kitabisa, Dompot Dhuafa, and Lazismu has significantly transformed the landscape of philanthropy in Indonesia, marking a profound shift in the motivation, intensity, and psychological experience of giving and zakat practices. In today’s digital era, individuals are connected in unprecedented ways, enabling the emergence of online communities grounded in empathy, solidarity, and shared spiritual values through digital philanthropic practices. Technological mediation functions not merely as a mechanical intermediary but also as a catalyst that fosters a unique interplay between personal motivation and the communal dimensions of charitable action. Recent studies indicate that technological characteristics, such as website quality, interface design, and transaction convenience, have a significant influence on users’ levels of empathy and their donation behaviors. (Liu et al., 2018)

emphasize the importance of exploring how digital features can evoke empathetic responses, which serve as a crucial element in motivating donation intentions on online philanthropic platforms. These findings are consistent with the study (Li & Yu, 2020) which demonstrates that user experience, encompassing visual design, ease of navigation, and perceived security in transactions, can strengthen users’ emotional attachment to specific charitable causes. This emotional attachment, in turn, enhances donation intentions in terms of both frequency and amount of contribution. Thus, user experience is not merely a technical factor but an affective component that significantly contributes to the success of digital philanthropy campaigns.

The convergence of digital technology, Islamic philanthropic values, and psychological awareness has given rise to what this study terms the “spiritual wellness economy”, a paradigm in which well-being is cultivated through sharing, transparency, and community participation. This economy is not merely transactional but transformative, integrating faith, technology, and mental health into a coherent framework for holistic flourishing. To elucidate this model, Table 1 outlines its core components, descriptions, and manifestations as evidenced in contemporary digital philanthropy practices.

**Tabel 1**

Conceptual Model of the Spiritual Wellness Economy

Component	Description	Manifestation in Contemporary Practice	Supporting References in Manuscript
Religious Values	Core Islamic principles of zakat, sadaqah, and infaq as acts of worship and social responsibility.	Integration of giving into daily digital routines; theological framing of charity as spiritual therapy.	Hadith (Tirmidhi); Post (2005); Awad et al. (2019)
Digital Technology	Platforms and tools that facilitate, mediate, and enhance the giving experience.	Use of apps like Kitabisa, Dompot Dhuafa; real-time reporting; blockchain for transparency.	Mansur et al. (2025); Zhang et al. (2023); Hyndman & McConville (2018)
Psychological Awareness	Recognition of the mental health benefits of prosocial behavior and spiritual coping.	Promotion of <i>helper's high</i> ; framing sadaqah as stress relief and meaning-making.	Post (2005); Sabry & Vohra (2013); Tyas Aprillia et al. (2022)
Community & Connection	Digital and social spaces that foster empathy, trust, and collective identity.	Online communities, social media groups, interactive live streams, donor-recipient feedback loops.	Liu et al. (2018); Lin & Huang (2017); Shi & Wu (2023)
Transparency & Accountability	Mechanisms that build trust and sustain donor engagement through openness.	Digital audit trails, impact reports, donor dashboards, third-party verification.	Zhang et al. (2023); Hyndman & McConville (2018); Xiao & Yue (2021)

Well-being Outcomes	Holistic wellness achieved through integration of spiritual, mental, and social health.	Increased life satisfaction, reduced anxiety, strengthened religious identity, enhanced social solidarity.	Miles et al. (2022); Awad et al. (2019); Peek (2005); Kamranpour et al. (2019)
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Source: Developed by the author based on literature synthesis, 2025.

Table 1 illustrates how the spiritual wellness economy operates through the integration of religious values, digital technology, psychological awareness, and institutional transparency. This model positions digital sadaqah not merely as a material transfer but as a reflective practice that enhances holistic well-being. Islamic principles such as zakat and sadaqah converge with digital platforms (e.g., Kitabisa, Dompot Dhuafa) to create accessible and meaningful giving experiences. Psychological mechanisms like helper's high and spiritual coping explain how giving reduces stress and increases happiness. Digital transparency builds trust, while online interactions strengthen empathetic communities. Ultimately, well-being is measured not by material accumulation but by social contribution and spiritual balance. This paradigm signifies an epistemic shift in contemporary Islamic spirituality, where worship and mental therapy merge within a transformative sharing economy. The spiritual wellness economy thus redefines well-being as rooted in contribution, connectivity, and conscious faith practice.

Furthermore, the dynamic social media environment has given rise to new forms of semi-closed communities bound by trust and emotional engagement. (Lin & Huang, 2017) explains that social media users are increasingly forming connections within intimate digital spaces where they share similar spiritual and social experiences. Within these spaces, individual empathy is transformed into collective action, expanding the scope of philanthropy from a purely personal intention into a broader social movement. (Tong & Chan, 2022) adds that online trust is established through sustained dialogical communication and the interconnectedness between online and offline experiences. Once this trust is built, commitment to charitable activities tends to increase, ultimately deepening users' engagement in philanthropic practices. Another phenomenon that emerges in this context is slacktivism, a form of digital social activism characterized by low-commitment participation, such as liking, sharing, or commenting on charitable content without direct financial involvement. (Samuelson-Cramp & Bolat, 2018) shows that although slacktivism may appear to be a minimal form of contribution, it has a long-term impact on social awareness. Such small actions can increase exposure to humanitarian issues and

foster a desire to participate in more substantial forms of donation in the future. In other words, slacktivism serves as an entry point for the digital generation to engage in a broader philanthropic ecosystem.

Research (Hajli et al., 2017) strengthens these findings by stating that users' familiarity with digital platforms is positively correlated with increased trust and willingness to contribute. The more frequently users interact with a platform, the greater their tendency to donate. This indicates that repeated interactions within the digital ecosystem function as a process of internalizing altruistic values, whereby digital experiences shape one's identity and habits of giving. On the other hand, innovations such as live streaming features have also introduced new approaches to digital philanthropy. (Shi & Wu, 2023) argues that live streaming possesses the capacity to significantly enhance user engagement by providing a more authentic and emotionally resonant interactive experience. Through live broadcasts, users are not merely passive spectators but active participants in the fundraising process. This interactivity fosters a sense of togetherness and strengthens the perceived value of one's contribution. Moreover, such interactive experiences encourage repeated giving and help cultivate stronger community bonds among participants in online philanthropic activities.

(Xiao & Yue, 2021) shows that increased interactivity fosters a sense of belonging within digital communities. When individuals perceive themselves as integral members of a charitable movement, they are more motivated to continuously participate in a sustainable cycle of reciprocal goodwill. This phenomenon illustrates that digitalization functions not merely as a technological medium but also as a social and emotional space that forges new relationships between individuals, communities, and spiritual values. The psychological dimension of digital philanthropy further reveals that donors increasingly demand higher levels of transparency and accountability from charitable organizations. Trust in philanthropic institutions is now built not only on moral reputation but also through technology-driven transparency mechanisms. In this context, blockchain technology is being explored as a means to ensure transactional integrity and to enhance donor confidence in charitable institutions (Zhang et al., 2023). This system enables every transaction to be recorded with an immutable digital footprint, creating a new form of data-driven accountability. Zhang et al.'s findings are consistent with studies that (Hyndman & McConville, 2018) which asserts that digital accountability mechanisms are a key factor in strengthening donor trust. When platforms demonstrate high transparency through digital reports, online audits, and real-time donation tracking, donor confidence and loyalty increase significantly. Digital

accountability, therefore, functions not merely as an administrative tool but as a form of social and moral capital that shapes donor behavior and the volume of contributions.

This transformation illustrates that platforms such as Kitabisa, Dompet Dhuafa, and Lazismu do more than simply facilitate charitable transactions, they act as cultural agents that reshape the meaning and practice of generosity in contemporary society. Through digital technology, charitable giving is transformed into a collective empathetic space where spiritual, social, and psychological values interact dynamically. Furthermore, this change demonstrates that philanthropy is no longer centered solely on “giving” in a material sense, but also on “participating” in social and spiritual meanings. Through digital interaction, users contribute not only money but also attention, time, ideas, and emotions. They become part of a mutually reinforcing spiritual ecosystem, in which the act of giving becomes an existential experience encompassing empathy, reflection, and connectedness. Ultimately, the phenomenon of digital philanthropy reflects a cultural shift toward a more connected and reflective universe of generosity. The success of digital philanthropic platforms is determined not merely by the amount of funds collected but by their ability to foster a sense of community, moral transparency, and meaningful spiritual experience among users. In this context, technology operates not only as a tool but also as a cultural and spiritual medium that reshapes how people understand, feel, and practice goodness.

Thus, the evolution of digital philanthropic platforms represents the hybridity between faith, technology, and participatory culture. It integrates the traditional Islamic values of sadaqah, zakat, and gotong royong with a digital ethic that emphasizes transparency, collaboration, and emotional engagement. This transformation signifies that philanthropy in the digital era is not merely about giving, it is about belonging to a global spiritual network that inspires and strengthens a shared sense of humanity.

### **Almsgiving as a “Spiritual Coping Mechanism”: Finding Tranquility Amid the Pressures of Modern Life**

The routine practice of giving within urban Muslim communities serves as an essential form of spiritual coping mechanism, functioning as a means of addressing psychological stress, anxiety, and existential fatigue arising from the complexities of modern life. In this context, giving is not merely understood as a social action or religious obligation but as a profound spiritual process that generates therapeutic effects for the giver. This phenomenon can be explained through the framework of Helper’s High Theory and the concept of spiritual

coping mechanisms, both of which are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. The Helper's High Theory posits that altruistic behaviors, such as giving and helping others, produce positive emotional effects for the actor, including feelings of happiness, inner peace, and a sense of life fulfillment (Baasher, 2001). In the context of urban Muslim societies, acts of giving are often manifested through the obligations of zakat, infak, and voluntary sadaqah. These practices not only strengthen the community's moral and ethical foundations but also offer a tangible means of alleviating both personal and social pressures. Through collective and routine charitable activities, a sense of solidarity emerges, fostering belonging and mutual care among community members.

The intersection of routine almsgiving and mental well-being is supported by a growing body of scholarly work that highlights specific psychological mechanisms and outcomes. To synthesize key findings from the literature reviewed, Table 1 summarizes the relationship between digital sadaqah practices and various indicators of mental and spiritual wellness. This table illustrates how the act of giving, mediated by faith and technology, operates as a multidimensional coping strategy, reinforcing the argument that sadaqah functions as an effective form of spiritual therapy in contemporary Muslim life.

**Table 2**

Relationship between Digital Sadaqah Practices and Mental Well-being

Indicators

Aspect Studied	Key Findings	Psychospiritual Mechanism	Sources in Manuscript
Positive Emotional Impact	Increased happiness, life satisfaction, and sense of purpose after giving.	<i>Helper's High</i> : release of dopamine & oxytocin; alignment with Islamic spiritual values.	Post (2005); Hadith (Tirmidhi); Awad et al. (2019)
Stress & Anxiety Reduction	Sadaqah serves as an emotional regulator and distraction from life pressures.	<i>Spiritual coping</i> : meaning-making, surrender to God, social connectedness.	Sabry & Vohra (2013); Tyas Aprillia et al. (2022)
Social Connection Building	Giving via digital platforms strengthens social bonds, trust, and empathy.	Digital interaction creates empathetic spaces and virtual spiritual communities.	Liu et al. (2018); Lin & Huang (2017)
Religious Identity Reinforcement	Sadaqah acts as a medium for religious self-actualization amidst individualistic culture.	Giving reinforces identity as a socially responsible Muslim.	Peek (2005); Hamdi et al. (2018)
Digital Transparency & Trust	Features like real-time reporting and blockchain enhance donor confidence.	Digital accountability sustains giving intentions and sense of security.	Zhang et al. (2023); Hyndman & McConville (2018)

Interactive Technology Engagement	Live streaming and social features increase engagement and repeat donation intent.	Participatory experiences deepen spiritual meaning and sense of community.	Shi & Wu (2023); Xiao & Yue (2021)
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Source: Developed by the author based on literature synthesis, 2025.

As illustrated in Table 2, the practice of digital sadaqah engages multiple dimensions of well-being, emotional, social, spiritual, and psychological. The synthesis confirms that giving is not a monolithic act but a process that triggers neuropsychological rewards, strengthens communal ties, and reaffirms religious identity. These mechanisms collectively operate as a spiritual coping framework, enabling Muslims to navigate urban stressors while cultivating inner peace. Furthermore, the role of digital platforms in enhancing transparency, interactivity, and trust underscores the emergence of a spiritual wellness economy, where technology amplifies the therapeutic potential of religious giving. This integrated view supports the paradigm that in the age of digital capitalism, well-being is increasingly pursued not through accumulation, but through contribution, a principle deeply embedded in Islamic teachings and now revitalized through digital mediation.

Furthermore, participation in Islamic philanthropic activities helps build vital social support networks, particularly during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when communal empathy and cooperation become essential sources of resilience and psychological well-being (Achour et al., 2021). In the midst of increasing urban alienation, driven by fast-paced and individualistic lifestyles, acts of giving serve as emotional bridges between individuals. The presence of communities actively engaged in socio-religious activities helps individuals find spaces of empathy, belonging, and spiritual meaning that alleviate loneliness and stress (Scull et al., 2014). In this regard, charity functions as a form of spiritual communication that nurtures inner connectedness among people while simultaneously reflecting obedience to God's commands. Moreover, the spiritual coping mechanism provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between charitable giving and mental well-being. Through acts of giving, individuals engage in spiritual reflection and discover a higher purpose beyond themselves, an awareness that serves as a buffer against psychological distress (Sabry & Vohra, 2013). Islam emphasizes that dhikrullah (remembrance of God) and doing good to others are two central strategies for maintaining inner peace. Both are not merely ritual practices but also effective psychological strategies for cultivating tranquility and inner happiness (Tyas Aprillia et al., 2022).

Thus, charitable practices in Islam facilitate the search for meaning in suffering, allowing individuals to reinterpret life's trials not as burdens but as opportunities to draw closer to God. This spiritual process fosters resilience, a crucial psychological capacity for enduring modern life pressures. A number of qualitative studies further indicate that many Muslims perceive their faith as a primary source of comfort and strength when confronting personal adversity, underscoring the significance of spiritually grounded approaches to mental health interventions (Scull et al., 2014). The spiritual dimension of mental health in Islam can also be linked to contemporary psychotherapeutic frameworks, particularly religiously integrated psychotherapy, which incorporates religious values into therapeutic practice (Abu Raiya & Pargament, 2010). This approach stresses the importance of respecting clients' religious backgrounds and using their faith as a tool for emotional healing. Within this context, charitable acts can be viewed as a faith-based therapeutic practice that restores inner balance. Empirical studies have shown that higher levels of religiosity are positively correlated with mental health and help individuals cope with existential anxiety (Abdul Khaiyom et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the significance of regular giving as a form of spiritual coping can be traced to Islam's long-standing emphasis on *maslahah al-'ammah* (collective welfare). During the Islamic Golden Age, Muslim scholars and physicians played a major role in integrating spiritual and medical understandings of mental distress (Mitha, 2020). This approach demonstrates that Islam, from its inception, has not separated the spiritual from the psychological domain. Instead, it established a holistic paradigm where medical treatment and religious values jointly nurture human well-being. In the modern era, acts of giving and sharing thus represent a historical continuity of this paradigm, linking spirituality with emotional and social equilibrium. The realities of contemporary urban life further reinforce this view. High mobility, economic pressures, and social inequality often generate psychological strain. In such contexts, charitable acts can function as a form of positive spiritual escape, allowing individuals to channel care and counter feelings of helplessness amid social uncertainty. Through technology, empathy and solidarity can now be expressed on a larger scale. Though seemingly small, each click and act of digital participation can produce psychological effects akin to Helper's High, a sense of joy derived from contributing to collective good. This demonstrates that Islamic spirituality is capable of adapting to modernity without losing its essence.

However, giving is not merely material; it also encompasses time, attention, and emotional support. In Islam, even a smile toward others is considered charity; offering one's knowledge or energy to help others is likewise

an act of virtue. This dimension broadens the scope of spiritual coping, allowing every individual, regardless of socioeconomic status, to participate in collective goodness. Hence, the concept of charity in Islam is inclusive rather than exclusive, fostering a sense of spiritual self-worth and equality among all believers. From a modern psychological perspective, acts of giving can trigger the release of dopamine and endorphins, inducing feelings of happiness and satisfaction. This biological reaction aligns with Helper's High Theory, which posits that altruistic behavior generates positive emotional responses that enhance mental health. In Islam, this effect is spiritually interpreted as rahmah (divine mercy) or barakah (blessing), where the joy experienced is not merely biochemical but a manifestation of divine approval for acts of kindness. Regular acts of giving within urban Muslim communities represent not only social behavior but also a profound spiritual mechanism for maintaining psychological balance. It functions as a coping strategy against stress, anxiety, and existential fatigue through the synergy between Helper's High Theory and Islamic spiritual coping principles. The integration of psychological and spiritual dimensions highlights the importance of embedding religious values within contemporary mental health frameworks. Thus, giving transcends its moral function, it becomes a process of healing, a form of worship, and a path to inner peace in an increasingly complex world.

### **The Islamic Wellness Paradigm: Well-Being Through Sharing in the Age of Digital Capitalism**

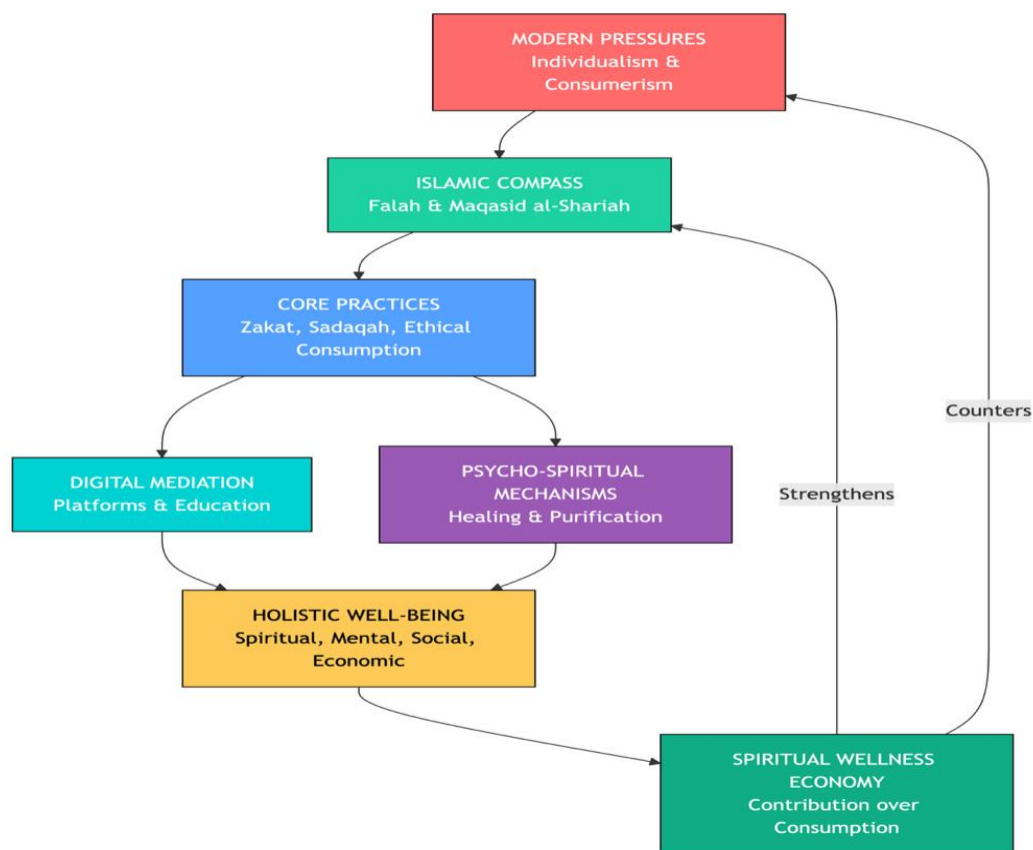
The emergence of the concept of Islamic wellness as a new paradigm marks a significant shift in understanding the relationship between Islamic spirituality, mental health, and social values. This paradigm challenges the individualistic culture fostered by modern capitalism by reaffirming the importance of community values, social solidarity, and collective well-being. Within this framework, practices of sharing and philanthropy become central pillars that not only affirm the values of worship and social care but also demonstrate that true well-being transcends mere material success. Islam places the balance between worldly happiness and the hereafter as an integral part of human well-being, reflected in social practices that cultivate empathy and collective responsibility. One of the main foundations of this paradigm is the concept of *falah*, meaning comprehensive success or happiness that encompasses material, spiritual, and moral dimensions.

In the age of digital capitalism and urban stress, we face profound challenges to human well-being: increasing individualism, consumerist values, and psychological alienation. The Islamic wellness paradigm offers a

transformative alternative – a holistic system where well-being emerges not from accumulation but from contribution, not from consumption but from connection. The following diagram visually synthesizes this paradigm as an integrated ecosystem. It begins with the recognition of contemporary pressures created by digital capitalism, then maps how Islamic theological foundations guide practical responses, how technology amplifies these practices, and how internal transformations occur within individuals. The framework culminates in four-dimensional well-being and the emergence of what we term the “spiritual wellness economy.” This visualization represents more than a theoretical model; it depicts a living, self-reinforcing system where each component strengthens the others. The circular nature of the diagram reflects the paradigm’s core insight: true well-being creates conditions that sustain its own foundations while countering the very pressures that necessitated its emergence.

**Figure 1**

Conceptual Framework of the Islamic Wellness Paradigm



Source: Authors’ conceptualization based on literature synthesis,2025.

This diagram effectively captures the Islamic Wellness Paradigm as a coherent, transformative system. It visually narrates a journey from the challenges of digital capitalism—marked by individualism and consumerism—to the establishment of a spiritual wellness economy. The strength of this visualization lies in its clear depiction of how Islamic theological foundations, specifically the concepts of *falah* and *maqasid al-shariah*, act not as abstract ideals but as an active compass guiding concrete practices like *zakat* and *sadaqah*. The flow then meaningfully branches to show how these core practices simultaneously fuel internal psycho-spiritual mechanisms and are amplified externally through digital mediation. The convergence of these internal and external pathways is crucial, illustrating that holistic well-being is generated from the synthesis of inner transformation and technological enablement. Most significantly, the diagram closes its own loop with two critical feedback arrows. The resultant spiritual wellness economy is shown actively countering the initial modern pressures while simultaneously reinforcing the foundational Islamic values. This encapsulates the paradigm's core thesis: genuine well-being is not a linear end-point but a self-reinforcing ecosystem. It posits a sustainable alternative where community contribution and connection become the primary engines for well-being, directly challenging the extractive logic of consumption and individualism. The visualization successfully distills a complex theoretical framework into an intuitive narrative, making it a powerful tool for understanding how enduring values can offer a viable path to holistic health in the modern age.

This concept lies at the heart of Islamic economics and serves as the philosophical framework of Islamic well-being, emphasizing harmony between individual needs and social interests (Isnaini et al., 2024). *Falah* guides Muslims toward achieving holistic welfare, not only in material prosperity but also in inner peace, mental health, and moral integrity. In this context, well-being cannot be separated from religious and social orientations; both must coexist. Through the principle of *maqasid al-shariah*, which includes the preservation of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (“*aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*mal*), the Islamic well-being paradigm positions charity (*sadaqah*) not merely as a ritual act of worship but also as a psychological healing mechanism for individuals facing crises (Kamranpour et al., 2019). Thus, the social dimension of *sadaqah* plays a vital role in strengthening mental resilience and emotional well-being. Acts of giving create a sense of connectedness and purpose, serving as antidotes to feelings of alienation and existential stress. In the context of urban societies under pressure, faith-based giving and philanthropy can foster empathy, reduce anxiety, and reinforce a sense of life's meaning. Islam views every sincere act of kindness not

only as a social benefit but also as a means of cultivating inner balance and spiritual peace, making it an integral part of psychological recovery.

Furthermore, Islamic philanthropy serves as a form of resistance to capitalist ideology that emphasizes individual achievement and personal wealth accumulation. Modern capitalism often fosters a competitive and consumerist culture that neglects the spiritual and social dimensions of human life. In this context, charity and sharing in Islam become symbols of resistance against such materialistic values. (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019) found that consumption behavior within Muslim societies tends to reject individualistic orientations and instead prioritize ethical values, communal harmony, and social responsibility. Through ethical consumption, such as purchasing halal products, supporting social enterprises, or participating in charitable activities, Muslim communities actively construct an economic culture grounded in spirituality and solidarity. This paradigm aligns with sociocultural studies showing that participation in faith-based social activities, including charity and donations, strengthens interpersonal bonds, enhances emotional well-being, and nurtures a meaningful sense of purpose. Within the framework of Islamic well-being, happiness is not determined by wealth or professional success but by one's contribution to collective welfare. Hence, charity and sharing cultivate resilient communities, capable of confronting alienation, poverty, and despair often worsened by neoliberal economic logic.

Education also plays a crucial role in reinforcing the Islamic well-being paradigm. Modern Islamic education, integrated with spiritual and moral values, is vital for shaping individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also empathetic and socially responsible. (Ibrahim et al., 2024) emphasize the importance of developing curricula that go beyond economic achievement to include ethics, morality, and social consciousness. Through such education, Islamic well-being is revived as a system that prioritizes *akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character) and social collaboration as foundations of communal life. By embedding Islamic ethical values into the learning process, younger generations gain the capacity to perceive well-being not as the result of competition but as the fruit of cooperation and social empathy. This educational model nurtures awareness that mental and spiritual balance are essential parts of resisting the socio-economic pressures of capitalism. In modern society, the relentless demand for productivity and material success often generates stress and a loss of life's meaning. The Islamic wellness paradigm offers a middle path: restoring balance between the inner and social worlds, between personal achievement and compassion for others.

Moreover, the Islamic well-being paradigm carries significant implications for sustainable community development. Through structured philanthropic practices, such as zakat, infak, and waqf, Muslim societies can establish a fair system of economic redistribution. This system not only reduces social inequality but also strengthens emotional stability within society by fostering trust and compassion. Hence, Islamic well-being is not merely a theological concept but also a socio-economic strategy for creating a more inclusive and harmonious society. At the individual level, Islamic well-being encourages spiritual awareness that perceives life as a trust (amanah) and devotion. Practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), prayer, and charity are not only acts of worship but also means of self-reflection that cultivate inner peace. In this sense, Islamic well-being emphasizes balance between psychological, spiritual, and social dimensions. By strengthening one's relationship with Allah and nurturing social bonds with others, individuals can attain sakina, a state of tranquility that represents the ultimate goal of true well-being. In conclusion, the Islamic wellness paradigm asserts that genuine well-being cannot be separated from spirituality and social solidarity. This model synthesizes Islamic values with the psychological needs of modern humans, positioning charity as a bridge between worship and inner healing. The paradigm stands as an antithesis to the individualistic tendencies of capitalism by reaffirming the significance of togetherness, sharing, and social interconnectedness as the foundation of well-being. Thus, Islamic wellness is not merely a new concept in the discourse of spirituality and mental health but also a cultural movement that reaffirms the centrality of community in building mental resilience, life balance, and holistic human well-being.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of this study confirms that the practice of regular sadaqah (charity) within modern Muslim communities has undergone a paradigmatic transformation, from merely a religious obligation to an active strategy of spiritual wellness. The key findings reveal that in responding to the pressures of urban life, sadaqah functions as an effective form of "spiritual coping mechanism," in which acts of giving not only strengthen social solidarity but also serve as sources of inner peace and psychological resilience. The scholarly contribution of this research lies in its effort to bridge the discourse between Islamic philanthropy and the psychology of well-being, while introducing the concept of a "spiritual wellness economy" as a new framework for understanding religious practices in the digital age. However, as a literature-based study, these findings have limitations regarding direct empirical

verification of participants' subjective experiences. Therefore, further research is needed, particularly field studies exploring the quantitative correlation between the frequency of charitable giving and mental health indicators, as well as qualitative investigations into how digital platform design influences users' spiritual experiences. This study not only offers a new understanding of the relationship between worship and mental well-being but also opens pathways for deeper exploration of contemporary forms of spirituality emerging within increasingly digitalized Muslim societies.

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