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The Concept of Zuhud and Its Relevance to Modern Consumerism

Saafia Areesha[1], Faakhira[2], Musarrat[3]
[1,2] Islamic University of Madinah, Madinah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
[3] State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Indonesia

Abstract: Modern society is increasingly influenced by consumerism and materialism, encouraging individuals to prioritize material possessions, luxury lifestyles, and excessive consumption. In this context, Islamic spiritual values, particularly Zuhud, offer an important perspective on achieving simplicity, contentment, and moderation. This study aims to examine the concept of Zuhud based on Islamic teachings, analyze the characteristics of modern consumerism, and explore the relevance of Zuhud in addressing excessive materialism and shaping contemporary Muslim lifestyles. The research employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach through library research, using the Qur'an, Hadith, classical Islamic literature, books, and relevant scientific journal articles as data sources. Data are analyzed through content analysis, descriptive analysis, comparative analysis, and interpretation. The findings indicate that Zuhud represents spiritual detachment from excessive worldly desires rather than rejection of wealth or economic activities. It provides ethical principles for cultivating self-control, contentment, moderation, and responsible consumption. The study concludes that Zuhud remains relevant as an Islamic spiritual framework for encouraging balanced, socially responsible, and spiritually meaningful consumption patterns in modern life.

Research Highlights:

- Explains the concept of Zuhud based on Islamic teachings and spiritual values.
- Examines modern consumerism and its relationship with materialism and excessive consumption.
- Highlights Zuhud as a principle of moderation, self-control, and contentment.
- Demonstrates the relevance of Zuhud in promoting responsible and sustainable consumption.
- Emphasizes the importance of balancing material needs, spiritual fulfillment, and social responsibility in contemporary Muslim lifestyles.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Saafia Areesha

Email:saafiaareesha@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The development of modern society has brought significant changes to human consumption patterns, particularly under the influence of globalization, capitalism, digital technology, and social media(Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Consumerism has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon in contemporary life, encouraging individuals to purchase goods and services not only to fulfill their basic needs but also to express personal identity, social status, and lifestyle preferences. The rapid development of e-commerce, digital advertising, and social media platforms has further intensified consumer behavior by exposing individuals to continuous product promotions, lifestyle trends, and social comparisons. Consequently, material possessions and luxury lifestyles are increasingly perceived as indicators of happiness, success, and personal achievement. This condition contributes to the emergence of materialism, impulsive buying,

excessive consumption, and lifestyle competition, which can create financial difficulties, psychological dissatisfaction, environmental degradation, and social inequality. Furthermore, excessive attachment to material possessions may weaken spiritual awareness and shift individuals' priorities away from moral and religious responsibilities. In this context, Islamic teachings provide important ethical principles for establishing a balanced relationship between worldly needs and spiritual obligations. One of these principles is Zuhud, which refers to an attitude of spiritual detachment from excessive worldly desires and material possessions. Zuhud does not necessarily require individuals to reject wealth, abandon economic activities, or withdraw from social life; rather, it emphasizes maintaining control over material desires and ensuring that worldly possessions do not dominate one's heart and priorities. Therefore, Zuhud remains relevant in contemporary society because it encourages simplicity, self-control, gratitude, moderation, and spiritual awareness as essential foundations for responsible consumption behavior.

Linguistically, Zuhud originates from the Arabic term zahada, which refers to the attitude of having little desire or attachment toward something. Terminologically, Zuhud represents an Islamic spiritual attitude characterized by prioritizing the pleasure of Allah SWT. and the values of the Hereafter over excessive attachment to worldly possessions(Nasution & Faza, 2022). Historically, the concept developed within early Islamic spirituality and became an important foundation of Islamic Sufism (Tasawwuf), emphasizing purification of the heart, self-discipline, and spiritual closeness to Allah SWT. Zuhud should not be equated with poverty because Islam does not prohibit individuals from acquiring wealth through lawful means or participating in economic activities. Instead, it teaches Muslims to obtain, manage, and utilize wealth responsibly without allowing material interests to weaken their religious commitments. Zuhud is closely related to Taqwa (God-consciousness), Qana'ah (contentment), Sabr (patience), and Syukur (gratitude), which collectively encourage individuals to develop balanced attitudes toward worldly life. Its foundations can be identified in QS. Al-Hadid (57): 20, which explains the temporary nature of worldly life; QS. Al-Qasas (28): 77, which emphasizes balancing worldly interests with the Hereafter; QS. Al-A'la (87): 16–17, which highlights the importance of prioritizing the Hereafter; and QS. Al-Isra (17): 26–27, which prohibits extravagance and wastefulness. These teachings are reinforced by Hadith emphasizing simplicity, moderation, and responsible attitudes toward worldly possessions.

Modern consumerism refers to a pattern of behavior in which individuals place excessive importance on acquiring and consuming goods and services, often beyond their actual needs(Firat et al., 2013). Advertising, digital marketing, e-commerce, and social media significantly influence this phenomenon by creating consumer desires through persuasive promotions, influencers, and continuously changing lifestyle trends. Material possessions frequently become symbols of social recognition, personal identity, and economic achievement. Consequently, individuals may experience pressure to purchase fashionable products, expensive electronic devices, branded clothing, and luxury goods to maintain their perceived social position. Such behavior can generate dissatisfaction because material satisfaction is often temporary and encourages the continuous desire for additional possessions. Moreover, excessive consumption contributes to financial instability, environmental problems, and social competition. From an Islamic perspective, these tendencies contradict ethical principles emphasizing moderation, gratitude, responsibility, and avoidance of extravagance. Therefore, examining consumerism through Islamic spirituality is important for understanding how religious values can provide guidance in responding to contemporary materialistic lifestyles.

This study addresses four principal research questions: (1) How is the concept of Zuhud understood from the perspective of Islamic teachings and spirituality? (2) What are the characteristics and negative implications of modern consumerism? (3) How can the principles of Zuhud provide an Islamic ethical response to excessive consumer behavior? and (4) What is the relevance of Zuhud in developing a simple, moderate, and spiritually balanced lifestyle in contemporary society? These questions establish the foundation for examining the relationship between Islamic spiritual values and modern consumption patterns.

The study of Zuhud and its relevance to modern consumerism has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly in the fields of Islamic spirituality, Sufism, Islamic ethics, and contemporary consumption behavior. In a study published in 2025, Nur Hadi Ihsan, Ihwan Agustono, and Mochammad Eka Faturrahman (2025) examined the concept of Zuhud in the thought of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani through their article, “Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani on Zuhd: A Spiritual Remedy for Compulsive Consumerism.” The study employed qualitative library research and an analytical-descriptive approach to investigate the relationship between Zuhud and compulsive shopping behavior. The findings indicate

that Zuhud can function as a psychological and spiritual framework for addressing excessive consumption by emphasizing that inner peace derives from devotion to Allah rather than material wealth or social status. The authors also explain that excessive attachment to possessions may contribute to psychological difficulties and that Zuhud encourages ethical wealth management. This research provides an important foundation for understanding Zuhud as a spiritual response to consumerism. However, its primary focus is the thought of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani and compulsive shopping, whereas the present study seeks to examine the broader conceptual relationship between Zuhud and modern consumerism, including its social, ethical, and spiritual dimensions.

Furthermore, Amir Maliki Abitolkha, Taufik Alamin, Nur Hadi Ihsan, and Melania Sarah Huwaida (2025) conducted research entitled "Balanced Engagement: Kiai Ihsan Jampes' Adaptive Zuhud Framework for Spiritual Transformation in the Digital Era." Their study investigated the relevance of Kiai Ihsan Jampes's teachings on Zuhud among contemporary Muslims, particularly in the context of digital materialism. Using a phenomenological approach, the researchers examined textual sources, conducted observations at Pesantren Al-Ihsan Jampes in Kediri, and incorporated supplementary interviews with students. Their findings demonstrate that Zuhud can be understood as balanced engagement, namely participating actively in worldly life while maintaining spiritual detachment from material possessions. The study highlights the potential of Zuhud to strengthen spiritual resilience and encourage ethical consumption in the digital era. Nevertheless, the research focuses primarily on a particular Sufi figure and the spiritual transformation of a specific community. The present study extends this discussion by examining Zuhud as a broader Islamic ethical framework for addressing consumerism in contemporary society.

Another relevant study was conducted by Ratnasih, Aris Arif Mundayat, and Yuyun Sunesti (2025) in their article, "The Commodification of Piety: Negotiating Zuhud and Consumerist Subjectivities among Students in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools." This research examined the relationship between religious piety, Zuhud, and consumerist tendencies among students in contemporary Islamic boarding schools. The study is particularly relevant because it highlights the interaction between religious identity and consumer culture. It provides a useful perspective for understanding how spiritual values may be negotiated within social environments influenced by materialistic lifestyles. However, its specific focus on students and the commodification of religious piety differs from the present research, which emphasizes the conceptual foundations of Zuhud and its broader relevance to modern consumer behavior.

In addition, Muhammad Ihsan, Yusron Nur Hadi, Nurul Laely Mahmudah, Nasirudin, and Abu Bakar Ahmad Baihaqy (2026) published a study entitled "Reconstructing the Concept of Zuhd in Early Islamic Generations as a Response to the Contemporary Moral Crisis." The research examined the reconstruction of Zuhud from the early Islamic generations as a model of transformative social ethics. The authors emphasized that globalization, technological development, and consumerist culture have contributed to materialism, hedonism, and the weakening of spiritual awareness. Their study proposes that the principles of Zuhud can provide an ethical response to contemporary moral challenges. This research is closely related to the present study because both investigate the relevance of Zuhud in modern society. However, the previous research focuses more broadly on the contemporary moral crisis, while the present study specifically examines the relationship between Zuhud and consumerism, including consumption patterns, material desires, and responsible lifestyle practices.

Although these studies provide valuable contributions, there remains an opportunity to develop a more integrated conceptual discussion of Zuhud and modern consumerism. In particular, the relationship between the theological foundations of Zuhud, the psychological and social characteristics of consumerism, and the practical implications of Islamic spiritual ethics requires further synthesis. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining Zuhud not merely as an individual spiritual practice but also as a comprehensive ethical framework for understanding and responding to modern consumerism. Its contribution lies in connecting classical Islamic spiritual principles with contemporary consumption patterns while emphasizing simplicity, contentment, moderation, responsible wealth management, and spiritual awareness. Through this approach, the study aims to demonstrate that Zuhud remains relevant in developing a balanced relationship between material needs, spiritual fulfillment, and social responsibility in contemporary Muslim life.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive-analytical design to examine the concept of Zuhud in Islamic teachings and its relevance to modern consumerism(Kamal & Nasir, 2022). A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the research focuses on understanding Islamic spiritual values, interpreting religious teachings, and analyzing their relationship with contemporary social and economic phenomena. The study uses library research as its primary research method, involving the systematic examination of relevant literature, including the Qur'an, Hadith, classical Islamic books, scientific journal articles, and other academic publications. Through this design, the research seeks to explore the fundamental meanings, principles, and characteristics of Zuhud while examining how these values can be applied to address excessive materialism and consumerist lifestyles. The descriptive-analytical design enables the researcher to describe the development of consumerism in modern society and critically analyze its relationship with Islamic spiritual principles. Rather than conducting statistical testing or directly measuring individual consumption behavior, this study emphasizes conceptual understanding, textual interpretation, and theoretical analysis to develop a comprehensive explanation of Zuhud as an ethical and spiritual framework for contemporary Muslim life.

This research integrates several complementary approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Zuhud and its relevance to modern consumerism(Khunaifi et al., 2022). First, the normative-theological approach is used to examine the foundations of Zuhud through the Qur'an and Hadith, particularly religious teachings concerning worldly life, moderation, gratitude, contentment, and the prohibition of extravagance. Relevant Qur'anic verses, including QS. Al-Hadid (57): 20, QS. Al-Qasas (28): 77, QS. Al-A'la (87): 16–17, and QS. Al-Isra (17): 26–27, are analyzed to understand the Islamic perspective on material possessions and spiritual priorities. Second, the historical approach investigates the development of Zuhud in early Islamic history and its relationship with classical Islamic spirituality and Sufism (Tasawwuf). This approach considers the contributions of Muslim scholars, particularly Imam Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, in explaining spiritual detachment and the proper relationship between worldly possessions and religious devotion. Third, the conceptual approach examines the linguistic and terminological meanings of Zuhud, its fundamental characteristics, and its relationship with other Islamic values, such as Taqwa, Qana'ah, Sabr, and Syukur. Finally, the contemporary analytical approach connects these spiritual principles with modern consumerism by examining materialistic lifestyles, excessive consumption, social competition, and the influence of digital technology on consumer behavior. The integration of these approaches allows the research to establish a meaningful connection between classical Islamic teachings and contemporary social realities.

The collected data are analyzed using qualitative descriptive-analytical techniques through several interconnected stages(Langley & Abdallah, 2011). First, content analysis is employed to examine the meanings, principles, and spiritual values of Zuhud contained in the Qur'an, Hadith, classical Islamic literature, and relevant scholarly interpretations. This process identifies important themes concerning spiritual detachment, simplicity, moderation, contentment, and responsible attitudes toward material possessions. Second, descriptive analysis is used to explain the characteristics and implications of modern consumerism, including materialism, excessive consumption, impulsive buying, lifestyle competition, and the influence of digital media on contemporary consumption patterns. Third, comparative analysis is conducted to identify similarities and differences between the principles of Zuhud and the characteristics of consumerist lifestyles. Through this comparison, the researcher examines how Islamic spiritual values challenge excessive material desires and promote balanced consumption behavior. Fourth, interpretative analysis is applied to explain the contemporary significance of Zuhud by relating its theological and ethical foundations to the social, psychological, and economic challenges associated with modern consumerism. This stage also considers the practical implications of Zuhud in developing simplicity, financial discipline, gratitude, social responsibility, and environmental awareness. Finally, conclusion formulation is conducted by synthesizing the findings from the literature review and analytical processes to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept and Foundations of Zuhud in Islamic Teachings

The findings of this literature-based study indicate that Zuhud represents an important principle in Islamic spirituality that emphasizes spiritual detachment from excessive worldly desires and material possessions. Linguistically, Zuhud originates from the Arabic word zahada, which refers to having little

desire or attachment toward something(Astuti, 2022). In Islamic terminology, Zuhud refers to an attitude of prioritizing the pleasure of Allah SWT. and the Hereafter over excessive attachment to worldly interests. However, Zuhud does not mean rejecting wealth, abandoning economic activities, or withdrawing completely from social responsibilities. Rather, it emphasizes maintaining control over material desires and ensuring that worldly possessions do not dominate an individual's heart, thoughts, and life priorities. The fundamental characteristics of Zuhud include simplicity, contentment, self-control, gratitude, patience, and awareness of the temporary nature of worldly life. Within Islamic spirituality and Sufism (Tasawwuf), Zuhud occupies an important position as a foundation for purifying the heart and developing a stronger relationship with Allah SWT. It encourages individuals to avoid excessive love of wealth, luxury, and social recognition while directing their attention toward spiritual development and moral responsibility.

The foundations of Zuhud can be identified in several Qur'anic teachings that explain the relationship between worldly life and the Hereafter. QS. Al-Hadid (57): 20 explains that worldly life is temporary and can become a source of distraction when individuals become excessively attached to material pleasures. This verse reminds Muslims that wealth, possessions, and worldly achievements should not become the ultimate objectives of human existence. Similarly, QS. Al-Qasas (28): 77 emphasizes the importance of seeking happiness in the Hereafter without neglecting legitimate worldly responsibilities(Abdullah et al., 2013). This teaching demonstrates that Islam promotes balance rather than complete rejection of material life. Furthermore, QS. Al-A'la (87): 16–17 highlights the tendency of human beings to prioritize worldly life despite the greater value and permanence of the Hereafter. Meanwhile, QS. Al-Isra (17): 26–27 explicitly prohibits extravagance and wastefulness, establishing an ethical foundation for responsible consumption. These Qur'anic principles are reinforced by the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. concerning simplicity, moderation, and avoiding excessive attachment to worldly possessions. In one authentic Hadith narrated by Muslim, the Prophet explains that true richness is not determined by the abundance of possessions but by richness of the heart. This teaching emphasizes that spiritual satisfaction and inner contentment are more valuable than material accumulation.

Classical Muslim scholars have also contributed significantly to the understanding of Zuhud(Howell, 2010). Imam Al-Ghazali, in Ihya' Ulum al-Din, discusses the importance of purifying the heart from excessive attachment to worldly interests and prioritizing spiritual development. His perspective indicates that material possessions are not inherently harmful; rather, the problem arises when wealth becomes the primary objective of human life and weakens religious commitment. Similarly, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, in Madarij al-Salikin, explains spiritual development through the purification of the heart and the proper ordering of human desires in accordance with Islamic teachings. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, through his work Kitab al-Zuhd, also presents examples of simplicity, restraint, and detachment from excessive worldly pleasures among earlier Muslim generations. These perspectives demonstrate that Zuhud should be understood as spiritual discipline rather than an attitude of poverty or social withdrawal. Its application contributes to the development of moral character by encouraging honesty, humility, gratitude, generosity, patience, and responsibility. Therefore, Zuhud provides an important spiritual foundation for Muslims to participate actively in economic and social life without becoming excessively dependent on material possessions.

The Characteristics and Challenges of Modern Consumerism

The literature analysis identifies modern consumerism as a social and economic phenomenon characterized by the excessive importance placed on acquiring and consuming goods and services. In contemporary society, material possessions are increasingly associated with happiness, personal achievement, social recognition, and individual identity. Many individuals evaluate their success through the ownership of luxury products, fashionable clothing, expensive electronic devices, vehicles, and other material symbols(Michman & Mazze, 2006). This tendency demonstrates that consumption is not always motivated by actual needs but may also be influenced by psychological desires and social expectations. The development of globalization, capitalism, digital technology, and social media has further accelerated consumerist behavior by making products and services increasingly accessible. Online shopping platforms, digital advertisements, promotional campaigns, and influencer marketing continuously introduce consumers to new products and lifestyle trends. Consequently, individuals may experience pressure to purchase particular products to maintain their appearance, social status, or perceived position within their communities.

Another important characteristic of modern consumerism is the emergence of impulsive buying and excessive shopping habits. Digital shopping platforms frequently use discounts, limited-time offers,

personalized advertisements, and promotional notifications to encourage immediate purchasing decisions. Social media influencers also contribute to consumption patterns by presenting luxury lifestyles and promoting products as essential elements of modern living. These practices can encourage individuals to purchase goods without carefully considering their actual needs or financial capabilities. Furthermore, social comparison may create dissatisfaction among individuals who perceive their possessions or lifestyles as inferior to those displayed by others. As a result, material satisfaction often becomes temporary because acquiring one product can generate the desire for another. This continuous cycle of consumption may contribute to financial difficulties, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and excessive dependence on material possessions.

Modern consumerism also produces broader social and environmental consequences(Assadourian, 2010). Excessive consumption increases the demand for natural resources, energy, and industrial production, potentially contributing to environmental degradation, pollution, and the accumulation of waste. The continuous replacement of usable products, particularly clothing, electronic devices, and household goods, reinforces unsustainable consumption patterns. From a social perspective, consumerism may strengthen economic inequality and lifestyle competition because individuals with different financial capacities experience unequal opportunities to participate in consumer culture. Moreover, the excessive pursuit of luxury and material recognition can weaken values such as gratitude, simplicity, generosity, and concern for others. These characteristics demonstrate that modern consumerism presents not only economic challenges but also psychological, social, environmental, and spiritual concerns. Therefore, an Islamic ethical perspective is necessary to encourage individuals to reconsider their consumption priorities and establish a more balanced relationship with material possessions.

The Relationship Between Zuhud and Modern Consumerism

The relationship between Zuhud and modern consumerism can be understood through their different orientations toward material possessions, human desires, and the meaning of happiness. Zuhud emphasizes spiritual fulfillment, moderation, and contentment, whereas consumerism frequently encourages material satisfaction through continuous acquisition and consumption(Zafran, 2022). From the perspective of Zuhud, material possessions are temporary resources that should be managed responsibly and utilized for beneficial purposes. Conversely, consumerist lifestyles may encourage individuals to associate personal happiness and social recognition with the quantity, quality, and value of the goods they possess. This fundamental difference demonstrates that Zuhud provides an alternative perspective for evaluating the meaning and purpose of consumption in contemporary society.

One of the most important differences between these two orientations concerns their attitudes toward human desires. Zuhud encourages individuals to control excessive desires and develop Qana'ah, or contentment with what Allah SWT. has provided. Contentment does not mean abandoning ambition or refusing to improve one's economic condition; rather, it means avoiding uncontrolled desires and appreciating existing blessings(De Botton, 2008). Modern consumerism, on the other hand, can continuously stimulate new desires through advertising, social comparison, and changing lifestyle expectations. Consequently, individuals may experience an endless pursuit of material satisfaction without achieving lasting contentment. Zuhud challenges this pattern by emphasizing that genuine happiness should not depend exclusively on material possessions but should also arise from spiritual awareness, gratitude, meaningful relationships, and devotion to Allah SWT.

Another important relationship concerns moderation and responsible consumption. Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to distinguish between legitimate needs and excessive desires when making purchasing decisions. QS. Al-Isra (17): 26–27 establishes the prohibition of extravagance and wastefulness, while QS. Al-A'raf (7): 31 instructs believers to eat and drink without excess. These teachings demonstrate that consumption is permissible and necessary, but it must remain within ethical and responsible boundaries. Through the principles of Zuhud, individuals are encouraged to evaluate whether a purchase is genuinely necessary, financially appropriate, and beneficial. This approach promotes awareness of consumption decisions and discourages unnecessary accumulation. Furthermore, spiritual awareness can strengthen responsible economic behavior by encouraging individuals to consider the moral, social, and environmental consequences of their purchasing habits. Therefore, Zuhud can function as an ethical foundation for evaluating consumption decisions and developing a balanced relationship between material needs and spiritual responsibilities.

The Relevance of Zuhud in Addressing Modern Consumerism

The concept of Zuhud remains relevant in addressing modern consumerism because it provides spiritual and ethical guidance for developing a simple, moderate, and responsible lifestyle. One of its most important contributions is encouraging individuals to prioritize necessities rather than luxury and unnecessary possessions(Danziger, 2004). Developing a simple lifestyle does not mean rejecting comfort or avoiding economic improvement; instead, it involves recognizing the difference between essential needs and excessive desires. Individuals who apply Zuhud principles are encouraged to make purchasing decisions based on necessity, usefulness, and financial capability rather than social pressure or temporary trends. This approach can reduce unnecessary consumption and help individuals establish healthier financial habits.

Furthermore, Zuhud promotes self-discipline and the ability to control material desires. In contemporary society, individuals are frequently exposed to advertisements, promotional campaigns, and social media content that encourage continuous consumption. The application of Zuhud helps Muslims develop greater awareness of these influences and avoid making purchasing decisions based solely on emotional impulses(Islam et al., 2022). This principle is closely related to Qana'ah, which encourages individuals to appreciate their existing possessions and recognize the blessings provided by Allah SWT. Through contentment, individuals can reduce excessive competition, avoid unnecessary comparisons with others, and develop a more stable sense of satisfaction. Qana'ah also teaches that economic improvement should be pursued through lawful and responsible activities rather than through uncontrolled material ambition.

Zuhud is also relevant to promoting responsible consumption by encouraging Muslims to avoid extravagance, wastefulness, and excessive purchasing. Islamic teachings emphasize that wealth is a trust from Allah SWT. and should be managed according to ethical principles. Consequently, individuals should consider not only their personal satisfaction but also the usefulness and consequences of their consumption decisions. This awareness is particularly important in addressing contemporary environmental challenges because unnecessary consumption contributes to resource depletion, pollution, and waste accumulation. By practicing moderation in the use of food, clothing, energy, and other resources, Muslims can translate the spiritual values of Zuhud into environmentally responsible behavior. Although Zuhud is not identical to modern environmental ethics, its emphasis on restraint and avoidance of wastefulness provides a meaningful connection with sustainable consumption.

Another significant contribution of Zuhud is strengthening spiritual awareness and social responsibility. The recognition that worldly possessions are temporary encourages Muslims to prioritize devotion to Allah SWT., moral development, and beneficial social activities(Al-Jayyousi, 2016). Rather than accumulating wealth exclusively for personal satisfaction, individuals are encouraged to utilize their resources to support others through zakat, sadaqah, charitable activities, and community development. This principle demonstrates that Zuhud does not eliminate economic participation but gives it a broader moral purpose. By integrating spiritual awareness, contentment, moderation, and generosity, Zuhud can contribute to addressing the psychological, social, and environmental problems associated with excessive consumerism.

The Practical Application of Zuhud in Contemporary Muslim Life

The practical application of Zuhud in contemporary Muslim life requires the integration of spiritual principles into everyday financial decisions, consumption habits, social interactions, and community activities. At the individual level, Muslims can practice Zuhud by developing wise spending habits, preparing financial priorities, distinguishing between needs and wants, and avoiding unnecessary purchases(KURNIAWAN, 2013). Before purchasing goods, individuals should consider whether the products are genuinely needed, whether they are financially affordable, and whether the purchase provides meaningful benefits. This practice encourages financial discipline and reduces the possibility of impulsive buying. Zuhud can also be reflected in the responsible management of income and wealth, including allocating resources for household necessities, savings, religious obligations, and social assistance.

In the digital era, the application of Zuhud also requires greater awareness when using social media and online shopping platforms. Muslims should avoid excessive exposure to content that promotes luxury lifestyles, material competition, and unnecessary consumption(Raquib et al., 2020). Limiting unnecessary shopping activities, evaluating promotional advertisements critically, and avoiding purchases motivated primarily by social comparison are practical ways to strengthen self-control. Individuals should also understand that social media presentations do not necessarily reflect the actual financial or personal

circumstances of other people. Therefore, comparing personal happiness with the lifestyles displayed online can create unrealistic expectations and dissatisfaction. By applying Zuhud principles, Muslims can use digital technology productively without becoming excessively influenced by consumerist culture.

The application of Zuhud should also extend to family life, Islamic education, and religious communities. Parents can introduce the values of simplicity, gratitude, moderation, and generosity to children through daily examples and responsible financial practices(Sherlock, 2003). Islamic educational institutions can integrate discussions about Zuhud, Islamic consumption ethics, and the prohibition of extravagance into religious learning activities. Similarly, mosques, Islamic organizations, and religious leaders can promote ethical consumption through sermons, educational programs, and community discussions. These initiatives can help Muslims understand that spiritual development is not measured by material wealth or luxury possessions but by faith, good character, and beneficial contributions to society.

Furthermore, Zuhud encourages individuals and communities to prioritize social welfare over unnecessary material accumulation. The practice of zakat, sadaqah, and other charitable activities reflects the principle that wealth should provide benefits beyond individual interests. Muslims who possess sufficient resources are encouraged to support people experiencing poverty, assist educational initiatives, and participate in community development. Such practices strengthen social solidarity and demonstrate the relationship between spiritual detachment and social responsibility. In this way, Zuhud can become a practical ethical principle that influences not only personal consumption behavior but also broader community values. Its application can contribute to developing a society that values moderation, generosity, financial responsibility, and spiritual awareness.

Critical Analysis: Zuhud as an Alternative Ethical Framework for Modern Society

The findings of this literature review suggest that Zuhud has considerable potential to function as an alternative Islamic ethical framework for addressing materialism and excessive consumerism in modern society(Maliki et al., 2022). Contemporary consumer culture frequently presents material accumulation as an important indicator of happiness, achievement, and social recognition. However, this orientation may create continuous dissatisfaction because material satisfaction is often temporary and encourages individuals to pursue additional possessions. Zuhud challenges this understanding by emphasizing that genuine happiness and personal fulfillment should not depend exclusively on wealth, luxury, or social status. Instead, spiritual awareness, gratitude, moral character, meaningful relationships, and devotion to Allah SWT. should become essential foundations of human well-being. Through this perspective, Zuhud contributes to redefining success as a combination of material sufficiency, spiritual fulfillment, and social responsibility.

Nevertheless, the interpretation of Zuhud requires careful consideration to avoid misunderstandings. Zuhud should not be interpreted merely as poverty, rejection of wealth, withdrawal from society, or opposition to economic development(Zunaidi, 2022). Such interpretations may create the mistaken impression that spiritual development requires individuals to abandon productive activities or neglect their responsibilities toward their families and communities. In reality, Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to work, pursue lawful economic activities, manage wealth responsibly, and contribute positively to society. QS. Al-Qasas (28): 77 clearly illustrates the importance of maintaining a balance between worldly interests and the Hereafter. Therefore, the essence of Zuhud lies not in the absence of material possessions but in the absence of excessive attachment to them. A wealthy individual can practice Zuhud when wealth is obtained lawfully, managed responsibly, and utilized for beneficial purposes without becoming the primary objective of life.

From the perspective of contemporary social and environmental challenges, Zuhud also offers meaningful connections with sustainable consumption and environmental ethics. Its emphasis on moderation, avoiding extravagance, and appreciating existing resources can encourage individuals to reduce unnecessary purchases, minimize waste, and utilize natural resources responsibly. These principles are particularly relevant in a society characterized by mass production, consumer competition, and increasing environmental pressures. However, the application of Zuhud to environmental sustainability should be understood as an ethical contribution rather than a direct substitute for broader economic, technological, and institutional solutions. Individual spiritual awareness must also be supported by responsible production systems, effective environmental policies, and community participation.

Furthermore, the relevance of Zuhud extends to the development of responsible economic behavior. By encouraging contentment, self-control, and generosity, Zuhud can help individuals establish healthier relationships with money and material possessions(Zunaidi, 2022). It also emphasizes that

economic activities should serve human welfare rather than become instruments of excessive competition and personal prestige. This perspective provides an important foundation for integrating Islamic spirituality with contemporary discussions about ethical consumption, social justice, and sustainable development. Nevertheless, because the present study is based on library research, its conclusions represent conceptual and interpretative findings from relevant literature rather than empirical evidence demonstrating measurable changes in consumer behavior.

Overall, Zuhud can be understood as an active spiritual and ethical orientation that enables Muslims to participate in modern society while maintaining control over material desires. Its principles encourage a balanced relationship between economic activity, personal needs, religious devotion, and social responsibilities. By integrating simplicity, moderation, contentment, gratitude, and generosity into everyday life, Zuhud offers an Islamic response to the challenges of modern consumerism. Consequently, the concept remains relevant not only as a traditional principle of Islamic spirituality but also as a contemporary ethical framework for developing a more moderate, responsible, environmentally conscious, and spiritually meaningful society.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Zuhud represents an important Islamic spiritual principle that encourages individuals to avoid excessive attachment to worldly possessions while maintaining a balanced relationship between material needs and religious responsibilities. The findings indicate that Zuhud promotes simplicity, moderation, contentment (Qana'ah), gratitude (Syukur), and self-control as essential foundations for responsible living. In contrast, modern consumerism is characterized by materialism, excessive consumption, lifestyle competition, and the continuous pursuit of material satisfaction. These differences demonstrate that Zuhud provides an alternative perspective for understanding happiness and success beyond material wealth. Therefore, Zuhud remains relevant as an ethical and spiritual framework for addressing excessive consumption in contemporary society. Theoretically, this study contributes to Islamic spirituality and contemporary Islamic ethics by connecting classical teachings of Zuhud with modern consumer behavior. It also highlights the importance of integrating spiritual values into discussions of responsible consumption and environmental sustainability. Practically, Muslims are encouraged to distinguish between needs and desires, practice moderate consumption, strengthen gratitude, and prioritize social responsibility. Zuhud values should also be integrated into Islamic education, family practices, and community development. Future research should investigate empirically the relationship between Zuhud and actual Muslim consumption behavior, examine the influence of Islamic spirituality on financial decision-making, compare Zuhud with other approaches to materialism, and explore its contribution to sustainable consumption and environmental awareness.

AUTHORS' DECLARATION

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The author was responsible for the conceptualization, research design, literature collection, data analysis, interpretation, and preparation of the manuscript. The author examined relevant Islamic sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith, classical Islamic literature, and contemporary scholarly publications.

Competing Interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests related to this research, including financial, personal, or institutional relationships that could have influenced the research process, analysis, or publication of this manuscript.

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