



## ***Ujub* and Self-Inflation: Reconstructing The Ethical Structure of *Abyān Al-Ḥawāij* in Dialogue With Contemporary Moral Psychology**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines the concept of *ujub* in the Nusantara Sufi manuscript *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* (copied in 1264 H/1848 CE) and analyzes its structural parallels with the phenomenon of self-inflation in contemporary moral psychology. Using a qualitative manuscript-based approach with philological-hermeneutic analysis and structural comparison, the study reconstructs *ujub* as a coherent ethical structure rather than merely a normative moral prohibition. The findings reveal that *ujub* in the manuscript is articulated as a condition of evaluative self-inflation characterized by exaggerated self-appraisal, asymmetrical attribution of success, moral superiority, and illusion of spiritual autonomy. These structural elements resonate with constructs in modern psychology, including self-enhancement bias, overconfidence bias, self-serving bias, and moral superiority illusion. However, while psychological theories frame these tendencies within cognitive-regulatory and adaptive functions, *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* situates them within a theological-ethical horizon emphasizing humility and awareness of human dependence on the Divine. This study contributes to comparative moral psychology by positioning a Nusantara Sufi manuscript as a conceptual source for interdisciplinary dialogue. It demonstrates that classical Islamic ethical texts contain systematic moral analysis compatible with contemporary theoretical discourse, while maintaining distinct epistemological foundations. The findings also offer implications for Islamic education, suggesting that moral cultivation should integrate spiritual discipline with awareness of cognitive mechanisms underlying self-inflation.

**Keywords:** *Ujub*, Self-Inflation, Manuscript, *Abyān al-Ḥawāij*, The Ethical Structure, Moral Psychology,

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the era of social media and a culture of digital visibility, morality often appears as a public performance rather than a purely internal orientation. Piety is not only lived but also displayed; good deeds are not only performed but also displayed and measured through social recognition. Self-exposure, social validation, and performative religiosity influence how

individuals interpret goodness, not just experience it (Grubbs, Exline, Campbell, Twenge, & Pargament, 2018). Contemporary moral psychology explains this phenomenon through the concepts of self-enhancement, overconfidence bias, self-serving bias, and the illusion of moral superiority—the tendency to judge oneself as morally superior to others while denying one's own internal biases (Moore & Healy, 2008; Tappin & McKay, 2017).

This orientation triggers a tendency to judge oneself as superior to others—not only in terms of achievement but also morality. In social psychology, this phenomenon of excessive self-evaluation is explained through the concepts of self-enhancement and illusory superiority, in which individuals systematically overestimate their own qualities compared to others (Dong, van Prooijen, van Lange, 2019). Moral psychology shows that the tendency to judge oneself as more moral than others often emerges in public contexts but is not always reflected in private behaviour (moral hypocrisy). People are more likely to display moral behaviour when it can be demonstrated to others than when it is private (Dong et al., 2019). This aligns with findings that feelings of moral superiority often strengthen self-enhancement motivations in social contexts (Liang, Dondeyne, Hodges, & Hoorens, 2024).

However, the problem of self-inflation in the moral and religious realms is not new. The Sufi tradition has long identified the dangers of piety contaminated by self-admiration, known as *ujub*. In classical literature, *ujub* is understood as a sense of admiration for one's deeds and knowledge, thus obscuring awareness of one's limitations and dependence on God (Al-Gazali, 2005). However, its discussion often takes a normative-didactic-creedal form and has not been reconstructed as a systematic ethical structure or analytically dialogued with contemporary moral psychology theory (Mubarok, Khobir, & Azzuhri, 2026).

Furthermore, Nusantara Sufi texts are rarely positioned as conceptual sources for developing ethical theory. Yet, these texts do not simply transmit classical teachings but actively rearticulate them within local socio-cultural contexts (Fathurahman, 2005). The *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* manuscript, copied in 1264 AH (c. 1848 CE), contains a relatively structured discussion of *ujub*, encompassing its definition, causes, and spiritual implications. This text provides an opportunity to read *ujub* not simply as a moral prohibition, but as an inner state with specific internal patterns.

Based on this background, this article aims to reconstruct the concept of *ujub* in the *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* as a coherent ethical structure and analyze its structural equivalence with the phenomenon defined in this article as self-evaluative inflation in contemporary psychology. This article argues that *ujub* in this text parallels findings from contemporary psychology. Thus, this study builds a conceptual dialogue between Nusantara Sufi ethics and contemporary moral psychology in a non-reductionist manner and demonstrates the relevance of classical texts to modern discussions of self and morality.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative manuscript-based study that employs a philological-hermeneutic approach and a conceptual comparative analysis. Referring to Creswell's classification, this research falls into an interpretive qualitative design, aiming to understand and reconstruct the meaning of a text within its historical and intellectual context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The hermeneutic approach interprets the text's meaning through contextual and

dialogical reading between the text and the reader, as explained in the tradition of philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2004). The research was conducted through library research, focusing on the Nusantara Sufi manuscript of *Abyān al-Ḥawāij*. The analysis process was carried out through intensive close reading and systematic textual analysis, a method common in humanities and religious studies (Bowen, 2009).

The primary data source is the *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* manuscript, copied in 1264 AH (c. 1848 CE). The data consisted of text units discussing the concept of *ujub*, including its definition, causes, characteristics, and spiritual implications. Data collection techniques included text documentation, namely, transcription of relevant sections, identification of key terms, and thematic grouping based on the manuscript's discussion structure. Documentation as a data collection technique in qualitative research is recognized as a stable source and rich in historical context (Bowen, 2009). Secondary literature, specifically journal articles on moral and personality psychology, was used as a comparative framework to identify structural parallels.

Data analysis was conducted through three operational stages. First, a philological-conceptual reconstruction to systematically identify the internal structure of the concept of *ujub* in the text. Second, thematic analysis to map patterns of self-evaluative inflation, attributional distortion, and the illusion of autonomy that emerge in the manuscript narrative. Thematic analysis refers to the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006), which emphasizes the systematic identification of meaning patterns in qualitative data. Third, a structural comparative analysis was conducted by comparing the textual findings with contemporary moral psychology constructs, without equating their ontological horizons. The validity of the analysis is maintained through the internal coherence of the text, consistency of argumentation, and triangulation of academic literature that has undergone peer review (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Manuscript Description and Pedagogical Function

The *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* Manuscript is the work of Kiai Haji Ahmad Rifai. The manuscript consists of 268 pages on 22x17 cm European paper, with text measuring 15x11 cm and 11 lines per page. It is written in Naskhi script with black ink and red rubrication, without decorative illumination. The text of *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* is written in *naẓam* (verses) with paired rhyme schemes (a-a, a-a, etc.), without decorative illumination.

The absence of artistic ornamentation and the layout's simplicity indicate that this text's functional orientation is intended for teaching. The structure of the *naẓam* demonstrates a pedagogical function, with its rhyme scheme facilitating memorization and internalization (Abdullah, Islam, & Suparno, 2024). This indicates that the discussion of *ujub* (inheritance) in this manuscript is not merely a theoretical reflection, but part of a moral education strategy within the educational environment.

### Structural Analysis of *Ujub in Abyān al-Ḥawāij*

Based on textual analysis, the concept of *ujub* is constructed through interconnected conceptual elements, ranging from terminological explanations, normative warnings, relationships with other traits such as arrogance and *ria*, to the resulting moral consequences. The following table presents the results of the categorization of textual units based on four

analytical dimensions: text citation (transliteration), core translation, conceptual structure, and theoretical implications, to demonstrate how the construction of *ujub* is constructed within the overall narrative of the text.

Table 1. Conceptual Construction of *Ujub* in the Text

Text Citation (Transliteration)	Translation Core	Conceptual Structure	Theoretical Implications
<i>ujub tégésé... iku anggawoakén dalém kébatinan, ... iku majibakén séntosané badan saking siksa akhirat kaslamétané</i>	<i>Ujub</i> is defined as inner pride and confidence in one's safety from the punishment of the hereafter.	Definition of <i>Ujub</i>	<i>Ujub</i> stems from an inner conviction of one's own sufficiency and spiritual security.
<i>iku kawilang dosa gédlé ning batiné, pérek ngapésakén ing Allah pangupayané</i>	<i>Ujub</i> is a major sin and weakens one's dependence on Allah.	Inner Sin, the Illusion of Spiritual Security	<i>Ujub</i> distorts theological awareness by replacing submission to God with a sense of egotistical security.
<i>Nyata haram wong gung adiguna... Fa la ya'manu makerallabi...</i>	Emphasizing one's superiority and feeling secure from Allah's punishment is forbidden.	The Prohibition of Self-Glorification	Self-glorification contradicts the principle of servanthood and the Quran's warnings against false security.
<i>Lan ora nana wong nyéntosaakén ning atiné...</i>	No one should feel secure from Allah's power except those who are at a loss.	Pseudo-Moral Security	<i>Ujub</i> breeds spiritual negligence and a disregard for Islamic law.
<i>Utawi satéméné 'ujb... takabur kang basil dalém kébatinan, kélawan angén-angén rumasa kasampurnan, saking ngilmuné lan akébh ngamalé kabénéran.</i>	<i>Ujub</i> is a form of inner arrogance born of the assumption of one's own perfection due to knowledge and numerous good deeds.	Inner Pride	<i>Ujub</i> is structurally linked to arrogance and inflated moral self-assessments.
<i>Maka wong kang tinému ngalim... ingkang iku rumasa bènér sarira késawang</i>	Feeling righteous even though one's knowledge and deeds are imperfect leads to misguidance.	Distortion of Self-Evaluation	<i>Ujub</i> blinds moral evaluation and inhibits self-criticism.
<i>Nyana bènér tan anut syara'... ujub riya takaburé tan kinawruban</i>	A person can feel righteous yet unknowingly fall into the trap of <i>ujub</i> , ostentation, and arrogance.	Undisguised Moral Corruption	<i>Ujub</i> operates subtly and often goes unnoticed by the perpetrator.
<i>Tinému wong labiré haram... sabab rumasa sarirané kéapésan</i>	Those who are aware of their weaknesses are safer than those who feel superior.	Consciousness and Knowledge as Antidotes to <i>Ujub</i>	Awareness of one's limitations serves as a bulwark against <i>ujub</i> .

### Definition and Ontological Construction

The definition of *ujub* in the text *Abyān al-Hawāij* etymologically refers to inner pride. Terminologically, *ujub* is understood as the belief in one's security and safety from the

punishment of the hereafter. In this sense, *ujub* is not only a feeling of pride in the affective dimension but also develops into a cognitive attitude that gives rise to an inner claim to spiritual safety. In other words, *ujub* encompasses internally constructed feelings, ways of thinking, and self-assessments.

Al-Ghazali (2005) explains that *ujub* is an attitude of admiration and self-aggrandisement toward one's deeds, knowledge, or abilities, which gives rise to a sense of satisfaction and self-sufficiency. Meanwhile, Al-Asfahani (2009) defines *ujub* as a person's presumption that they possess something that others do not. This type of prejudice is destructive because it positions oneself as the centre of excellence and glory. Thus, *ujub* can be defined as an inner state characterised by self-aggrandisement, a sense of self-sufficiency, and a belief in one's own specialness and spiritual security.

Ontologically, *ujub* in the text *Abyān al-Hawāij* is understood as a state of mind that falls into the category of inner sin. It is not always apparent in outward actions, as its existence operates at a hidden level of consciousness and inner orientation. In this regard, the text's quote "*iku kawilang dosa gédhé ning batiné*" (*iku kawilang dosa gédhé ning batiné*) aligns with Al-Qasimi's (2010) explanation, which positions *ujub*, which operates in the inner realm, as the root of arrogance (*al-kibr*) as an outward expression.

As an inner sin, *ujub* arises when a person exaggerates the blessings he or she has, feeling at ease and relying on them, while forgetting that these blessings originate from Allah (Al-Zabidi, 2024). In this sense, the essence of *ujub* lies not in the existence of blessings themselves, but rather in how the heart positions those blessings, namely, whether they are seen as gifts from God or as inherent perfection.

At that point, the feeling of serenity toward blessings is no longer based on gratitude, but on a sense of ownership and self-sufficiency. Therefore, *ujub* is an inner state that operates at the deepest level of consciousness and is not always apparent in outward behaviour. The implication is that *ujub* can accompany worship and good deeds without changing their outward form, but it can also damage the spiritual quality within.

### **Epistemological Dimension**

Epistemologically, findings in the text *Abyān al-Hawāij* indicate that *ujub* (self-delusion) arises from self-perception of knowledge and good deeds. *Ujub* blinds a person to their shortcomings, believing they possess superiority and a special position before Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) and humanity (Al-Gazali, 2005). In the context of worship and good deeds, those affected by *ujub* tend to exaggerate their deeds and feel they have meritorious service before Allah. This attitude indicates that they no longer view their deeds as gifts and favours from Allah, but rather as the result of their own efforts. However, the guidance and ability to do good are entirely a gift from Allah.

When a person feels admiration for their deeds, they become less sensitive to their own shortcomings and defects. They are deceived by their own judgment, feel safe from Allah's plots and punishment, and believe they hold a special position before Him. In fact, he considers the deeds done as a basis for demanding certain rights or services, even though all of these deeds are essentially gifts from Allah alone (Al-Qasimi, 2010).

A person may feel pious, believe they are the most correct, or even believe they are following the Shari'a, yet they are unwittingly trapped in '*ujb*' (self-delusion). The text "*Nyana bènèr tan anut syara' panggèran, ujub riya takaburé tan kinawruhan*" emphasizes that '*ujb*' makes one feel righteous and knowledgeable, even though this may not necessarily be in accordance with the standards of Allah's Shari'a. In this context, '*ujb*' functions as a distortion in religious self-perception. It creates an exaggerated and disproportionate self-assessment, so that the individual loses the ability to correct their own shortcomings. As a result, what can be called a "moral blind spot" emerges, a condition where a person is no longer able to see their own weaknesses because they are obscured by self-admiration (Jones, 2018).

### **Theological Dimension**

The theological dimension is an important aspect of the structure of the teachings of *Abyān al-Hawāij*. The prohibition against feeling secure from the makr of Allah indicates that '*ujb*' also touches on the realm of monotheism. In this case, *ujub* distorts theological awareness by replacing submission and fear of God with a sense of self-security. In fact, *ujub* shifts the focus of salvation from God's grace to personal performance and achievement. Thus, *ujub* is positioned as an attitude that implicitly undermines the recognition of God's will as absolute, because it assumes that salvation can be ensured through one's own abilities and achievements rather than solely by God's will and grace.

Theologically, *ujub* encourages one to forget or trivialize one's sins, and to feel secure from God's punishment. In this state, the person practicing *ujub* becomes blind to the flaws of their deeds and is deceived by their own judgment. In Sufism, a believer must walk a balance between fear (*khauf*) and hope (*raja'*) (Al-Gazali, 2005). Both protect a servant from falling into despair or a deceptive sense of security. Moreover, the Qur'an itself reminds us: "Do they feel secure from the plots of Allah? No one feels secure from the plots of Allah except the losers." (Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 99)

### **Psychological Dimension**

*Ujub* grows from feelings of sufficiency and superiority. *Ujub* leads to a reluctance to advice and a feeling of sufficiency in one's own opinion (Al-Gazali, 2005). In this regard, the text *Abyān al-Hawāij* warns with the phrase: "*Ingkang iku rumasa bènèr sarira késawang.*" This statement emphasizes that *ujub* fosters a sense of righteousness and obscures awareness of one's own weaknesses and limitations.

According to Al-Qasimi (2010), *ujub* encourages a person to praise and flatter themselves excessively. When a person admires their own opinions, deeds, or intelligence, this attitude prevents them from learning, seeking advice, or questioning those with greater knowledge. They feel self-sufficient and use their own opinions as their primary reference.

In this state, a person can feel proud of an erroneous opinion simply because it originates from their own mind. They rejoice in their ideas, but do not show the same attitude toward the thoughts of others. As a result, they stubbornly defend their views and reject the advice or opinions of others. This attitude keeps him in error without a willingness to self-correct. Therefore, *ujub* is considered a form of *mublikat*, which is a destructive act (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

### **The Antidote to *Ujub***

The text of *Abyān al-Hawāij* succinctly formulates this solution in the phrase: "*Iku dadi slamêt tan dosa ka'ujban, sabab rumasa sarirané kêapêsan.*" The phrase *rumasa sarirané kêapêsan* emphasizes that awareness of one's own weaknesses and limitations is the primary foundation of spiritual salvation. By realizing that one has no power or virtue except by God's grace, one avoids the tendency to exalt oneself.

Al-Zabidi (2024) states that the source of *ujub* is ignorance, namely the lack of awareness that all one's advantages come from God. The cure for *ujub* is true knowledge (*al-'ilm*) and the awareness that the servant, his deeds, and all his attributes are gifts from God. This awareness affirms that only God is deserving of praise and blessings. This awareness will foster humility, gratitude, and fear of losing blessings.

Overall, *ujub* in *Abyān al-Hawāij* is understood as an inner illness that makes a person feel secure and righteous about themselves. *Ujub* is an inner arrogance that shifts a servant's orientation from submission to Allah to self-aggrandizement. This attitude operates subtly. It fosters a false sense of security, weakens awareness of Allah's will, and gradually undermines one's moral integrity. As an antidote, the text emphasizes awareness of one's own weaknesses. This awareness protects the heart from ego-inflation and lays the foundation for the growth of sincerity and reliance on Allah.

### ***Ujub* as Self-Inflation**

Self-inflation is not discussed through a single theory, but rather through a number of distinct but structurally intersecting theoretical constructs. These constructs demonstrate a common pattern of exaggerated self-evaluation, disproportionate internal attributions, and a tendency to defensively maintain a superior image. For the purposes of this article, these patterns are summarized under the phenomenological category of self-inflation.

One construct is narcissistic self-enhancement, which is the tendency to overestimate one's qualities, competence, and worth. Narcissism is not simply high self-esteem, but a disproportionate self-evaluation of one's abilities and superiority. Individuals with narcissistic tendencies have a superiority in self-assessment compared to others. Di Pierro & Fanti (2021) showed that expressions of narcissism correlate with a strong sense of superiority in various aspects of the self. Morf and Rhodewalt (2001) explained that narcissistic individuals actively seek external validation to maintain a superior self-image. Grijalva et al. (2015) also showed that narcissism correlates with high perceptions of self-leadership, although this is not always accompanied by better objective performance. This indicates inflated self-views in the domains of competence and social status.

A similar phenomenon is discussed in terms of overconfidence bias, an individual's tendency to overestimate their decision-making capacity. Moore and Healy (2008) distinguish three forms: overestimation (increasing one's own abilities), overplacement (considering oneself as superior to others), and overprecision (being overly confident in the accuracy of one's own

judgments). Furthermore, Zell and Krizan (2014) show that overconfident individuals rate themselves above average across various ability domains (the better-than-average effect).

Another construct is self-serving bias, the tendency to attribute success to internal factors (ability, personal effort) and failure to external factors. This bias indicates an imbalanced attribution mechanism that ultimately disproportionately reinforces a positive self-image. Mezulis et al. (2004) show that this bias is a robust pattern across cultures and contexts, although its extent varies.

The phenomenon of self-inflation also manifests in the moral superiority illusion, the tendency for individuals to perceive themselves as more moral than others. Alicke et al. (1995) showed that individuals systematically assess themselves as superior to the average person on various positive traits, including moral dimensions. Tappin and McKay (2017) demonstrated that perceptions of moral superiority are often illusory and serve to maintain a positive moral identity. Thus, self-inflation is not only cognitive or performative but also extends to normative and moral dimensions.

Meanwhile, in analytical psychology, the phenomenon of self-inflation manifests itself in the form of ego inflation. Carl Jung defined ego inflation as the unconscious expansion of one's personality beyond its intended limits. When this occurs, a person identifies with a persona or archetype, resulting in an exaggerated sense of self-importance. This inflation leads to grandiosity and an exaggerated sense of autonomy (Kam, 2023).

From these various approaches, contemporary psychological studies acknowledge the existence of internal mechanisms that encourage individuals to exaggerate their self-worth (narcissistic self-enhancement), attribute success unilaterally to themselves (self-serving bias), ignore personal limitations and mistakes (overconfidence bias), and maintain a superior self-image compared to others (moral superiority bias). This structure is summarized in this article as the construct of self-inflation, which conceptually has structural parallels with the concept of *ujub* in the spiritual ethics of Sufism.

### **Structural Parallels between Self-Inflation and *Ujub***

This section aims to demonstrate the structural parallels between self-inflation in contemporary psychology and the concept of *ujub* in the Sufism of *Abyān al-Hawāij*. The approach employed is not a direct terminological identification or equating of terms, but rather a deep structure analysis, namely, an investigation of the internal mechanisms underlying both concepts. This approach focuses on how the psychological dynamics mapped in self-inflation theory align with the moral-spiritual description of *ujub*.

First, the enlargement of the centre of consciousness. In psychological studies, particularly regarding the constructs of narcissistic self-enhancement and ego inflation, individuals tend to position themselves as the centre of value and source of superiority (Di Pierro & Fanti, 2021; Kam, 2023). This mechanism operates through an exaggerated internal attribution of positive qualities, so that the self serves as the primary standard of evaluation (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Thus, the legitimacy of value no longer rests on objective reality or external relations, but rather on the construction of personal superiority.

This pattern finds a correspondence in the text of *Abyān al-Hawāij* through the phrase “... *rumasa kasampurnan, saking ngilmuné lan akééh ngamalé kabênêran.*” This phrase suggests that a

sense of perfection is built on the possession of knowledge and numerous deeds, so that self-awareness centres on personal achievement as a source of legitimacy for value. This construction aligns with the explanation in *Iḥyā' 'ulum al-dīn*, which defines *ujub* as a condition in which deeds and knowledge are perceived as inherent perfection rather than as divine gifts (Al-Ghazali, 2005). It is at this point that the corresponding structural parallel of self-inflation and *ujub* appears: the self serves as a source of validation and a measure of excellence.

Second, the illusion of security and self-confidence. In cognitive psychology, overconfidence bias refers to three forms of illusion: overestimation, overplacement, and overprecision, which lead individuals to place themselves above average and be overly confident in the accuracy of their judgments (Moore & Healy, 2008). This mechanism produces a subjective sense of certainty disproportionate to objective reality, leading individuals to feel secure within their own evaluative framework and to tend to close off room for correction.

A similar structure is evident in the *Abyān al-Ḥawāj* through the phrase "*iku majibakên séntosané badan saking siksa akhirat kaslamêtané*," which describes the belief in one's salvation from the punishment of the afterlife due to one's good deeds. This sense of security is not merely a religious hope, but a form of internal certainty born from self-evaluation of one's deeds and spiritual quality. This explanation aligns with the description in *Iḥāf al-sadāh al-muttaqīn*, which states that *ujub* does not stop at pride, but develops into a false sense of security regarding one's safety (Al-Zabidi, 2024). In this configuration, the sense of security becomes a form of self-assurance that precludes re-evaluation. Structurally, this condition parallels overconfidence bias: individuals feel self-sufficient and no longer feel the urgency to correct themselves.

Third, the distortion of success attribution. In social psychology, self-serving bias explains the tendency of individuals to attribute success to internal factors (ability, effort, character), while displacing failure to external factors (situations, fate, or other people) (Mezulis et al., 2004). This mechanism serves to maintain a positive self-image by integrating success into the core identity.

In the concept of *ujub*, spiritual blessings and successes are attributed to personal capacity, as if they were born of complete self-autonomy. Moral, intellectual, or religious successes are internalized as the result of one's own efforts. Meanwhile, external factors such as God's grace, mercy, and guidance are reduced or even eliminated from reflective consciousness (Al-Gazali, 2005).

Thus, both self-serving bias and *ujub* exhibit parallel structural patterns: (1) integration of success into self-identity, (2) marginalization of external factors from the narrative of success, and (3) defensive reinforcement of self-image. The difference lies in their normative horizons. In psychology, this bias is understood as a self-regulatory mechanism, whereas in Sufism, it is viewed as *al-mublikat*, a distortion of consciousness that undermines the purity of intentions and humanity's transcendental relationship with God (Mezulis et al., 2004; Al-Gazali, 2005).

Fourth, moral blind spots and the illusion of superiority. In moral psychology, moral superiority bias indicates an individual's tendency to perceive themselves as more moral than others. Research by Alicke et al. (1995) and Tappin & McKay (2017) shows that individuals systematically perceive themselves as above average in ethical dimensions. Thus, self-inflation extends to the normative realm: not only are competence or achievement inflated, but also one's moral qualities.

A strong parallel is evident in the description of *ujub* (self-righteousness) in the *Abyān al-Hawāij*. The text states: "*nyana bènêr tan anut syara' panggêran, ujub riya takaburê tan kinawruhan*" and "*ingkang iku rumasa bènêr sarira kêsawang.*" This expression indicates a condition when someone believes they are right, even without conformity to sharia, while the elements of *ujub*, *riya*, and *takabur* are no longer conscious. Here, reflective blindness occurs, where inner errors are masked by moral convictions about oneself. *Ujub* emerges in the moral and spiritual realm, feeling more devout, sincere, and righteous than others.

### **Critical Differences: Where Psychology and Spiritual Ethics Diverge**

While there are strong structural parallels between self-inflation in psychology and the concept of *ujub* in Islamic spiritual ethics, the two are not identical. This section outlines these fundamental differences in four key aspects.

First, there is a difference in horizon. In contemporary psychology, constructs such as narcissistic self-enhancement, overconfidence, and self-serving can be understood within a descriptive-empirical framework. The primary focus is on explaining how cognitive and self-regulatory mechanisms operate and how they impact social adaptation and psychological well-being. In contrast, in Islamic spiritual ethics, *ujub* is not merely a psychological phenomenon but a normative and moral category. It is understood as a deviation of the heart (*inbiraḥ qalbī*) that has ethical and afterlife consequences.

For example, Morf and Rhodewalt (2001) describe narcissism as a self-regulatory system that functions to maintain grandiosity through cognitive and interpersonal strategies. Their evaluation is functional, namely, whether these mechanisms are adaptive or maladaptive in a given social context. Thus, while psychology asks, "How do these mechanisms work?", the spiritual tradition of Sufism asks, "How do these mechanisms affect safety and purity of intention?" The difference lies not in the structure of symptoms, but in the framework of value evaluation.

Second, there are differences in ontology. Modern psychology generally operates within a naturalistic ontological framework: the self is understood as an organized cognitive-affective system, the result of biological, social, and developmental interactions. Distortions such as overconfidence (Moore & Healy, 2008) are explained as biases in information processing. In the spiritual ethics of Sufism, the self is understood not only as a psychological system but as a moral-spiritual entity with an ontological relationship with God. *Ujub* occurs when the self severs the conscious connection to the transcendent source of value.

Third, there are differences in goals. In psychology, the goal of analysis is to improve well-being, self-assessment accuracy, and social adaptation. Biases such as the self-serving bias can be viewed as a protective mechanism for self-esteem (Mezulis et al., 2004). However, in the spiritual ethics of Sufism, the primary goal is not self-esteem stability, but rather purity of intention (*ikhlas*) and humility (*tawāḍu*). Psychological mechanisms considered to maintain self-esteem, from a spiritual perspective, actually become barriers to moral awareness and closeness to God.

Fourth, epistemological differences. Psychology operates through empirical methods, including experiments, surveys, meta-analyses, and statistical analyses. Phenomena such as the moral superiority illusion (Tappin & McKay, 2017) are identified through experimental design

and comparative analysis of self-perception. In contrast, the concept of *ujub* emerges from normative reflection, spiritual experience, and textual authority. Therefore, structural parallels do not imply epistemological equivalence. The two exist within different knowledge regimes.

Based on this analysis, it can be asserted that various constructs in contemporary psychology depict patterns of self-inflation that are structurally parallel to the concept of *ujub* in the Sufi ethics of *Abyān al-Ḥawāij*. This similarity is evident in the inflated self-worth, distorted attributions of success, and the illusion of autonomy that sustains a superior image.

However, these parallels do not eliminate the differences in framework. Psychology explains it as a cognitive-regulatory mechanism related to self-function and adaptation, while Sufism views it as a moral-spiritual problem that requires purification of the heart. Therefore, this discussion does not intend to equate the two concepts, but rather to emphasize the structural overlap and epistemological boundaries that must be maintained in an interdisciplinary reading.

## CONCLUSION

This study finds that the description of *ujub* in the *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* manuscript is not merely normative-moral but also contains a systematic psychological structure. Through textual analysis of the manuscript, *ujub* is understood as an inflated sense of self-worth, accompanied by absolute internal attributions of success, disregard for one's limitations, and a sense of moral superiority. This finding becomes significant when compared with contemporary psychological constructs: it shows strong parallels with the phenomenon formulated in this article, self-inflation, which is evident in theories of narcissism, overconfidence bias, self-serving bias, and the illusion of moral superiority. Thus, the *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* manuscript demonstrates that classical Sufi concepts resonate structurally with contemporary empirical findings.

The novelty of this research lies in demonstrating that classical Sufi texts are not merely normative but also contain analytical depth structurally aligned with empirical findings in contemporary psychology. Thus, *Abyān al-Ḥawāij* can be read not only as a text on spiritual ethics but also as a conceptual resource for developing an Islamic-based comparative moral psychology.

Scientifically, these results open the opportunity to develop a framework for comparative moral psychology based on Islamic values, by utilizing Sufi texts as conceptual resources that can be read through a psychological lens without reductionism. Practically, the implications for Islamic education are quite fundamental: preventing *ujub* (self-inflation) is not sufficient through normative advice; it must be complemented by literacy on the mechanisms of attribution bias and self-inflation, so that moral development addresses the reflective and cognitive dimensions of students.

This research has limitations. First, the study is conceptual-comparative and has not included empirical field verification. Second, the psychological analysis focuses on specific mainstream constructs and does not include cross-cultural, age, or gender variations. Third, no experimental testing has been conducted on the effectiveness of Islamic educational interventions in reducing the tendency toward self-inflation. Fourth, the term "self-inflation" is an analytical construct of the author that still requires further conceptual strengthening and operationalization. Further research with a larger sample, a mixed-methods approach, and direct

testing of educational interventions is needed to better understand the relationship between *ujub* (self-confidence) in the *Abyān al-Hawāij* and self-inflation. With stronger results, the formulation of Islamic educational policies and models will be more context-specific and effective in fostering humility amid a modern culture that tends to promote ego inflation.

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