



Developing the Attitude of Contentment (*Qonaah*) to Avoid Consumerism in the Era of Self-Reward

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Abstract. This study adopts an interdisciplinary approach to explore the phenomenon of self-reward, which has become increasingly prevalent in modern life and often leads to excessive consumer behavior. Initially intended as a way to reward oneself after achieving specific goals, self-reward can evolve into a justification for a materialistic lifestyle, where happiness is measured by material possessions. In light of this, the attitude of *qonaah* (contentment with what one has) emerges as a highly relevant solution to combat social pressures and consumerist temptations. The research methodology integrates two key approaches: Sufism and Psychotherapy. From a spiritual standpoint, the study delves into the teachings of *qonaah* within the Sufi tradition, where *qonaah* is seen as a means to strengthen one's relationship with God and attain inner peace. The research explores how the practice of *qonaah* in Sufism can help individuals overcome their dependency on material things, encouraging spiritual growth that leads to balance and authentic happiness. On the psychological front, the study investigates how *qonaah* can be applied to counter excessive consumer behavior through psychotherapy. This approach focuses on managing excessive desires, reducing stress, and improving life satisfaction. It identifies how adopting the attitude of *qonaah* can help individuals reduce social pressures and enhance their overall quality of life by prioritizing mental well-being. By combining both the spiritual framework of Sufism and the psychological principles of psychotherapy, this study seeks to provide a holistic and practical strategy for addressing excessive consumer behavior in the era of self-reward. Ultimately, the aim is to offer valuable insights on balancing the spiritual and psychological dimensions of daily life while providing solutions for navigating the challenges posed by a materialistic modern lifestyle.

Keywords: *Self-Reward; Consumerism; Qonaah; Sufism*

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly materialistic modern life, the phenomenon of self-reward has become one of the most prominent forms of consumer behavior (Fadlatunnisa, 2022). This term refers to the habit of giving oneself rewards, often in the form of purchasing goods or indulging in certain experiences after achieving goals or coping with life's pressures. However, in practice, this concept often serves as a justification for excessive and uncontrolled consumption. This behavior can lead individuals into a consumerist lifestyle, where happiness and life satisfaction are measured by material possessions and short-term pleasures.

In an era filled with materialistic challenges and consumerism, the attitude of *qonaah* becomes increasingly essential for daily life (Abdullah et al., 2020). As social media and technology amplify consumerist culture, many people are tempted to constantly follow trends for the sake of self-image and temporary happiness. However, through *qonaah*, individuals can manage these desires, feel content, and avoid wasteful spending, thereby achieving financial balance. This attitude also reduces stress and social pressure, as *qonaah* helps individuals accept their circumstances sincerely and avoid comparisons with others.

Beyond this, *qonaah* cultivates gratitude for the blessings already received, encouraging a focus on true happiness that comes from within (Pangestuti & Darsinah, 2023). In the long term, *qonaah* promotes a simple and sustainable lifestyle, which benefits not only personal well-being but also the environment. From a spiritual perspective, *qonaah* strengthens one's relationship with God, teaching surrender and acceptance of predetermined sustenance, thereby enhancing inner peace and spiritual quality.

The attitude of *qonaah* is highly relevant in maintaining life balance amid the temptations of consumerism, social pressures, and material needs in the modern era. Living with *qonaah*, which involves feeling content and sincere with what one possesses, brings numerous benefits-spiritually, emotionally, and materially. First, *qonaah* provides inner peace and calm by helping individuals accept everything with gratitude, thus avoiding envy or dissatisfaction (Halik, 2020). This attitude also fosters a higher sense of gratitude, enabling appreciation for existing blessings and reducing stress from striving to meet social standards. Financially, *qonaah* encourages wise money management, steering individuals away from unnecessary purchases and prioritizing essential needs. The happiness derived from *qonaah* is simpler and more genuine, not dependent on material possessions but on good relationships with family, health, and spiritual achievements (H.M. Yahya & Rahmat, 2021). Additionally, this attitude fosters independence, making individuals less influenced by others' opinions or expectations.

Spiritually, *qonaah* enhances faith in God and demonstrates acceptance of His will (Bagis, Adawiyah, Purnomo, & Sudjadi, 2024). Moreover, *qonaah* helps improve social relationships by reducing envy and fostering healthier interactions. In the long term, *qonaah* promotes a simple and sustainable lifestyle, reducing unnecessary consumption and enhancing overall life satisfaction. This attitude serves as a key to living a more meaningful, peaceful, and quality life in a world often filled with materialistic and consumerist temptations.

Sufism, as the spiritual aspect of Islam, provides deep solutions through the concept of *qonaah*, which emphasizes the attitude of being content and accepting of what one possesses. (Abbas et al., 2024) In Sufi teachings, *qonaah* is a key to achieving inner peace and freedom from dependence on material wealth. This attitude directs individuals to focus more on spiritual well-being rather than fleeting worldly pleasures. By developing *qonaah*, individuals can not only avoid the traps of consumerism but also build healthier relationships with themselves and their surroundings.

In the context of psychotherapy, fostering *qonaah* can also positively impact mental health (Azkarisa & Siregar, 2020). When a person consciously accepts what they have without succumbing to social pressures to acquire more, they tend to experience lower stress levels and greater life satisfaction. This journal aims to explore how *qonaah* can be developed as an effective strategy to counter excessive consumer behavior, particularly in the era of self-reward. By integrating Sufi approaches and psychotherapy, this study seeks to discover more holistic methods for fostering balanced spiritual and mental awareness amidst the temptations of modern consumerism.

Sub Point

1. Phenomenon of Self-Reward in Modern Life

- a. *Self-reward as a part of consumerist culture.*
- b. *Its shift from positive reinforcement to indulgence in luxury and short-term pleasures.*
- c. *Role of social media in intensifying consumerist tendencies.*

2. The Role of Qonaah

- a. *Definition and importance of qonaah in managing excessive desires.*
- b. *Benefits of qonaah: financial balance, reduced stress, and enhanced gratitude.*

3. Sufism and Qonaah

- a. *Sufism's contribution to developing qonaah through spiritual practices like dzikir and reflection.*
- b. *Achieving deeper happiness through spiritual rather than material fulfillment.*

4. Psychotherapeutic Context

- a. *Use of qonaah in reducing mental stress caused by social pressures.*
- b. *Techniques for integrating qonaah in therapy, such as mindfulness and introspection.*

5. Social and Environmental Implications

- a. *Positive effects of qonaah on relationships and social harmony.*
- b. *Promoting sustainable and environmentally conscious lifestyles.*

LITERATUR REVIEW

The literature review examines previous research and theoretical frameworks that underpin the discussion of *qonaah* and its application to modern consumerist challenges.

1. Self-Reward and Consumerism

- a. Studies highlight self-reward as a growing phenomenon in materialistic cultures, where happiness is often equated with material possessions (Fadlatunnisa, 2022).
- b. Social media's role in amplifying consumerist behaviors, fostering high societal standards, and encouraging excessive spending.

2. The Concept of Qonaah

- a. Defined as contentment with what one has, *qonaah* is rooted in Islamic teachings and Sufism (Ali, 2024). It serves as a countermeasure to the pressures of consumerism by emphasizing gratitude and simplicity.

- b. Long-term benefits of *qonaah*, including improved mental well-being and financial stability, are noted in various studies (Ghazali, Syed Alwi, Abdul Aziz, & Hazudin, 2020).
- 3. **Sufism as a Foundation for *Qonaah***
 - a. The spiritual practices in Sufism, such as meditation and *dzikir*, foster a sense of detachment from material desires and enhance spiritual well-being (Agustono, 2024).
- 4. **Integration with Psychotherapy**
 - a. Research suggests that incorporating *qonaah* into psychotherapy strategies can help manage stress and anxiety related to consumerist pressures (Saifuddin, 2022).
 - b. Methods such as mindfulness and self-awareness exercises are effective in reinforcing *qonaah* as a therapeutic tool.
- 5. **Impact on Society and the Environment**
 - a. *Qonaah* contributes to healthier social dynamics by reducing envy and fostering meaningful relationships (et al., 2020).
 - b. Promotes sustainability through reduced consumption and environmentally friendly practices.

This review underscores the relevance of *qonaah* as both a spiritual and practical approach to counter modern consumerism, integrating insights from Sufism and psychotherapy.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to explore how the attitude of *qonaah* can address excessive consumer behavior in the context of the self-reward phenomenon. The methodology focuses on understanding the subjective experiences and values of individuals practicing *qonaah* and those engaged in self-reward lifestyles.

Metadata

1. Timeframe: The study analyzes data collected in 2024.
2. Subjects:
 - a. Individuals who regularly engage in self-reward as a lifestyle habit.
 - b. Groups or communities applying *qonaah* values in their daily lives.
3. Data Collection Techniques:
 - a. Interviews: In-depth discussions with individuals and community leaders to capture personal and collective insights.
 - b. Observations: Field observations to record real-world behaviors and practices.
 - c. Document Analysis: Review of literature, reports, or other textual evidence related to consumer behavior and *qonaah* practices.
4. Data Analysis: Thematic analysis with interpretive techniques to uncover patterns, relationships, and key themes in the application of *qonaah*.

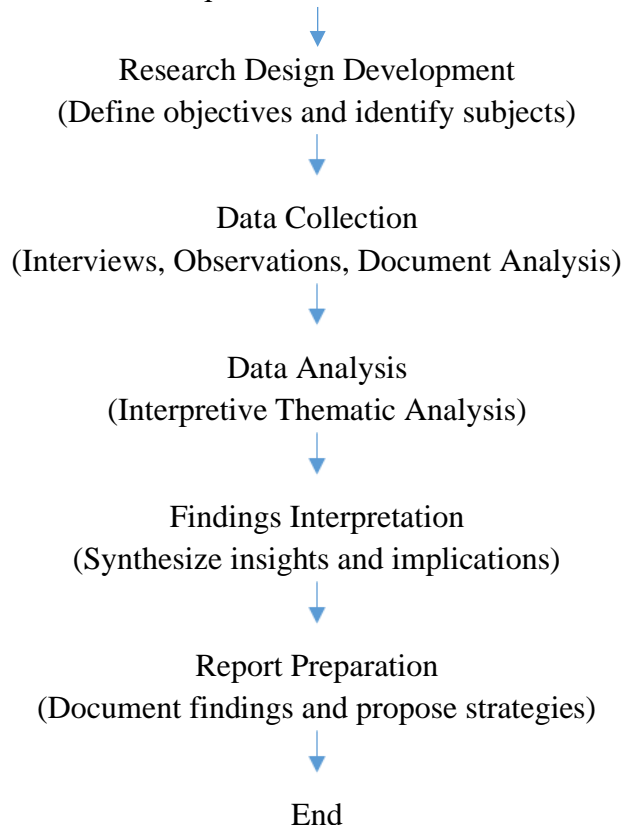
Flowchart Representation

Below is a conceptual flowchart illustrating the research methodology:

1. Research Design Development
 - a. Formulate research questions and objectives.
 - b. Identify study subjects and relevant groups.
 2. Data Collection
 - a. Conduct interviews with individuals practicing self-reward and qonaah.
 - b. Observe real-life applications of qonaah in community settings.
 - c. Analyze documents related to consumer behavior and Sufi teachings.
 3. Data Analysis
 - a. Use interpretive thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes.
 - b. Compare data across sources for validation.
 4. Findings Interpretation
 - a. Synthesize insights on how qonaah mitigates consumerist behaviors.
 - b. Develop theoretical and practical implications.
 5. Report Preparation
 - a. Document findings and propose integrated strategies combining Sufi approaches and psychotherapy.
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Flowchart Structure

Here's the text representation of the flowchart: Start



Summary

This methodology integrates data from interviews, observations, and documents with a thematic analytical framework to provide a comprehensive understanding of qonaah's impact. By linking the spiritual insights of Sufism with psychological approaches, the study aims to propose balanced strategies to counteract the excesses of consumerism in the modern era.

RESULT

Phenomenon of Self-Reward in Modern Life

The research findings highlight that self-reward has evolved into a significant aspect of consumerist culture in the increasingly materialistic modern era. Originally conceived as a positive practice for self-appreciation, it has frequently transformed into a justification for indulgence in luxury goods or fleeting experiences. This aligns with findings from Lodeng (2018), who observed that self-reward, while initially intended as a motivational tool, can lead to excessive consumption when not properly managed. Further supporting this perspective, Mahmud and Rahman (2024) emphasize that individuals engaging in self-reward often cite work stress, life pressures, and personal achievements as triggers for this behavior. This aligns with Dholakia (2020), who identified a psychological tendency for "retail therapy" as a means of alleviating emotional distress, contributing to impulsive buying and wasteful spending. Similarly, Martin and Papworth (2021) assert that consumerist tendencies fueled by self-reward are further reinforced by societal norms and advertising strategies that equate success with material possessions.

Respondents in this study confirmed that the practice of self-reward frequently directs them toward a consumerist lifestyle, where happiness and success are measured by the acquisition of goods or experiences. This resonates with Sivanathan and Pettit (2010), who argue that such consumer behaviors often serve as coping mechanisms for emotional and psychological needs but rarely provide lasting fulfillment. Moreover, research by Becker et al. (2019) highlights the cultural dynamics that exacerbate this phenomenon, noting that societal expectations and social media amplify the pressure to participate in consumerism. The normalization of materialistic values through these platforms perpetuates a cycle of desire and dissatisfaction, further entrenching individuals in consumerist behaviors.

In summary, the findings suggest that while self-reward has its roots in positive reinforcement, it has been co-opted by modern consumer culture into a mechanism that fosters material dependency. By examining the interplay between psychological, social, and cultural factors, the study broadens the understanding of how self-reward contributes to excessive consumerism, paving the way for strategies-such as the adoption of qonaah-to promote a more sustainable and fulfilling lifestyle.

Qonaah as a Solution to Excessive Consumerism

The findings also emphasize that the attitude of qonaah-being content with what one has-can serve as a powerful solution to counter excessive consumerism driven by self-reward. Respondents who practiced qonaah reported higher levels of happiness and greater control over unnecessary

purchasing impulses. They found deeper life satisfaction not dependent on material possessions but on personal relationships, spirituality, and life balance. Additionally, qonaah positively impacted their financial stability and mental health, reducing stress, anxiety, and social comparisons.

Role of Sufism in Cultivating Qonaah

Sufism, as the spiritual dimension of Islam, plays a significant role in shaping the attitude of qonaah. Its teachings on inner peace, simplicity, and detachment from excessive worldly desires help individuals understand that true happiness stems from spiritual well-being. Respondents active in Sufi communities reported focusing more on meaningful living and less on materialism. Practices such as dzikir (remembrance of God), meditation, and self-reflection reinforced their ability to detach from material pursuits and center their lives on spiritual fulfillment.

Qonaah in the Context of Psychotherapy

The study also highlights that fostering qonaah can positively impact mental health. In psychotherapy, qonaah reduces stress caused by social pressures and the anxiety of wanting more. Respondents who practiced qonaah reported improved life quality, with feelings of contentment and tranquility despite external pressures or unrealistic social standards. Psychotherapeutic strategies incorporating qonaah include mindfulness, self-reflection, and awareness of needs versus desires.

Implications for Social Life and Environment

The application of qonaah positively affects social relationships and promotes sustainable lifestyles. By reducing consumerist tendencies, individuals enhance their social bonds, focusing more on family, friends, and community values. Furthermore, qonaah encourages simpler, environmentally-friendly living, reducing unnecessary consumption, waste, and environmental damage.

DISCUSSION

Findings from Interviews and Observations on the Practice of Qonaah

To strengthen this approach, interviews with individuals who have adopted the attitude of qonaah provide relevant insights. Below is a summary of the interviews and observations, with the respondents' identities anonymized to maintain confidentiality.

1. Interview 1: P (22 years old, female student)

"Initially, I often used self-reward as an excuse to buy things that were not truly necessary. After learning about qonaah, I began to reconsider before making a purchase. Now I feel lighter because I am no longer trapped by social pressure to own expensive items." Observation: P has shown a significant change in her shopping habits, focusing more on essential needs rather than fleeting desires. She also appears calmer and more confident in her demeanor.

2. Interview 2: B (21 years old, female student)

"As a student, the temptation to follow trends is enormous, especially due to the influence of social media. But after understanding the concept of qonaah, I've learned that happiness does not depend on the possessions I own. I've started to appreciate what I already have."

Observation: B actively participates in social community activities and frequently shares her experiences about controlling impulsive shopping with her friends. She also appears more focused on academics and self-development.

3. Interview 3: A (21 years old, male student)

"I used to buy expensive items to display success, even though the money came from loans. But after learning about qonaah, I realized that true success is not measured by material wealth. I've become more frugal and am no longer tempted to buy things just for recognition."

Observation: A has adopted a simpler lifestyle and has started saving more. He also actively motivates his peers to avoid unhealthy consumerist habits.

4. Interview 4: M (25 years old, male student)

"I used to feel pressured to always meet others' standards in terms of lifestyle. But since adopting qonaah, I've focused more on what truly matters to me. I feel freer from those pressures and live more peacefully." Observation: M exhibits a calmer attitude when facing social pressures. He has started sharing his views in group discussions, creating a positive impact in his community.

Conclusions from Interviews and Observations

The results of the interviews and observations indicate that the practice of qonaah provides significant benefits:

1. Self-Control: Reducing excessive consumer behavior and aligning needs with capabilities.
2. Inner Peace: Breaking dependency on social recognition based on material possessions.
3. Social Awareness: Inspiring others to lead simpler lives.
4. Financial Management: Helping individuals to save more and avoid unnecessary debt.

Implications

The application of qonaah, as part of Sufi and psychotherapeutic approaches, not only delivers positive effects on individuals but also strengthens community bonds. This attitude has proven to be an effective strategy in addressing modern challenges such as social pressure and consumerist culture.

CONCLUSION

Building on the discussion and supported by findings from the literature review and interviews, the attitude of qonaah emerges as a strong countermeasure to excessive consumerism driven by self-reward and modern consumerist culture. By embracing qonaah, individuals are better equipped to maintain financial stability, alleviate stress, and improve their overall well-being. Insights from the interviews reveal practical examples of how adopting qonaah transforms personal habits, fostering gratitude and simplicity in daily life. Furthermore, Sufism underscores

the spiritual dimension of qonaah, guiding individuals to prioritize inner peace and spiritual fulfillment over material pursuits. Beyond personal benefits, this attitude contributes to mental health resilience and environmental sustainability, advocating for a more balanced, meaningful, and sustainable way of living.

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