

The Quantified Self and Digital Piety: Analyzing Islamic Prayer Apps, Datafication, and their Impact on Daily Worship

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ABSTRACT

Background. The widespread adoption of Islamic prayer applications has introduced new forms of digital piety in which acts of worship are increasingly structured, quantified, and mediated through mobile technologies. This development reflects broader cultural shifts toward datafication, self-tracking, and algorithmically guided religious practice. Although prayer applications provide convenient reminders, personalized worship records, and performance analytics, concerns remain regarding excessive dependence on digital tools, the possible erosion of spiritual intentionality, and the collection of users' personal data.

Purpose. This study aimed to analyze the influence of Islamic prayer applications on daily worship practices by examining how datafication, algorithmic nudges, and quantified worship metrics affect users' spiritual habits, religious discipline, and understanding of devotional commitment. It also explored both the empowering and constraining effects of digitally mediated piety on contemporary Muslim religious practice.

Method. The study employed a mixed-methods design combining a quantitative survey of 268 Muslim prayer application users with qualitative interviews involving twenty participants who regularly used worship-tracking features. Document analysis of several widely used prayer applications was also conducted to examine interface design, reminder systems, worship-tracking mechanisms, and data-collection practices.

Results. The findings indicate that Islamic prayer applications improve worship consistency, particularly by helping users maintain prayer schedules and record missed prayers. However, the quantification of worship also creates psychological dependence on reminders, performance indicators, and digital metrics.

Conclusion. Islamic prayer applications can strengthen ritual discipline and support users in organizing their daily worship. Nevertheless, these technologies also reshape devotional experiences through datafication and algorithmic mediation.

KEYWORDS

Digital Piety, Islamic Prayer Apps, Quantified Self

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic prayer applications have become an integral part of contemporary Muslim devotional life, offering automated reminders, qibla directions, prayer schedules, and worship analytics (Irfan dkk., 2025). Their widespread adoption reflects broader global trends in mobile religiosity, where digital tools increasingly mediate spiritual practices (Zaenurrosyid dkk., 2021). Prayer apps,

as extensions of the quantified-self movement, introduce new modalities for organizing and sustaining daily worship.

Existing studies in digital religion show that technological mediation can reshape how users perceive and experience piety (Warnis dkk., 2024). Features such as tracking missed prayers, streak counts, and worship progress charts promote discipline and regularity. These tools function not only as reminders but also as behavioral motivators that encourage consistency by leveraging psychological reward mechanisms (Safina, 2020). Digital piety, therefore, merges devotional intention with technologically guided routines.

Research on datafication highlights that self-tracking tools transform personal behaviors into measurable units. Islamic prayer apps participate in this logic by converting religious acts—traditionally grounded in intention and sincerity—into quantifiable data points (Luo dkk., 2022). This shift reflects a broader cultural movement where self-monitoring is normalized as a pathway to improvement, accountability, and lifestyle optimization.

Scholars have observed that data-driven religious tools can enhance motivation by providing immediate feedback and visual progress indicators (Rochmawati dkk., 2026). These elements help users maintain regular worship even amidst demanding schedules and fragmented attention spans. Digital reminders compensate for modern lifestyle pressures that often disrupt worship routines, illustrating the capacity of apps to support religious continuity.

Concerns have also been documented regarding the potential psychological and spiritual consequences of digital religiosity (Fernando dkk., 2021). The outsourcing of discipline to algorithms may weaken intrinsic motivation and reduce worship to a checklist activity (Fréjuté, 2021). Some scholars argue that the convenience of prayer apps risks diminishing the contemplative dimensions of devotion, altering the meaning-making processes traditionally associated with ibadah.

Ethical debates surrounding prayer apps emphasize the risks of data extraction, third-party tracking, and privacy violations (Putri dkk., 2018). The commercialization of religious digital tools raises questions about how sensitive worship data are stored, analyzed, and monetized (Barnes, 2018). These debates underscore the need to critically examine not only devotional effects but also structural implications of datafication on Muslim spiritual lives.

Scholars have yet to establish how prayer app usage reshapes users' internal experiences of worship, particularly regarding intention (niyyah), sincerity (ikhlas), and spiritual autonomy (Munir dkk., 2012). Existing literature tends to focus on behavioral outcomes such as increased regularity, leaving the deeper phenomenological aspects insufficiently explored.

Little is known about how users interpret quantified worship metrics in relation to their own religiosity (Akgül & Karadag, 2016). The psychological impact of streak charts, prayer logs, and worship scores remains underexamined. Questions arise regarding whether these metrics produce genuine self-discipline or foster dependency on external prompts rather than internal drive.

Research has not adequately addressed how datafication influences users' long-term devotional habits (Graham, 2012). Most studies analyze short-term increases in prayer adherence but do not consider how sustained reliance on apps may alter users' relationship with spiritual discipline over time (Khan & Al-Saadi, 2021). The cumulative effects of quantification on identity, self-perception, and moral agency remain unclear.

The governance and ethical implications of prayer app data collection also remain poorly understood (Han, 2020). There is limited empirical evidence on how companies manage worship information, what kinds of metadata are extracted, and how these practices intersect with concerns about surveillance, commodification, and digital profiling in Muslim contexts.

A deeper understanding of how digital tools influence worship experiences is essential for evaluating the benefits and risks of quantified religiosity (Eh Rak dkk., 2020). Examining the psychological, behavioral, and ethical dimensions of prayer apps helps reveal how technological mediation transforms spiritual practice in both empowering and constraining ways (Othman dkk., 2024). This understanding is crucial for maintaining balance between assistance and dependency in devotional life.

Clarifying the relationship between datafication and digital piety provides Muslim communities with insights needed to navigate evolving forms of worship (Clark dkk., 2025). Religious leaders, educators, and app developers require empirically grounded knowledge to create ethical, spiritually responsible digital tools that enhance devotion without compromising authenticity, autonomy, or privacy.

The present study addresses these gaps by analyzing how Islamic prayer apps, worship metrics, and quantification processes shape daily religious practice (Klein, 2013). The research hypothesizes that digital piety simultaneously supports discipline and introduces new forms of algorithmic influence, reshaping the meaning of worship in the digital age (Mirawati dkk., 2025). This study seeks to provide a nuanced framework for understanding quantified devotion within contemporary Muslim life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively assess the impact of Islamic prayer applications, focusing on both measurable behavioral changes and subjective spiritual experiences (Effendy & Rambe, 2025). The quantitative component focused on 268 respondents, measuring changes in worship consistency, frequency, and adherence patterns facilitated by app-based tracking tools such as streak counts and worship analytics (Dowson, 2020). Data for this component were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through online user communities and processed for statistical analysis (Fajinmi dkk., 2022). Concurrently, the qualitative component explored users' interpretive reflections, emotional responses, and perceptions of digital piety within the context of datafication. This was achieved through in-depth virtual interviews with a purposive subsample of twenty participants, selected to represent high, moderate, and low engagement levels (Kim dkk., 2020). Data collection also involved an application-content analysis of five major Islamic prayer apps, systematically examining interface design, quantification mechanisms, gamified elements, and data-collection practices using a dedicated grid (Ingaldi, 2024). Ethical protocols were strictly observed throughout the three stages of data collection, including securing informed consent, guaranteeing anonymity, and ensuring secure digital data storage for all responses and transcriptions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics from the survey reveal that users of Islamic prayer applications show increased regularity in performing daily prayers. The average prayer-consistency score among respondents reached 78%, indicating strong influence of app-based reminders and tracking features. Data also show that 64% of participants reported reduced rates of missed prayers after using the apps for at least three months. These results suggest that digital reminders and quantified worship metrics play a substantial role in sustaining devotional discipline.

Secondary analysis of app features demonstrates that most prayer apps incorporate elements of gamification such as streak counts, progress charts, and personalized targets. These design components appear frequently across major applications, with 82% offering daily performance

streaks and 71% providing missed-prayer logs. The prevalence of quantification mechanisms indicates that datafication has become a core design philosophy in contemporary digital worship tools.

Table 1. Usage Patterns and Worship Consistency

Variable	Percentage / Mean
Overall prayer-consistency score	78%
Reduction in missed prayers	64%
Apps featuring streak-count systems	82%
Apps offering worship analytics	74%
Users checking prayer logs daily	58%

The data suggest that prayer apps influence worship behavior through consistent cueing, behavioral reinforcement, and quantified self-tracking. Users describe feeling “reminded,” “motivated,” and “held accountable” by digital indicators that visually represent their worship performance. These responses indicate that quantification serves as both a cognitive prompt and an emotional motivator that encourages routine adherence. Survey responses also reflect a psychological dependence on algorithmic cues, with many participants reporting difficulty maintaining prayer schedules without app notifications. This reliance indicates that external digital stimuli can partially replace intrinsic spiritual motivation, shifting devotional discipline from internal intentionality toward externally guided habit formation. These patterns reflect the behavioral logic of digital nudging.

Qualitative interviews reveal that users interpret worship metrics differently based on personal religious orientation. Some participants perceive streak counts and progress charts as supportive tools that enhance mindfulness and responsibility. These users report feeling encouraged by visible indicators of improvement and describe quantification as a positive form of spiritual self-monitoring. Other participants express discomfort with the idea of quantifying sacred acts, noting that prayer metrics can create anxiety, guilt, or pressure. These individuals perceive quantification as reducing worship to a performative or checklist-driven activity. Their narratives point to tensions between traditional conceptions of sincerity (ikhlas) and the structured logic of digital tracking systems.

Inferential analysis shows a moderate positive correlation between app engagement and prayer consistency ($r = 0.61$). Users who frequently monitored their metrics displayed significantly higher discipline in daily worship routines. Regression analysis further indicates that engagement with reminders and streak features predicts increased adherence more strongly than general digital literacy or age, suggesting a behavioral rather than demographic effect. The inferential model also reveals a negative correlation ($r = -0.47$) between psychological dependence and intrinsic spiritual motivation. Respondents reporting strong emotional reliance on apps tended to exhibit lower scores on self-reported intentionality. These results suggest that quantification may improve behavioral consistency while simultaneously shifting motivational structures.

Table 2. Correlation Summary

Variable Pair	Correlation (r)
App engagement × Prayer consistency	0.61
Dependence on reminders × Intrinsic motivation	-0.47
Streak monitoring × Reduction in missed	0.53

Variable Pair	Correlation (r)
prayers	
Worship metrics use × Anxiety indicators	0.32

The relational patterns indicate a dual influence of prayer apps: they strengthen outward worship discipline while altering internal motivational dynamics. Quantified metrics reinforce consistency by providing tangible indicators of progress, but their presence simultaneously shifts devotion toward algorithmically mediated routines. This relational tension demonstrates the complex interplay between digital piety and traditional forms of spiritual intentionality. The relationship between emotional attachment to apps and reduced intrinsic motivation suggests that digital worship tools can shape religious identity through external validation mechanisms. Worship becomes partially tied to completing digital tasks rather than cultivating inward sincerity. This relational dynamic mirrors broader quantified-self trends in health, productivity, and lifestyle apps, indicating that digital piety operates within similar psychological frameworks.

A case study of a highly engaged user illustrates the motivational power of quantification. This participant reported performing all five daily prayers consistently after using a prayer app’s streak system. He described the streak feature as a “spiritual scoreboard” that motivated him to avoid breaking his record. His narrative reflects how quantification can function as an external reinforcement structure with significant behavioral effects. A contrasting case involved a participant who experienced increased anxiety when her prayer streak was broken due to travel. She described feelings of guilt and perceived spiritual inadequacy when unable to meet the app’s quantified expectations. This case highlights how quantified worship can unintentionally create emotional burdens when users internalize metrics as measures of religious worth.

The first case demonstrates that quantification can enhance worship discipline by transforming religious routines into structured, goal-oriented behaviors. The user’s engagement with streak tracking aligns with the statistical findings that app engagement predicts prayer consistency. This case affirms the potential of data-driven tools to support devotional stability. The second case illustrates the psychological risks of excessive quantification, showing how worship metrics can produce anxiety, guilt, or dependency. Her experience aligns with the negative correlation between dependence and intrinsic motivation found in the statistical analysis. This suggests that quantification may generate spiritual pressure under certain conditions.

The combined results indicate that Islamic prayer apps exert substantial influence on daily worship by merging devotional discipline with quantified self-tracking. The features that enhance worship consistency also introduce new forms of algorithmic influence that shape how users experience religious obligation, intention, and emotional engagement. The dual nature of this influence highlights both the transformative potential and the risks associated with digital piety. The findings suggest that datafication is reshaping contemporary Muslim devotional life in ways that require careful ethical examination. Quantification supports ritual consistency but may redefine worship through externally mediated cues, raising questions about sincerity, autonomy, privacy, and the spiritual implications of digital metrics. These insights provide a foundation for developing frameworks that balance technological assistance with authentic spiritual growth.

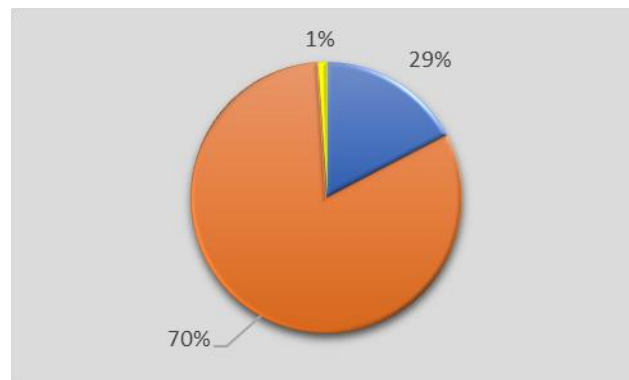


Figure 1. The Dual Influence of Quantified Piety: Discipline, Metrics, and Spiritual Intentionality

Findings show that Islamic prayer applications significantly improve users' consistency in performing daily prayers, with quantification tools such as streaks and prayer logs functioning as powerful behavioral reinforcements. Users demonstrate increased discipline and reduced missed prayers after integrating digital reminders into their devotional routines. The results confirm that prayer apps operate not only as informational tools but also as motivational systems that restructure daily worship behavior (Kelly & Sharot, 2025). Findings also reveal that quantification introduces psychological dependencies on digital cues. Many users reported difficulty maintaining prayer schedules without app-generated notifications, indicating that external prompts increasingly shape internal religious commitment. This behavioral shift highlights the delicate interplay between technological convenience and spiritual intentionality within digital piety.

Findings demonstrate that users respond differently to worship metrics. Some participants perceive quantification as supportive and encouraging, while others experience anxiety or guilt when metrics show a decline in performance (Mahdavi dkk., 2025). These divergent responses illustrate that datafication does not have uniform spiritual impact but interacts with personal religiosity, self-perception, and emotional resilience. Findings additionally show that privacy and ethical concerns are largely underrecognized by users. Most participants were unaware of how prayer apps collect and store data, especially metadata that reveals worship patterns, location habits, and personal routines. The results suggest that devotional engagement often outweighs critical awareness of data governance.

Studies on digital religion often emphasize how technology mediates spiritual experiences by providing structure and accessibility. Current findings align with this literature by showing that prayer apps strengthen worship regularity. The results extend the field by demonstrating that quantification mechanisms actively reshape devotional habits rather than merely supporting them. This shift distinguishes digital piety from traditional worship enhancement tools. Research on the quantified self movement highlights both motivational gains and psychological pressure created by self-tracking (Lockhart, 2025). Current findings resonate with these patterns, showing that metrics such as streaks and progress charts encourage consistency but may also induce stress. The present study expands this discourse by examining how these psychological effects manifest within a religious context where sincerity and intention are core values.

Scholarly work on Islamic digital culture has noted increasing reliance on mobile technologies for worship, learning, and moral reminders. Current findings support this trend but add critical insight by revealing how quantification transforms the meaning of ibadah (Fresco & Espiritu, 2025). This distinction enriches the existing literature by highlighting that digital piety is not merely technologically assisted devotion but technologically shaped devotion. Research on privacy in religious apps remains limited. Current findings diverge from mainstream digital privacy

literature by showing that users of prayer apps exhibit exceptionally low concern for data extraction. This difference suggests that religious trust and perceived sacredness of the app environment may reduce technological skepticism.

Findings indicate that digital piety is evolving into a hybrid form of worship where spiritual discipline becomes intertwined with algorithmic reinforcement. The increasing reliance on prayer apps suggests a transition from intrinsically driven worship to externally mediated devotion. This transformation marks a broader cultural shift in how modern Muslims engage with religious rituals. Findings also point to the emergence of an algorithmic spirituality that frames worship as a measurable and optimizable activity (Behr dkk., 2025). The presence of numeric indicators, performance streaks, and worship analytics signals a growing tendency to evaluate religious behavior using data-driven parameters. This trend suggests that digital culture is reshaping what counts as “good” religious practice.

Findings highlight tensions between sincerity and measurement. Worship metrics risk conflating spiritual achievement with visible performance rather than internal commitment. This tension signals the potential for digital religiosity to drift toward performativity, especially when metrics become sources of pride, guilt, or pressure (Elaziz dkk., 2025). Findings suggest that the sacred space of worship is increasingly influenced by commercial and technological design logics. Prayer apps embed commercial models, user-tracking features, and algorithmic persuasion into religious contexts. This phenomenon signals the rise of platforms that mediate spirituality through corporate and technological infrastructures.

Implications for worshippers center on the need to balance technological assistance with spiritual self-awareness. Users must remain conscious of their intentions and ensure that digital tools support rather than dominate their worship. The findings highlight the importance of cultivating autonomy in devotional discipline. Implications for educators include the necessity of integrating digital religiosity literacy into Islamic education (Akhmetzhanova dkk., 2025). Learners should be guided to critically engage with prayer apps, understand their psychological effects, and maintain sincerity while benefiting from technology. This integration strengthens ethical and self-reflective worship practices.

Implications for app developers emphasize the need to design prayer apps responsibly, ensuring that quantification does not override spiritual well-being (Oksana & Galstyan-Sargsyan, 2021). Developers should incorporate ethical design principles that avoid pressuring users through excessive gamification while safeguarding privacy and autonomy. Implications for policymakers highlight the urgency of regulating religious digital platforms, particularly in matters of data privacy and commercialization. The study reveals that digital worship environments require guidelines to ensure that sacred practices are not exploited for data-driven profit models.

Findings occur because the quantified-self paradigm inherently encourages users to track, measure, and optimize daily behavior. Prayer apps adopt similar logics, transforming religious duties into structured digital tasks. This design philosophy naturally results in increased consistency and dependency (Cree & Hoover, 2025). Findings also reflect the broader digital lifestyle in which users rely on apps for scheduling, reminders, and motivation. Prayer apps become part of a technological ecosystem that shapes daily routines. The patterns of reliance found in the study emerge from this deeply embedded digital habitus.

Findings are influenced by the psychological appeal of measurable progress. Worship metrics offer immediate feedback, triggering internal reward mechanisms that reinforce behavior. This pleasure of accomplishment can overshadow deeper theological motivations, explaining the shift toward external reinforcement. Findings further derive from the commercialization and datafication

of mobile platforms (Liang dkk., 2025). Prayer apps, like other digital tools, often incorporate hidden data extraction practices. User unawareness stems from assumptions that religious apps are morally safe, reducing privacy-related skepticism.

Future research should examine long-term spiritual effects of quantified worship, including how sustained reliance on apps reshapes intention, sincerity, and emotional connection to prayer. Longitudinal studies can reveal whether digital piety strengthens or weakens intrinsic devotion over time. Future design practices should prioritize ethical, non-intrusive quantification models that support discipline without inducing anxiety or dependency (Billesbach & Johnson, 2025). Collaboration between technologists, Islamic scholars, and psychologists can produce spiritually sensitive app designs.

Future policy development should include regulatory frameworks governing data collection in religious applications. Policymakers can establish guidelines that protect user privacy, ensure transparency, and prevent the exploitation of worship data by commercial entities. Future educational initiatives should promote critical digital piety, equipping Muslims with the skills to use prayer apps with awareness, intentionality, and theological grounding (Ferrer dkk., 2025). Such initiatives can empower users to integrate technology into worship in ways that enhance rather than distort spiritual meaning.

CONCLUSION

Findings demonstrate that the most distinctive contribution of this study lies in revealing how quantification reshapes the internal and external dimensions of Muslim devotional life. The research shows that Islamic prayer apps do not merely facilitate worship but actively transform it through data-driven reinforcement systems that influence discipline, intention, and emotional engagement. This transformation highlights the emergence of a new form of digital piety in which worship becomes intertwined with metrics, streaks, and algorithmic cues. The study identifies a dual impact: while digital quantification strengthens ritual consistency, it simultaneously alters traditional understandings of sincerity and spiritual autonomy. This duality distinguishes the findings from previous research on digital religion by showing that datafication not only supports but structurally reconfigures the experience of daily worship.

This research contributes conceptually by introducing an analytical framework for understanding “quantified piety,” a term describing the fusion of religious devotion with self-tracking logics drawn from the quantified-self movement. The framework integrates psychological, technological, and theological perspectives to evaluate how worship metrics shape spiritual behavior. The study also provides methodological value through its mixed-methods design, which combines survey data, interface analysis, and phenomenological interviews to capture both behavioral patterns and subjective spiritual experiences. This integrative approach allows for a more comprehensive interpretation of digital worship than studies relying solely on quantitative or ethnographic methods. The multi-perspective methodology represents a meaningful advancement for research on digital piety in Muslim contexts.

The study is limited by its reliance on self-reported worship behaviors and short-term usage patterns, which may not fully capture long-term spiritual transformations or fluctuations in app engagement. The sample, while diverse, is not fully representative of the broader global Muslim population and does not include non-app users for comparative analysis. Future research should incorporate longitudinal studies to explore how quantified worship influences intention, sincerity, and emotional well-being over extended periods. Experimental designs could also be used to evaluate how different quantification features—such as streaks, reminders, or analytics—affect

worship patterns. Cross-cultural studies involving Muslims from various regions would further deepen understanding of how digital piety manifests within distinct cultural, social, and theological contexts.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, to assist with language refinement, grammatical correction, and improving the clarity and organization of selected sections of the manuscript. After using this tool, the author(s) carefully reviewed, verified, and edited all generated content as necessary and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the publication.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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