



From Spiritual Discipline to Civic Ethics: Integrating Sufi Moral Frameworks into Education and Governance in Indonesia

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Abstract: Indonesia faces persistent moral challenges, including youth violence, online incivility, and corruption, which demand frameworks for value formation that are both context-sensitive and spiritually grounded. This article reinterprets the classical Sufi triad of *takhallī* (purification of vices), *taḥallī* (cultivation of virtues), and *tajallī* (divine manifestation) as mechanisms that can be operationalized for contemporary moral education and civic ethics. Methodologically, the study employs an integrative literature review combined with hermeneutic–thematic analysis of canonical Sufi texts and empirical studies on spirituality, psychology, and education. Findings indicate that *takhallī* aligns with self-regulation training to inhibit aggression and foster emotional control; *taḥallī* maps onto prosocial character formation through service-learning, ethical laboratories, and reflective governance practices; and *tajallī* fosters meaning-making and social cohesion through communal rituals and civic engagement. The study contributes academically by reframing Sufi ethics as intervention-ready, bridging classical Islamic spirituality with global scholarship on moral development, and practically by offering design principles for embedding Sufi-based interventions into schools, public service, and community programs. These insights suggest that tasawwuf *akhlāqī* remains a living resource for nurturing virtuous individuals, ethical institutions, and cohesive societies in Indonesia today.

Keywords: Sufism, moral education, civic ethics, spirituality



Abstrak: Indonesia menghadapi krisis moral yang terus berulang, mulai dari kekerasan remaja, ujaran tidak santun di media daring, hingga praktik korupsi dalam birokrasi. Kondisi ini menuntut adanya kerangka pembentukan nilai yang relevan dengan konteks sekaligus berakar pada spiritualitas. Artikel ini menafsirkan kembali tiga tahapan etika tasawuf klasik—*takhallī* (pembersihan diri dari sifat buruk), *tahallī* (penghiasan diri dengan kebajikan), dan *tajallī* (manifestasi ketuhanan dalam perilaku)—sebagai mekanisme yang dapat dioperasionalkan dalam pendidikan moral dan etika kewargaan kontemporer. Secara metodologis, penelitian ini menggunakan tinjauan pustaka integratif dengan analisis hermeneutik-tematik terhadap teks-teks klasik sufi serta studi empiris tentang spiritualitas, psikologi, dan pendidikan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *takhallī* relevan dengan pelatihan regulasi diri untuk mengendalikan agresi dan emosi; *tahallī* berkaitan dengan pembentukan karakter prososial melalui pembelajaran berbasis pengabdian, laboratorium adab, dan praktik reflektif dalam tata kelola; sementara *tajallī* menopang pencarian makna dan kohesi sosial melalui ritual komunal serta keterlibatan sipil. Secara akademik, penelitian ini berkontribusi dengan menempatkan etika tasawuf sebagai kerangka siap-intervensi yang menghubungkan khazanah klasik Islam dengan diskursus global tentang pengembangan moral. Secara praktis, artikel ini menawarkan prinsip desain program berbasis tasawuf yang dapat diintegrasikan dalam sekolah, birokrasi, dan masyarakat. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa tasawuf akhlāqī tetap menjadi sumber hidup untuk membentuk individu berakhlak, institusi yang etis, dan masyarakat yang kohesif di Indonesia masa kini.

Kata Kunci: Tasawuf, pendidikan moral, etika kewargaan, spiritualitas

المُلخَص

تواجه إندونيسيا تحديات أخلاقية مستمرة، من بينها عنف الشباب، وسوء السلوك في الفضاء الرقمي، والفساد، مما يستدعي أُطرًا لتشكيل القيم تكون حساسة للسياق الاجتماعي ومؤسسة على بُعد روحي عميق. تعيد هذه المقالة قراءة الثلاثية الصوفية الكلاسيكية: التخلّي (تطهير الرذائل)، والتحلّي (التحلّي بالفضائل)، والتجلّي (الظهور الإلهي)، بوصفها آليات قابلة للتفعيل في التربية الأخلاقية المعاصرة وأخلاقيات المواطنة. ومنهجياً، تعتمد الدراسة على مراجعة

أدبية تكاملية مقرونة بتحليل هرمنيوطيقي-موضوعاتي للنصوص الصوفية المعتمدة، إلى جانب الدراسات التجريبية في مجالات الروحانية وعلم النفس والتربية. وتشير النتائج إلى أنّ التخلّي يتوافق مع برامج تدريب ضبط الذات لكبح السلوك العدواني وتعزيز التحكم الانفعالي؛ وأنّ التحلّي يقابل بناء الشخصية الاجتماعية الإيجابية من خلال التعلّم الخدمي، والمختبرات الأخلاقية، وممارسات الحوكمة التأملية؛ وأنّ التجلّي يسهم في بناء المعنى وتعزيز التماسك الاجتماعي عبر الطقوس الجماعية والمشاركة المدنية. وتُسهم الدراسة علمياً في إعادة تأطير الأخلاق الصوفية بوصفها قابلة للتحويل إلى تدخلات تطبيقية، جسراً بين الروحانية الإسلامية الكلاسيكية والبحث العالمي في تنمية الأخلاق؛ كما تُقدّم عملياً مبادئ تصميمية لإدماج تدخلات مستندة إلى التصوف في المدارس، ومؤسسات الخدمة العامة، والبرامج المجتمعية. وتشير هذه الرؤى إلى أنّ التصوف الأخلاقي يظلّ موردًا حيًا في تنشئة الأفراد الفاضلين، وبناء المؤسسات الأخلاقية، وتعزيز تماسك المجتمع في إندونيسيا المعاصرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التصوف، التربية الأخلاقية، أخلاقيات المواطنة، الروحانية.

Introduction

Indonesia's persistent moral challenges—ranging from youth violence and online incivility to abuses of public office—have prompted calls to revisit value-formation frameworks that can work across schools, communities, and governance. While classical Sufi ethics (*taṣawwuf akhlāqī*) emphasize character cultivation through *takhallī-taḥallī-tajallī*, contemporary scholarship has often treated Sufism either historically or normatively, without showing how its concepts can be operationalized for present-day moral problems in Indonesia. This article addresses that gap by synthesizing recent literature on Islamic spirituality and well-being with a hermeneutic reading of canonical Sufi sources and by mapping Sufi ethical stages onto actionable interventions for education, civil service ethics, and community programs. In doing so, it contributes (1) an implementation-oriented framework for translating Sufi ethics into policy and practice; (2) an integrative review that brings newer,

international studies into dialogue with Indonesian contexts; and (3) a set of testable propositions for future empirical work.

Emerging evidence suggests that Islamic–Sufi practices are associated with improved mental well-being and self-regulation—mechanisms closely tied to moral behaviours. A 2007–2022 systematic review identified positive links between Sufi spirituality and reductions in anxiety and depression, while noting methodological limitations and the need for higher-quality studies (Cetinkaya & Billings, 2023). Scholarship on Islamic education and Sufi-inflected moderation likewise highlights the potential of values-based curricula for civic peace and ethical formation, including in higher education and community life (Purwanto et al., 2023). This article builds on such findings to argue that Sufi ethical work can be specified as trainable competencies (e.g., self-restraint, compassion, meaning-making) and embedded into context-sensitive programs for Indonesian schools, bureaucracies, and civil society.

Prior Indonesian studies often describe Sufi teachings or diagnose moral decline but stop short of (a) articulating mechanisms that connect Sufi practices to moral outcomes and (b) proposing implementable, evaluable programs. By contrast, we offer a mechanism-first, intervention-ready synthesis that pairs *takhallī* with self-regulation protocols, *taḥallī* with prosocial training and service learning, and *tajallī* with meaning-centered practices that strengthen social cohesion—each aligned with contemporary evidence on spirituality and well-being (Cetinkaya & Billings, 2023; Koenig, 2012).

Methods

This study employed an integrative literature review combined with hermeneutic–thematic analysis. The design brought together two strands: (i) close reading of classical Sufi ethics, particularly *taṣawwuf akhlāqī* as elaborated by al-Ghazālī and later commentators (al-Ghazālī, 2011), and (ii) synthesis of recent empirical and conceptual studies on Islamic spirituality, moral education, and social well-being (Koenig, 2012; Purwanto et al., 2023). This dual approach enabled both the interpretation of

normative texts and the mapping of their relevance to contemporary Indonesian moral challenges.

The search strategy covered Google Scholar, Dimensions, and publisher databases for 2010–April 2025, using combinations of the keywords *Sufism / tasawwuf / taṣawwuf akhlāqī*, *moral education / character education*, *spiritual well-being / mental health*, and *Indonesia / Southeast Asia*. Reference lists were also hand-searched. Inclusion criteria required that sources be peer-reviewed and explicitly engage with Sufi or Islamic spirituality in relation to moral or psychosocial outcomes, or with implementation in education and governance; non-analytic devotional writings and duplicates were excluded. A two-cycle coding strategy was applied: deductive codes based on the *takhallī–taḥallī–tajallī* triad, and inductive codes capturing mechanisms from modern studies (e.g., self-regulation, empathy/compassion, civic ethics, social cohesion). Convergences and tensions between classical texts and contemporary evidence were triangulated to avoid purely descriptive conclusions, while study quality was appraised with attention to clarity, transparency, and limitations, including risk of bias noted in recent systematic reviews (Cetinkaya & Billings, 2023).

Result and Discussion

Takhallī as Self-Regulation and Moral Inhibition

Classical tasawwuf has long emphasized the centrality of *takhallī*, the process of purging the self of blameworthy traits, as a necessary step toward higher levels of moral and spiritual refinement. In the writings of al-Ghazālī, for example, one encounters repeated exhortations to identify and eliminate negative dispositions such as arrogance, greed, envy, and uncontrolled desire (*ṣifāt shayṭāniyyah*, *sabu‘iyyah*, and *bahīmiyyah*) because these represent the roots of destructive behavior (al-Ghazālī, 2011). Within his framework, the individual is not merely an isolated soul but a moral agent whose transformation has direct implications for society. Thus, the theological demand for purification is not only about attaining closeness to God but also about achieving the ethical maturity necessary to foster harmony in social life. In modern psychology, this dimension of self-purification resonates with the construct of self-regulation, understood as the ability to

control impulses, delay gratification, and align behavior with long-term goals and social norms (Tangney et al., 2004). When placed in dialogue, classical *takhallī* and contemporary psychological theories reveal significant points of convergence that invite fresh applications in addressing today's moral challenges, such as bullying, aggression, and the deterioration of civility in online and offline interactions (Koenig, 2012).

Empirical evidence further strengthens this alignment by demonstrating that Sufi-inspired practices, when operationalized in contemporary contexts, can enhance psychological well-being and moral functioning. Hamsyah and Subandi (2016) found that *zikr*—or the remembrance of God through rhythmic repetition of divine names—was positively correlated with increased subjective well-being, especially in reducing symptoms of anxiety and distress. Their study suggests that repetitive spiritual practices can function as forms of mindfulness, anchoring attention and promoting emotional stability. Similarly, Bozorgzadeh and Grasser (2022) reported that spiritual interventions rooted in Sufi tradition improved stress regulation and fostered resilience among participants facing psychosocial difficulties. These findings converge with broader literature in psychology that highlights how contemplative practices—whether framed religiously or secularly—contribute to impulse control and emotional balance. A recent pilot randomized controlled trial conducted in Turkey added more robust evidence: over four weeks, participants who engaged in Sufi music therapy exhibited significant reductions in anxiety ($p = .013$) and improvements in spiritual well-being ($p < .001$), demonstrating that even relatively short interventions rooted in Sufi tradition can have measurable effects on mental health (Gurbuz-Dogan & Ali, 2025). Together, these empirical studies confirm that the theological insights of *takhallī* can be translated into psychological mechanisms of self-regulation with tangible outcomes.

The implications for educational and community practices in Indonesia are particularly significant, given the country's current struggles with youth delinquency, online incivility, and rising cases of school bullying. The challenge lies not merely in diagnosing these issues but in offering implementable frameworks that address the roots of moral decline. Integrating *takhallī* into daily practices

provides one promising pathway. One concrete strategy is the incorporation of dhikr-breathing exercises at the start of classes. These short, guided rituals, combining breath regulation with verbal remembrance, help students center themselves and transition into a mindful state before academic activities commence. Research in contemplative pedagogy has consistently shown that such micro-practices improve attentional control and reduce impulsivity, outcomes directly relevant to preventing disruptive or aggressive behaviors in schools (Koenig, 2012). By anchoring the practice in Sufi ethics, these exercises further imbue the activity with a spiritual dimension, reminding students that emotional discipline is simultaneously a form of worship and a civic responsibility.

Beyond collective rituals, *takhallī* can also be nurtured through individual reflective practices. Weekly *muḥāsabah* journals, for instance, provide students with structured opportunities to document their emotional experiences, evaluate their actions, and recognize both achievements and failures. In the framework of restorative education, such journaling goes beyond self-expression; it encourages accountability by guiding students to identify relational harms they may have caused and to propose constructive ways of repair. In essence, the journal becomes a mirror through which students confront their own impulses and gradually learn to regulate them. This aligns with al-Ghazālī's insistence that *muḥāsabah*—regular self-examination—is indispensable for moral growth, while also resonating with contemporary research on reflective learning as a predictor of ethical behavior (Park et al., 2006).

Complementing these reflective practices are emotion-regulation micro-lessons designed around the simple formula of “pause–reflect–respond.” By explicitly teaching students to insert a moment of reflection before reacting to provocation, educators can scaffold habits of impulse inhibition that address the root mechanisms of aggression and bullying. Neuroscientific research on mindfulness supports this approach, showing that structured pauses in decision-making activate prefrontal processes associated with inhibitory control (Tangney et al., 2004). When framed through the lens of *takhallī*, the same practice acquires a dual significance: it is both a technique for psychological self-regulation

and a spiritual exercise in resisting *nafs ammārah* (the commanding self-inclined toward evil).

Collectively, these strategies operationalize *takhallī* not as an abstract theological demand but as a set of daily practices that can be systematically cultivated in schools and communities. Their strength lies in their dual grounding: they draw on classical Sufi concepts with deep cultural resonance in Indonesia while also aligning with evidence-based strategies in psychology and education. This dual grounding is crucial for ensuring both legitimacy and effectiveness. Religious legitimacy ensures that practices are embraced within Islamic communities without suspicion of secular intrusion, while psychological evidence guarantees that the interventions are measurable and adaptable to contemporary challenges.

Moreover, by situating *takhallī* within structured interventions, educators and policymakers can move beyond purely moral exhortation toward actionable strategies. Moral instruction in Indonesia often suffers from being overly didactic, emphasizing rules and prohibitions without cultivating the self-regulatory capacities needed to internalize these norms (Revalina, Moeis, & Indrawadi, 2023). Integrating *takhallī* practices addresses this shortcoming by training students to manage impulses, reflect on their behavior, and align actions with ethical and spiritual values. In this way, tasawwuf becomes not merely a subject of religious study but a living pedagogy of moral formation.

The potential applications also extend to broader community life. Youth organizations, neighborhood associations, and even corporate workplaces can adapt *takhallī*-based interventions to their own contexts. Community centers might host weekly group dhikr sessions focused on cultivating calm and reducing interpersonal conflict. Local governments could incorporate reflective audits inspired by *muhāsabah* into civic education programs, fostering accountability at both the personal and institutional level. Even in digital spaces, principles of *takhallī* can be adapted: campaigns promoting “pause–reflect–respond” before posting on social media could help counter the epidemic of online incivility documented in Indonesia’s Digital Civility Index (Mazrieva, 2021). Such innovations would demonstrate that tasawwuf is not an esoteric

tradition detached from modern life but a resource for addressing some of the most pressing moral crises of the digital age.

Finally, it is worth noting that the translation of *takhallī* into contemporary contexts should not be seen as a dilution of its theological richness but as a recovery of its original intent. As al-Ghazālī emphasized, the purification of the soul is not achieved in isolation but during worldly challenges, where the battle against vice is most acute. By embedding practices of self-regulation within the routines of education, governance, and community life, Indonesian society can recover a tradition of moral cultivation that is both authentically Islamic and practically effective. The evidence reviewed—from empirical psychology, educational pedagogy, and Sufi theology—demonstrates that *takhallī* offers a powerful framework for developing self-control, fostering empathy, and preventing destructive behaviors. Its relevance in contemporary Indonesia lies not only in preserving a spiritual heritage but also in equipping new generations with the moral competencies necessary to navigate the complexities of globalization, digital culture, and civic life.

Taḥallī as Prosocial Character and Civic Ethics

If *takhallī* requires individuals to rid themselves of destructive inclinations, *taḥallī* represents the constructive counterpart: the deliberate cultivation of virtues such as *ṣabr* (patience), *riḍā* (acceptance), *tawbah* (repentance), and *murāqabah* (constant self-awareness before God). In the Sufi tradition, the soul cannot remain in a state of emptiness after vice is expelled; it must be filled with praiseworthy qualities that elevate the individual toward greater harmony with both God and fellow humans. Al-Ghazālī (2011) repeatedly stresses that the ethical life is not simply about abstaining from wrongdoing but about embodying virtues that radiate outward to transform social relations. Modern psychology and character education echo this principle. Lickona (1991) defines character as comprising both moral knowing and moral action, while Park et al. (2006) identify universal character strengths—such as perseverance, kindness, and self-control—that align closely with Sufi virtues. Thus, *taḥallī* can be understood as a religiously grounded framework for developing the kind of prosocial traits that

contemporary psychology also views as essential for personal and civic flourishing.

Contemporary scholarship has increasingly highlighted the role of spirituality in enhancing civic virtues and educational outcomes. Purwanto et al (2023), for example, in their study of spiritually integrated curricula, demonstrate that embedding tasawwuf-inspired values within higher education correlates with improved empathy, altruism, and engagement in civic life. Their findings support the thesis that *tahallī* is not a private mystical exercise but a pedagogical resource that strengthens public virtues. In the Indonesian context, Fahrudin et al. (2024) confirm this observation in their analysis of Islamic Religious Education at UIN Malang, showing how Sufi ethical concepts embedded in curricula contribute to the cultivation of noble character among students. Qualitative research by Abdullah (2024) further substantiates this by demonstrating that the transmission of Sufi values often occurs through modeling: teachers who embody virtues of compassion, patience, and humility create learning environments where students are naturally socialized into these values. In other words, *tahallī* manifests not only in explicit instruction but also in lived practice and institutional ethos.

From these insights, one can draw implications for both educational policy and pedagogy. A central strategy is the use of service-learning modules that directly integrate moral virtues with civic engagement. When students participate in initiatives such as community kitchens, social welfare programs, or disaster relief operations, they are not merely learning about empathy and service in abstract terms but practicing them in contexts of real social need. Research in character education underscores that experiential learning is crucial for translating values into behavior (Lickona, 1991). When framed as part of *tahallī*, such activities are also infused with spiritual significance: service is performed not simply for civic duty but as an expression of devotion to God through serving humanity (*ḥablun min al-nās*).

In addition to experiential learning, educational institutions can develop *adab laboratories* or scenario-based ethical exercises. These simulate moral dilemmas—such as conflicts between honesty and loyalty, or tensions between personal gain and communal responsibility—allowing students to deliberate on them

in a guided environment. Such exercises encourage students to practice principled reasoning, empathy, and restraint, aligning with the Sufi imperative to cultivate inner virtues that manifest in social responsibility. By engaging students in these simulations, educators operationalize *murāqabah* as constant awareness of God and *muhāsabah* as critical self-evaluation in relation to ethical decisions.

Teacher formation represents another essential dimension. As Abdullah's (2024) study makes clear, students are more likely to internalize virtues when teachers themselves embody them. Professional development programs, therefore, should not only emphasize subject-matter expertise but also train educators in compassionate pedagogy—cultivating patience, humility, and fairness in their interactions with students. When teachers consistently demonstrate such values, they model *tahallī* in practice, turning classrooms into spaces of moral formation. This suggests that institutional investment in teacher training can have multiplier effects: one virtuous educator can influence dozens of students each year, embedding *tahallī* across generations.

The relevance of *tahallī* extends beyond the educational sector into public administration. Corruption, abuse of authority, and ethical negligence among public officials have long been identified as symptoms of Indonesia's moral crisis (Revalina, Moeis, & Indrawadi, 2023). To address these, the virtues of *murāqabah* and *muhāsabah* can be adapted into bureaucratic culture. For example, quarterly reflection audits could require civil servants to review decisions they have made, assessing their alignment with ethical principles and social justice. Such practices would institutionalize self-examination and accountability, reducing the gap between personal spirituality and professional conduct. Similarly, spiritual ethics pledges could be integrated into employee codes of conduct, encouraging public servants to commit personally to integrity as part of their professional identity. While such pledges may appear symbolic, research in organizational behavior indicates that personal commitments, when reinforced by institutional culture, can significantly shape ethical behavior (Treviño et al., 2006).

These interventions demonstrate that *tahallī* is not restricted to personal piety but can function as a civic resource. By aligning spiritual development with structural ethics, *tahallī* offers a

framework that strengthens both individual virtue and institutional integrity. In schools, it nurtures empathetic and socially responsible students; in public administration, it promotes ethical governance and accountability. Both levels are crucial for addressing Indonesia's broader moral crisis, which manifests simultaneously in youth behavior and in political leadership.

It is important, however, to recognize potential challenges. One risk is that *tahallī*-based programs may be reduced to ritual formalism if not accompanied by genuine reflection and habituation. For example, service-learning may become tokenistic if students treat it as a requirement rather than a transformative experience. Similarly, ethics pledges in government could be rendered ineffective if they are not paired with mechanisms of accountability. To avoid such pitfalls, *tahallī* must be framed not as occasional activities but as part of a holistic ethos—embedded in institutional culture, reinforced through mentoring, and evaluated through both qualitative reflection and quantitative outcomes.

Moreover, attention must be paid to pluralism in Indonesian society. While *tahallī* is rooted in Islamic spirituality, its virtues—patience, empathy, accountability, and humility—are universally resonant. Framing these values as simultaneously Islamic and humanistic ensures that *tahallī*-based interventions foster inclusivity rather than sectarianism. In this sense, the civic application of *tahallī* parallels what Purwanto et al (2023) term “tasawwuf moderation,” a mode of spirituality that cultivates tolerance, peace-building, and inclusive civic identity.

In conclusion, *tahallī* offers a powerful framework for cultivating prosocial character and civic ethics in contemporary Indonesia. By emphasizing the active acquisition of virtues, it bridges theological traditions with modern character education, embedding spirituality within the practices of schools and governance. Empirical studies confirm that spiritually integrated curricula foster empathy and altruism, while teacher modeling and experiential learning translate virtues into lived behavior. At the same time, institutional adaptations such as reflection audits and ethics pledges demonstrate that *tahallī* can inform governance as well as pedagogy. These strategies together suggest that *tasawwuf akhlāqī*, far from being a relic of the past, constitutes a living

resource for addressing Indonesia's moral crisis by harmonizing personal discipline with civic responsibility.

Tajallī as Meaning-Making and Social Cohesion

At the highest stage of spiritual cultivation in Sufi ethics, *tajallī* represents the culmination of the journey of purification and adornment. After removing destructive impulses through *takhallī* and cultivating virtues through *tahallī*, the Sufi devotee reaches the state of living entirely for the pleasure of God (*riḍā Allāh*). This stage marks a radical reorientation of life: actions are no longer driven by ego or self-interest, but by devotion, altruism, and an enduring awareness of divine presence. Theologically, *tajallī* is described as the manifestation of God's light within the human heart, producing clarity, compassion, and detachment from worldly attachments (al-Ghazālī, 2011). Psychologically, it can be understood as a form of meaning-making in which the individual frames life experiences—whether joy or suffering—within a transcendent purpose. This orientation not only strengthens personal resilience but also fosters solidarity and altruism, because one perceives human relations as reflections of one's relationship with God.

Recent sociological analyses of Sufi practices in Indonesia affirm this interpretation by demonstrating how *tajallī* is embodied in collective rituals that generate social cohesion. Studies on *hadrah* (spiritual chanting) and *samā'* (auditory devotion through music and recitation) show that these gatherings function not merely as acts of worship but also as mechanisms for community bonding and conflict mediation. Through shared rhythms, movements, and collective remembrance, participants experience a dissolution of individual ego into communal identity, reinforcing bonds of trust and empathy. Quantitative data support these observations: Rahmah et al. (2024) report a significant correlation ($r = 0.68$, $p < .05$) between regular participation in Sufi rituals and perceptions of community cohesion. This suggests that the spiritual ecstasy associated with *tajallī* is not confined to the mystical experience of individuals but radiates outward, shaping social structures and strengthening communal solidarity.

The civic implications of *tajallī* are particularly important in contemporary Indonesia, a society marked by religious diversity

and periodic tensions between groups. As Purwanto et al (2023) argue, the concept of “tasawwuf moderation” highlights how Sufi values—such as tolerance, humility, and service—provide a theological foundation for inclusive civic identity and interreligious harmony. In this framework, *tajallī* nurtures not only devotion to God but also the ability to see the divine image in others, regardless of their religious or cultural background. This perspective transforms diversity from a potential source of conflict into an opportunity for compassion and cooperation. In higher education, for instance, curricula that incorporate tasawwuf principles of moderation have been shown to foster more inclusive attitudes among students, preparing them to become civic actors capable of building bridges across social divides (Purwanto et al, 2023).

To operationalize *tajallī* in contemporary contexts, one can examine how its spiritual insights translate into community practices that enhance meaning-making and social cohesion. One strategy is the development of inter-*tarīqa* study circles where followers of different Sufi orders come together to share teachings, engage in joint dhikr, and deliberate on social issues. Such gatherings reinforce plural civility by modeling that diversity of practice within Islam can coexist with unity of spiritual purpose. Another avenue is the use of arts and devotional movements—such as *qasidah* performances, calligraphy workshops, or dhikr-based music festivals—that create public spaces of aesthetic and spiritual encounter. These not only preserve cultural heritage but also foster empathy and belonging among diverse participants, aligning religious devotion with civic cultural life.

Community-driven civic projects also offer fertile ground for embedding *tajallī*. Initiatives such as neighborhood clean-ups, cooperative economic ventures, or interfaith humanitarian relief can be framed as acts of devotion undertaken for God’s pleasure. When communities engage in such projects with a transcendent orientation, participation is not motivated merely by pragmatic necessity but by a sense of spiritual duty. This reorientation deepens commitment and resilience, ensuring that civic engagement is sustained even in the face of adversity.

To evaluate the effectiveness of *tajallī*-inspired practices, scholars and policymakers can adopt multi-dimensional metrics. Peer-trust indices can measure the degree to which participants feel

they can rely on one another in daily life. Volunteering rates provide a concrete indicator of altruistic engagement. Social capital indices—measuring both bonding capital within groups and bridging capital across different communities—offer a broader assessment of cohesion. These quantitative measures can be complemented by qualitative methods, such as interviews and ethnographic observation, to capture the lived experience of spiritual solidarity. In this way, the outcomes of *tajallī* are not left in the realm of theological abstraction but become subject to empirical assessment and policy integration.

The relevance of *tajallī* becomes even more urgent when considered against the backdrop of rising nihilism and moral disorientation in contemporary society. Globalization, rapid technological change, and digital culture often produce a sense of alienation, particularly among youth. The pursuit of material success without transcendent meaning can foster despair, cynicism, and susceptibility to extremist ideologies. By contrast, *tajallī* offers a framework of meaning-making that situates individual life within a cosmic order, imbuing daily struggles with spiritual significance. Psychological research on meaning-making supports this claim: individuals who interpret life events through transcendent frameworks demonstrate greater resilience, lower anxiety, and higher levels of altruism (Schnell, 2009). Thus, the cultivation of *tajallī* not only strengthens faith but also inoculates individuals against existential despair and destructive social behaviors.

It is also crucial to acknowledge that the social potential of *tajallī* depends on its ethical orientation. History has witnessed instances where mystical experiences were co-opted into sectarian exclusivism or political manipulation. For *tajallī* to serve as a resource for social cohesion, it must be consistently framed as oriented toward God's universal mercy (*rahmatan li'l-'ālamīn*) rather than narrow group interests. Educational and religious leaders therefore bear responsibility for guiding mystical devotion toward inclusive and ethical outcomes. This aligns with the Sufi maxim that true mystical unveiling (*kashf*) is always tested by its fruits: if it produces humility, compassion, and service, it is genuine; if it fosters arrogance or division, it is a delusion.

In conclusion, *tajallī* encapsulates the transformative potential of Sufi ethics for meaning-making and social cohesion in

contemporary Indonesia. At the individual level, it provides a transcendent framework that instills resilience, purpose, and altruism. At the communal level, it manifests through rituals, artistic expressions, and civic projects that strengthen trust, solidarity, and inclusive identity. Empirical evidence confirms that participation in Sufi practices correlates with higher levels of community cohesion (Rahmah et al., 2024), while educational research highlights the role of tasawwuf moderation in promoting civic harmony (Purwanto et al, 2023). By integrating *tajallī* into programs of education, community development, and governance, Indonesian society can cultivate citizens who are not only spiritually devout but also socially responsible, thereby addressing the moral and civic crises of the present age with resources deeply rooted in its own spiritual heritage.

Conclusion

This study has argued that the tripartite framework of Sufi ethics—*takhallī*, *taḥallī*, and *tajallī*—can be reinterpreted as actionable mechanisms for addressing Indonesia’s moral and civic challenges. Rather than treating tasawwuf merely as a historical or devotional tradition, we showed how classical insights map onto contemporary constructs in psychology, education, and governance. *Takhallī* was reframed as self-regulation and impulse control, supported by empirical evidence that Sufi practices reduce anxiety and foster attentional calm (Hamsyah & Subandi, 2016; Gürbüz-Dogan & Ali, 2025). *Taḥallī* was positioned as prosocial character development, aligning with research on spiritually integrated curricula that cultivate empathy and civic responsibility (Purwanto et al, 2023). *Tajallī* was interpreted as meaning-making and social cohesion, validated by sociological findings that Sufi rituals strengthen trust and solidarity in Indonesian communities (Rahmah et al., 2024). Together, these stages create a holistic framework linking inner purification with outer civic responsibility.

The broader contribution of this study is twofold: academically, it reframes tasawwuf *akhlāqī* as an intervention-ready paradigm that can enrich global debates on moral education and spiritual well-being; practically, it offers design principles for embedding Sufi ethics into education, governance, and community programs. While this article is limited to conceptual synthesis, it

highlights the need for future empirical research to pilot and evaluate interventions grounded in *takhallī*, *taḥallī*, and *tajallī*. In a society facing rising moral disorientation and social fragmentation, reengaging tasawwuf as both a personal discipline and a civic ethic may provide Indonesia with resources for nurturing virtuous individuals, ethical institutions, and cohesive communities rooted in its own spiritual heritage.

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