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Sufism-Based Management for Enhancing Employee Performance in Industry 4.0: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract: Sufism is conceptualized as a spiritual discipline oriented toward moral and spiritual refinement, and its integration into human resource management is underutilized. This article examines the concept of Sufism-based management implemented at the Faculty of Tarbiyya and Teacher Training at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. The faculty applies Sufi-oriented management to cultivate inner transformation and enhance employee performance in the current business context of Industry 4.0. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis involving 12 key informants. The analysis guided by Smith's model revealed that Sufi-trained business leaders demonstrate more astute organizational behavior, greater innovativeness, and stronger commitment to addressing institutional challenges. The study found that Sufism-based management elevates institutional service quality across internal, external, and transcendental dimensions, aligning organizational practices with spiritual refinement and collective well-being.

Contribution: This study contributes to the literature on Sufism-based management by providing practical implementations of *takhalfi*, *tahalfi*, and *tajalfi* in business management.

Keywords: contextual Sufism; Industry 4.0; business management; university performance; UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Introduction

Sufism can be defined as a transformative discipline capable of addressing spiritual and psychological disturbance.¹ Such disturbance may manifest not only as inner unrest but also as behavioral symptoms, including diminished motivation, weakened responsibility, and inadequate professional conduct. In the context of organizational service, poor staff performance can be used as an indicator of spiritual and mental imbalance, as individual behavior towards others reflects the actor's inner state.² Accordingly, Sufi principles and practices can provide an effective framework for enhancing the quality of administrative performance by fostering spiritual awareness, moral integrity, and disciplined self-conduct.

Classical Sufi literature places strong emphasis on self-refinement, particularly through the disciplined management of the spiritual heart (*qalb*) and the lower self (*nafs*).³ The mismanagement of these two aspects of consciousness and motivation can lead to a spiritual crisis.⁴ In Sufi thought, *qalb* is understood as the sovereign and regulator of human life, while *nafs* is meant to be subservient to the *qalb*, not to govern it.⁵ However, when this hierarchy is inverted, a state of spiritual disequilibrium arises, which may extend its impact into broader domains, including organizational performance. Such internal misalignment inevitably shapes decision-making, behavior, and institutional dynamics, thus influencing the overall effectiveness of an organization.

Management must adapt to socio-cultural shifts such as Industry 4.0 (IR 4.0) and Society 5.0 (S 5.0), both of which present significant challenges for individuals and organizations. If they fail to respond to challenges, a disruption will occur.⁶ IR 4.0 is

¹ Nasim Bahadorani, Jerry W. Lee, and Leslie R. Martin, "Implications of Tamarkoz on Stress, Emotion, Spirituality and Heart Rate," *Scientific Reports* 11 (2021): 14142, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-93470-8>.

² Stephane M. Shepherd et al., "The Challenge of Cultural Competence in the Workplace: Perspectives of Healthcare Providers," *BMC Health Services Research* 19 (2019): 135, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-019-3959-7>.

³ Sri Hartati, "Tazkiyatun Nafs as an Effort to Reduce Premarital Sexual Behavior of Adolescents," *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 1, no. 1 (2018): 33–44, <https://doi.org/10.25217/igcj.v1i1.207>.

⁴ Eyad Abuali, "Words Clothed in Light: Dhikr (Recollection), Colour and Synaesthesia in Early Kubrawi Sufism," *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 58, no. 2 (2020): 279–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/05786967.2019.1583046>.

⁵ Syafaatun Almirzanah, "God, Humanity and Nature: Cosmology in Islamic Spirituality," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 76, no. 1 (2020): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i1.6130>.

⁶ Achmad Firdaus, "Determination of Organisational Essential Needs as the Basis for Developing a Maslahah-Based Performance Measurement," *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance* 13, no. 2 (2021): 229–50, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIF-11-2017-0041>.

characterized by high digital technology⁷ and the fusion of digital, physical, and biological worlds through smart, connected systems using technologies like AI, IoT, cloud computing, and robotics.⁸ On the other hand, S 5.0 creates a super-intelligent society⁹ where cyberspaces are integrated with physical spaces.¹⁰ With respect to work performance, spiritual and digital literacy is indispensable, including in educational services.¹¹ Universities must prepare and respond to the demands of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0 by providing services that are aligned with the needs of this era.

The 2021 survey on the performance of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTIK) of Universitas Islam Negeri Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto (UIN Saizu Purwokerto) shows that performance related to student affairs, management, academics, research, and service is classified as good, while the aspects of administrative and financial services are at a sufficient level. Both aspects require further improvement by the faculty managers. In its efforts to improve managerial qualities, FTIK UIN Saizu Purwokerto implements a Sufism-based management approach.

A considerable amount of research has investigated the relationship between spirituality and work performance. Joelle and Coelho found that spirituality contributes to the formation of job resourcefulness and affective commitment, which are strong predictors of individual working performance.¹² Moreover, Petchsawang concluded that there is a relationship between workplace spirituality and performance, and meditation partially enables the relationship.¹³ Trisnawati conceptualized that Sufi governance

⁷ Eka Putri Azrai, Daniar Setyo Rini, and Ade Suryanda, "Micro-Teaching in the Digital Industrial Era 4.0: Necessary or Not?," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 8, no. 4A (2020): 23–30, <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.081804>.

⁸ Riska Anggraini Saputri, Muchtarom, and Winarno Triyanto, "Reinforcing Civics Literacy in Sustaining Students' Learning in the Industrial Era 4.0," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 7, no. 9A (2019): 36–43, <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2019.071605>.

⁹ Andreia G Pereira, Tânia M Lima, and Fernando Charrua Santos, "Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0: Opportunities and Threats," *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering* 8, no. 5 (2020): 3305–8, <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.D8764.018520>.

¹⁰ Beata Hysa, Aneta Karasek, and Iwona Zdonck, "Social Media Usage by Different Generations as a Tool for Sustainable Tourism Marketing in Society 5.0 Idea," *Sustainability* 13, no. 3 (2021): 10–18, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031018>.

¹¹ Fahri Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations: A Literature Review," *Journal of Business Ethics* 94, no. 1 (2009): 89–106, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0251-5>.

¹² Maria Joelle and Arnaldo Matos Coelho, "The Impact of Spirituality at Work on Workers' Attitudes and Individual Performance," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 30, no. 7 (April 2019): 1111–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1314312>.

¹³ Pawince Petchsawang and Dennis Duchon, "Workplace Spirituality, Meditation, and Work Performance," *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* 9, no. 2 (2012): 189–208, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2012.688623>.

through raising employees' spiritual awareness can be used as a measure to eradicate corruption.¹⁴ However, Yee, Smith, and Robinson caution that the direct connection of spirituality and performance should be locally contextualized.¹⁵ The previous studies are silent on the potential of Sufism for improving work performance; therefore, this article examines how the Sufism-based management model is practiced at FTIK UIN Saizu Purwokerto in the context of IR 4.0 and S 5.0, and the steps to be taken for implementing this management model. This study fills the existing research gap on establishing a model in Sufism-based management, presenting an empirical investigation into the subject in the Indonesian context.

Literature Review

Sufism: Mental Illness Cure and A Control Tool

There are many definitions of Sufism and its terminologies. The shortest definition of Sufism is 'a way to draw closer to God.'¹⁶ Its basic concepts are *takhalli* (emptying the heart from negativity), *tahalli* (filling the heart with goodness and God's glory), and *tajalli* (God revealing Himself).¹⁷ Through these inner processes, Sufism plays a role in healing mental and spiritual illnesses.¹⁸ According to Al-Ghazālī (c.1058–1111),¹⁹ spiritual diseases such as envy, arrogance, laziness, gossip, and self-admiration are likened to poisonous snakes, scorpions, or centipedes. In Sufism, the root of all disobedience to God is following vain desires, while the root of all obedience to God is

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- ¹⁴ Trisnawati, "Strengthening Capacity of Local Government for Prevention of Corruption Apparatus Through Sufi Governance Approach," *Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Publik* 2, no. 1 (2016): 19–26, <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jiap.2016.002.01.3>.
- ¹⁵ Jeffrey Khong Loong Yee, Jonathan Smith, and Simon Robinson, "Spiritual Well-Being and Work Performance among Ground-Level Employees: Unravelling the Connection," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 29, no. 3 (2021): 1671–91, <https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.29.3.11>.
- ¹⁶ Moh Ashif Fuadi, "Comparative Study of Manakib Nurul Burhani Book with Jawahirul Maani and The Teachings of Sufism in the Book Hagiography," *IBDA: Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya* 19, no. 2 (2021): 243–65, <https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v19i2.4789>; Muzammil Saced, "Newspapers and Dynamics of Religious Communication: The Test Case of Sufi News," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 11, no. 1 (2021): 201–16, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.11>.
- ¹⁷ Suwito, "Eko-Sufisme Studi Tentang Usaha Pelestarian Lingkungan Pada Jama'ah Mujahadah Ilmu Giri Dan Jama'ah Aoliya' Jogjakarta," *Disertasi* (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2011); Maghfur Ahmad, "Three Sufi Communities Guarding the Earth: A Case Study of Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 57, no. 2 (December 24, 2019): 359–96, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2019.572.359-396>.
- ¹⁸ Syamsun Ni'am, "The Debate of Orthodox Sufism and Philosophical Sufism The Study of Maqamat in the Siraj Al-Talibin of Shaykh Ihsan Jampes," *Al-Jami'ah* 58, no. 1 (2020): 1–34, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2020.581.1-34>; Eyad Abuali, "'I Tasted Sweetness, and I Tasted Affliction': Pleasure, Pain, and Body in Medieval Sufi Food Practices," *The Senses and Society* 17, no. 1 (2022): 52–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17458927.2021.2020607>.
- ¹⁹ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn* (Kediri, 1983), 58.

controlling them.²⁰ Negativity is darkness that leads to misguidance, straying away from the way of God and earning His displeasure.

The Sufi path can offer a cure for spiritual illnesses by way of cleansing the heart, ridding it of its impurities, obstructing it from the Divine light, and protecting it from corruption. As revealed in QS. al-Muṭaffifin (83): 14, the human heart can be hollowed out and stained by sinful thoughts and deeds.²¹ The Sufi scholar explained that a person's behavior reflects the state of their heart.²² Therefore, a person's behavior, including managerial organization, must start with improving the inner aspects by balancing between the heart and the lower self.

Sufism as an 'open-source software' of Spiritual Development

Sufism can be used as a tool for self and social control. Adam S. Hodge posits that Sufism is a tool for self-control, as stated by Al-Ghazālī.²³ Sharī'a-based or orthodox Sufism indicates the scale of human deeds, encompassing all forms of human behavior, whether in the form of thoughts or deeds.²⁴

In the context of IR 4.0, Sufi practice can be compared to computer software or mobile applications, which can be installed across a wide range of devices. Just as the Android operating system functions seamlessly on Samsung, Oppo, Xiaomi, and other smartphone brands, Microsoft Office can operate on a wide range of laptop models, including Asus, Acer, Toshiba, and Samsung. Similarly, Sufism can be practiced by individuals from diverse social backgrounds and occupations and is not limited to the religious experts. Sufi teachings are accessible to all who seek spiritual refinement and moral transformation. Further, it can be implemented in a whole array of approaches, whether in conflict resolution, Qur'an memorizing, eco-healing,²⁵ improvement of organizational management, bureaucratic reform, development of spiritual consciousness, or foreign language learning, by way of activating the subconscious.²⁶

²⁰ Ibnu Athaillah Al-Sakandary, *Kitab Hikam* (Semarang: Toha Putra, 1992), 85; 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Anṣārī, *Manāzil As-Sā'īn Ilā Al-Ḥaqq Al-Mubīn* (Tunisia: Dār al-Turk li-l-Nashr, 1989), 25–26.

²¹ QS. 83: 14: "By no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!"

²² Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*, 65.

²³ Adam S. Hodge et al., "Religion and Spirituality, Free Will, and Effective Self-Regulation," in *The Science of Religion, Spirituality, and Existentialism* (Academic Press, 2020), 103–17, <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-817204-9.00009-3>.

²⁴ Suwito Suwito et al., "Hybrid Sufism for Enhancing Quality of Life: Ethnographic Perspective in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.4102/HTS.V78I4.7198>.

²⁵ Ahmad, "Three Sufi Communities Guarding the Earth."

²⁶ Suwito et al., "Language Acquisition Through Sufism (A Case Study of Sufism Concept and Implementation of Learning English through Subconscious-Installing Method [LET-IM] in

Sufism, IR 4.0, and Education Management

The range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital, and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies, and industries, marks the beginning of IR 4.0.²⁷ Each industrial revolution profoundly impacted people's lives; equally, IR 4.0 has a tremendous impact on people's lifestyles,²⁸ work patterns,²⁹ communication behaviors,³⁰ and education systems.³¹ This new stage of technological development compels institutions to facilitate activities that enhance competence, quality of service, and human-computer interaction. Yet, introducing new technologies is insufficient because, ultimately, every piece of technology is only as good as its designers and users, and it may be directed toward constructive or destructive purposes.

Method

This article employs a qualitative approach, drawing on Smith's phenomenological framework. The data were collected through participatory observation, interviews, documentation, and surveys. The observation was conducted over a period of 45 months, from March 2019 to December 2022. The 12 key informants comprised managers (dean, vice-deans, and coordinators), lecturers, administrative staff, and students, who were invited for in-depth interviews. Documentation was used to retrieve data from FTIK files and documents. The collected data were analyzed following Smith's model of phenomenology research: (a) reading and rereading; (b) initial noting; (c) developing emergent themes; (d) searching for connections across emergent themes; (e) moving to the next cases; (f) looking for a pattern across cases.³²

Kuanta Indonesia)," *Asian EFL* 23, no. 3.2 (2019): 143–158, <http://repository.uinsaizu.ac.id/id/eprint/9050>.

²⁷ Syamsul H. Mahmud, Laromi Assan, and Rashidul Islam, "Potentials of Internet of Things (IoT) in Malaysian Construction Industry," *Annals of Emerging Technologies in Computing* 2, no. 4 (2018): 44–52, <https://doi.org/10.33166/AETiC.2018.04.004>.

²⁸ Vasja Roblek et al., "The Interaction between Internet, Sustainable Development, and Emergence of Society 5.0," *Data* 5, no. 3 (2020): 1–27, <https://doi.org/10.3390/data5030080>.

²⁹ Jesus Alvarez-Cedillo et al., "Actions to Be Taken in Mexico towards Education 4.0 and Society 5.0," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education* 8, no. 4 (2019): 693–98, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v8i4.20278>.

³⁰ Brian Kee Mun Wong and Sarah Alia Sa'aid Hazley, "The Future of Health Tourism in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 Era," *Journal of Tourism Futures* 7, no. 2 (2020): 267–72, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-01-2020-0006>.

³¹ Galih Abdul Fatah Maulani and Nizar Alam Hamdani, "Can Universities Improve Their Competitiveness Using Information Technology?," *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology* 8, no. 6 Special Issue 3 (2019): 456–58, <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijeat.F1083.0986S319>.

³² Jonathan A. Smith, Paul Flowers, and Michael Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research* (Sage Publication, 2021), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ITNPEAAAQBAJ>.

Results and Discussion

Contextual Sufism as a Framework for Organizational Management

1) Managerial *Takhallīf*: Purification Practices in Organizational Management

In Sufism, *takhallīf* is the process of draining negativity and removing weaknesses from the heart. When applied to organizations, this process involves identifying and addressing errors and management flaws, such as slow response time, unprofessional behavior, unfriendly interaction, and a lack of empathy. In the Sufi framework, managerial *takhallīf* within FTIK involves recognizing that institutional dysfunction stems from leaders' inner issues. The dean of FTIK highlighted that organizational health depends on the spiritual and ethical well-being of its managers. He said, "Slow service causes people to be dissatisfied. Their swearing and scolding can be a bad and disastrous prayer for us. Such bad behavior will harm ourselves and our institution."³³ He further explained that someone's negligence and lack of care can have a negative impact:

Our deeds will be rewarded by God. Kindness leads to kindness, and badness causes badness. We all want our children and grandchildren to have a smooth life, career, or business. To achieve this, we must invest in them by providing the best service for our stakeholders.³⁴

Therefore, addressing such issues calls for what the Sufis call introspection (*muḥāsaba*) and repentance (*tawba*), which entails identifying and addressing deficiencies in faculty management. On 13 July 2022, the dean held a coordination and faculty meeting, where the participants discussed their weaknesses and problems, such as officials being difficult to contact over urgent matters and poor management of final-year students. These and other weaknesses, if tolerated and not rectified, would lower the quality of FTIK's services. Some participants also noted the poor quality of the faculty's reception service. The meeting results are as follows:

Table 1. Sins and Weaknesses of FTIK UIN Saizu Purwokerto

No	Informants	Opinion
1.	Sum	Some officials are difficult to contact over urgent matters, even via cell phone.
2.	Ima	Leaders (managers) are aloof and do not mingle with staff.
3.	Suw	Some staff members continue to smoke in the office, causing discomfort to others.
4.	Sho	Faculty digital services are often constrained. SISCA (Academic Information System) applications are often troubled, especially at the beginning of the semester.

³³ Suw, "Managerial *Takhallīf*," interview by Nugroho, 4 July 2022.

³⁴ Suw, interview.

5. Enj The lecturers' shared office is disorganized and uncomfortable, and some of the students' toilets are dirty.
6. Des Some classes, especially Room G, are not up to standard and need attention.
7. Suw Some FTIK officers are tardy, which decreases the service quality.
8. Don There is a gap in the number of guiding and testing activities for FTIK lecturers.
9. Faj The process for replacing thesis advisors seems arbitrary.
10. Suw, Sup, Sla Some course design plans (RPS) still include non-KKO verbs, such as 'to understand' and 'to know'.
11. Sum, Muf One lecturer reportedly used obscene language during learning activities.
12. Mhs Some lecturers reportedly do not follow RPS and deviate from the course outline.

The above data extracted from the faculty meeting highlight the weaknesses and shortcomings of the organization, as reflected in the negative behavior of its staff and in the negative state of its facilities. In Sufism, a sinful act increases the degree of spiritual darkness (*zulma*) in the heart. It spreads like a virus that multiplies if not treated. This understanding reflects managerial *takhallī*. In this regard, Sup stated:

The Dean of FTIK emphasizes Sufism-based management, viewing organizations like individuals with goals and resources. He links organizational management to Sufism, which he sees as both a cure and control.³⁵

Further, Sup explained that the brainstorming sessions serve as a form of monitoring and evaluation as well as a form of *muhāsaba*, which fosters metacognitive awareness, helping individuals recognize internal flaws and cognitive distortions.³⁶ This recognition generates an impulse toward *tawba*, which becomes the foundation of managerial *takhallī*.

Recent studies have affirmed the relationship between spiritual introspection and leadership clarity, as evidenced by the findings of Ramachandaran et al. and Roszak et al.,³⁷ which show that reflective practices enhance ethical decision-making and reduce managerial fatigue. From a Sufi perspective, organizational *takhallī* transcends mere administrative repair and becomes a spiritual-ethical reorientation of *nīya* (intention) toward collective benefit. This aligns with recent empirical work by Chen and Yang,³⁸

³⁵ Sup, "Sufism-based management," interview by Sarastuti, 16 August 2022.

³⁶ Sup, interview.

³⁷ Sharmila Devi Ramachandaran et al., "Effectiveness of the Use of Spiritual Intelligence in Women Academic Leadership Practice," *International Journal of Educational Management* 31, no. 2 (2017): 160–178., <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-09-2015-0123>.

³⁸ Chin-Yi Chen and Chin-Fang Yang, "The Impact of Spiritual Leadership on Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Multi-Sample Analysis," *Journal of Business Ethics* 105, no. 1 (2011):

who demonstrated that spiritually grounded leadership increases organizational trust while decreasing internal conflict. Likewise, Garcia found that leaders who engage in structured self-purification create psychologically safe and innovative organizational climates.³⁹ These insights resonate with the Sufi perspective that *tazkiyat al-nafs* produces healthier social systems, thus linking inner transformation to organizational well-being.

Consequently, managerial *takhalli* within FTIK should be understood as a contemporary expression of contextual Sufism—a synthesis of mystical introspection and institutional accountability. Supported by recent research trends, this model suggests that organizations integrating spiritual-metacognitive frameworks tend to cultivate more adaptive, ethical, and compassionate leadership cultures. The adoption of *muhāsaba* as a managerial practice demonstrates how Sufism extends beyond personal transcendence, offering a transformative methodology for organizational governance in the digital and post-digital era.

2) *Tahalli* in Organizational Leadership: Cultivating Virtue and Moral Excellence

Regarding the process of *tahalli* or filling the heart with goodness and God's glory, FTIK identified solutions to solve managerial problems. For example, Muf proposed a solution for the faculty's communication problems. He said, "Mr. X should ask for help from his wife or family to cover his communications at night, if he cannot use his cell phone after working hours. Or [he could] set up an after-office schedule."⁴⁰

In addition, Ima suggested solutions for improving the interpersonal relationships between FTIK managers and staff by conducting congregational prayers at the mosque for daily meetings, holding a weekly 'Blessed Friday' lunch gathering, and organizing an annual picnic. However, prohibited behavior like smoking in the office must be stopped, and a smoking area must be provided in the basement. The cigarette smokers among the staff are invited to perform *tahalli* by discussing the dangers of smoking in shared office spaces.⁴¹ As for RPS not aligning with KKO, the dean and vice dean must ensure that all lecturers are aware of this issue.

107–114, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0953-3>.

³⁹ Jean-Claude Garcia-Zamor, "Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance," *Public Administration Review* 63, no. 3 (2003): 355–363, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6210.00295>.

⁴⁰ Muf, "*Tahalli* in Organizational Leadership," interview by Sarastuti, 16 August 2022.

⁴¹ Ima, "*Tahalli* in Organizational Leadership," interview by Sarastuti, 16 August 2022.

Table 2. Result of Managerial *Tahalli* of FTIK

No.	Informants	Brainstorming to Identify Weaknesses (<i>Takhalli</i>)	Informants/ Participants	Results of Brainstorming to Identify Solutions (<i>Tahalli</i>)
1.	Sum	Some officials are difficult to contact at key times, even via cell phone.	Suw, Enj	Family members at home can facilitate important office communications.
			Sum	Better use of HP service.
			Des, Muf	An office service schedule can be set up; for example, with certain hours under HP control.
2.	Ima	Leaders (managers) are aloof and do not mingle with other staff members.	Sla, Faj	Organize a weekly ‘Blessed Friday’ gathering.
			Suw, Sup	Organize one daily congregational prayer for leaders and staff.
			Sum, Des	Organize an annual picnic for all staff.
3.	Suw	Some staff members continue to smoke in the office, causing discomfort to others.	Suw, Don	Smoking should be restricted to the smoking area. The smoking area should be in the basement.
4.	Sho	Faculty digital services are often constrained. SISCA (Academic Information System) applications are often troubled, especially at the beginning of the semester.	Sla, Ima	Coordinate with TIPD (Information Technology Center and Database)
			Muf, Sho	Improve or replace the university’s SISCA applications.
5.	Enj	The lecturers’ shared office is disorganized and uncomfortable; some of the students’ toilets are dirty.	Suw, Sum, Sup	Combine office space for full-timers and part-timers
			Enj, Des	Create schedules and observation sheets for officers’ work.
6.	Des	Some classes, especially room G, are not up to standard and need attention so that students are more comfortable.	Suw, Enj	Check by Kabag (division head) and Wadek 2 (vice dean 2)
			Enj	Add equipment and facilities to meet adequate standards.
7.	Suw	Some FTIK officers are tardy, which reduces service quality.	Suw, Sla	Issue warnings to tardy officers, based on the concept of <i>al-Rahmān al-Rahīm</i> .
			Suw, Ima	Provide more guidance on

				work and services in the workplace.
8.	Don	There is a gap in the number of guiding and testing activities for FTIK lecturers.	Suw, Sup, Enj	Simple app creation with macros in Excel with teamwork (Google Drive) for a recap in teams.
9.	Faj	The process of replacing thesis supervisors is arbitrary.	Sum, Suw	Replacements of thesis supervisors must be explained and justified.
10.	Suw, Sup, Sla	Some course design plans (RPS) still contain non-KKO verbs, such as 'to understand' and 'to know'.	Suw, Sup	Offer a workshop on course design for new lecturers.
			Sup, Don	Mandatory Competency Improvement for Beginner Lecturers (PKDP) training
11.	Sum, Muf	One lecturer reportedly used obscene language during learning activities	Sum, Sup, Des	Reduce credits for teaching lecturers
			Suw	Investigate and confirm allegations before taking disciplinary action.
12.	Mhs	Some lecturers reportedly do not follow RPS and deviate from the course outline.	Suw, Sum	Investigate and confirm allegations before taking disciplinary action
			Sho, Suw	Provide guidance on the following RPS content and teaching guidelines.

The table shows that the *tahalli* process was conducted collectively, involving FTIK personnel, officers, lecturers, and students. For example, Don pointed out a gap in guidance activities and final exams for FTIK lecturers (point 8). As part of the *takhalli* process, Suw, Sup, and Enj suggested creating simple applications with macros in Excel via teamwork for recapping in Teams.

In Sufism, *tahalli* involves instilling noble qualities. A *sālik* (follower) of the Shādhilīya Order recites 100 *ṣalawāt* upon the Prophet after the evening and morning prayers, which connects him to God and the Prophet. Through the Prophet, noble qualities are formed in the *sālik*. Applied to the business context, this means that the employee serves the internal, external, and eternal stakeholders with concern. The follower adopts noble qualities after cleansing (*takhalli*) of blameworthy traits, internalizing virtues such as sincerity, compassion, patience, and humility, thereby transforming his character and guiding his daily actions. In Sufism, *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli* form a spiritual development model that fosters personal virtue and social ethics. *Tahalli* specifically reflects the manifestation of purified inner states into beneficial

behaviors for the individual and the community.⁴²

Sufi orders offer *ṣalawāt* and liturgical remembrances (*dhikr*) to connect with God and His Messenger, thereby aiding the follower in *tahalli*. These practices help attune the heart toward compassion and moral virtues, reflecting the Prophetic qualities. This approach fosters spiritual closeness and embeds virtues into the practitioner's worldview. Research shows such practices enhance moral clarity and ethical responsiveness in social and organizational contexts.⁴³

From a managerial perspective, the virtues of *tahalli*, such as care, attentiveness, and concern, boost commitment to service and stakeholder well-being. Leaders who embody moral qualities from Sufi refinement demonstrate greater responsibility and work ethic. Research shows virtues like sincerity, patience, and compassion influence behavior, culture, and service. Therefore, incorporating *tahalli* into leadership may improve relations with all stakeholders.⁴⁴ Empirical studies show that *tahalli* can help address moral and social issues by integrating Sufi moral training into character programs. This fosters spiritually grounded individuals who act with integrity.⁴⁵ Spiritual cultivation and organizational effectiveness are interconnected aspects of human flourishing. Therefore, *tahalli* is both an inner spiritual change and a practical ethical resource that enhances managerial service and institutional performance.⁴⁶

3) Organizational *Tajalli*: Embodied Spiritual Values in Managerial Practice

The Sufi concept of *tajalli* is a manifestation of The Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*), reflecting God's qualities in all created beings. In the context of modern business practice, this concept is applied to institutions. At FTIK, organizational *tajalli* follows *takhalli*, as seen in the weekly 'Blessed Friday' event led by Ima, a staff member. Suw described organizational *tajalli* further.

On Friday, the sixteenth of September two-thousand twenty-two, lecturers and staff (Des, Faj, Don, Sla, Sho, Muf, Sum) agreed to bring side dishes and rice

⁴² Rofi'udin, "Konsep Kebahagiaan Dalam Pandangan Psikologi Sufistik," *Theologia* 24, no. 2 (2016): 163–200, <https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2013.24.2.332>.

⁴³ Muhammad Itsbatul Haq, "Tasawwuf (Sufism) as the Basis for Internalizing Humanist Character of Indonesian Muslims (Case Study of Pesantren in Yogyakarta and Madura)," *Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization* 2, no. 2 (2019): 235–262, <https://doi.org/10.14421/skijic.v2i2.1514>.

⁴⁴ Nadir N. Budhwani and Gary N. McLean, "The Roles of Sufi Teachings in Social Movements: An HRD Perspective," *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 21, no. 2 (2019): 205–223, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422319827938>.

⁴⁵ Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations: A Literature Review."

⁴⁶ Zaizul Ab Rahman et al., "The Representation of Al-Takhalli Approach in Coping Risk Behaviors Among Teenagers," *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology* 10, no. 3 (2019): 1162–1172, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3456502>.

for our weekly gathering activity ‘Jumat Berkah’. This activity is very fun and cheap. This activity is a follow-up to the suggestions and inputs mentioned by Ima during a brainstorming session.⁴⁷

Gathering activities create a more intimate atmosphere, fostering familiarity and togetherness as a form of managerial capital, linked to one of God’s Beautiful Names, *al-Rahmān*. This affection smooths communication and promotes healthier institutions. Suw said:

The annual meeting will be held on the seventh to eighth of January two-thousand twenty-three, packed with picnic events and *ziyarah* [visiting shrines]. We visit the heroes of this country and Islam. We will have a picnic by enjoying the beauty of God’s creation around Jogja and Pacitan.⁴⁸

Tajalli, or manifestations of God, in attributes and names, especially in FTIK, are reflected through the organization of the *Tridharma* of Higher Education. From 19 to 23 December 2022, FTIK lecturers participated in the PKDP activity, organized by LPM and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. They studied preparing learning plans (i.e., concept maps, objectives, models, media, evaluations) and religious moderation, focusing on learning objectives with operational verbs (KKO) and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). This form of *tajalli* relates to Allah’s manifestation of His Divine name *al-Haqq*, especially through *al-Rahmān*.

Recent studies in Islamic educational management have demonstrated that professional development grounded in ethical and spiritual values enhances both academic success and lecturer performance.⁴⁹ Research also indicates that institutions investing in capacity-building foster both technical skills and moral awareness among educators.⁵⁰ Training in HOTS and KKO aligns with modern education and reflects the Islamic ethic of *itqān* (mastery), linked to *tajalli* in professional practice.

Managerially, the Divine name *al-Rahmān* manifests as compassionate governance focused on empowerment, capacity building, and human development. Educating and training lecturers demonstrates institutional commitment to nurturing potential, reducing inequality, and enabling staff to assume dignified and competent roles. Research confirms that compassionate leadership enhances motivation, trust, and

⁴⁷ Suw, “Organizational *Tajalli*,” interview by Mualim, 16 October 2022.

⁴⁸ Suw, “Organizational *Tajalli*,” interview by Mualim, 16 October 2022.

⁴⁹ Daniel Moulin-Stožek, “Spiritual Development as an Educational Goal.” *ECNU Review of Education* 3, no. 3 (July 28, 2020): 504–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2096531120935128>.

⁵⁰ Nicholas A. Bowman and Jenny L. Small, “Do College Students Who Identify with a Privileged Religion Experience Greater Spiritual Development? Exploring Individual and Institutional Dynamics,” *Research in Higher Education* 51, no. 7 (2010): 595–614, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-010-9175-2>.

the sustainability of long-term performance.⁵¹

Tajalli in FTIK's management embodies Sufi spiritual processes, translating into institutional excellence. Lecturer development programs go beyond regulatory needs, embodying a spiritually informed management that integrates divine values into organizational life. Recent studies have shown that integrating spiritual principles into policies and systems can foster resilient, ethical, and high-performing institutions.⁵² Thus, *tajalli* links inner spiritual illumination with outward institutional change.

Spirituality and Wisdom as the Basis of Problem Solving

Sufism can serve as a cure and control by healing the ill heart and lust. The dean (Suw) said:

The Qur'an, a guide to Sufism, peace, education, law, and politics, also functions as a management manual. Opening with [Sūrat] al-Fatihah, it introduces Allāh as *Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn*, a term meaning regulator, educator, ruler, and keeper of the universe. Thus, the Qur'an should guide the regulation and management of the universe, including institutions.⁵³

The dean of the faculty teaches management based on this Islamic concept. Referring to the authority of God as a regulator of all human affairs, this should also be reflected in the management of human resources in organizations. To inculcate Sufi values at FTIK and enhance human resource management, the dean organized faculty meetings with a focus on spiritual enlightenment. He urged FTIK staff to serve their institution with affection and friendship. He said:

Stakeholders are guests. In Islam, it is customary to serve guests, and serving them is considered a reflection of one's faith. Guests, according to Ibn Hajar, are of a higher rank than the *awliyā'* [Muslim saints]. Guests must be respected, served, and treated in the best manner.⁵⁴

Further, he also stated that there are three types of stakeholders, namely internal, external, and eternal stakeholders. Internal stakeholders such as lecturers and staff from our faculties. External stakeholders include student guardians and campus partners [e.g., madrasahs, schools, and communities]. The eternal stakeholders are

⁵¹ Meghna Goswami, Rakesh Kumar Agrawal, and Anil Kumar Goswami, "Ethical Leadership in Organizations: Evidence from the Field," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 37, no. 1 (2021): 122–144., <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-04-2020-0048>.

⁵² Fabien Martinez, "On the Role of Faith in Sustainability Management: A Conceptual Model and Research Agenda," *Journal of Business Ethics* 155, no. 3 (2015): 787–807, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3540-4>.

⁵³ Suw, "Spirituality and Wisdom as the Basis of Problem Solving," interview by Mualim, 16 October 2022.

⁵⁴ Suw, interview.

Allah, the Messenger of Allah, and the angels.⁵⁵

Sufism also addresses the issue of desire, helping it to align with reason. When desire dominates the mind, the equilibrium of the heart is disturbed. As Al-Ghazālī noted, the heart must rule, not our lower self. If we are controlled by our desire, we are no longer guided by our heart, thus veering from the path.

Sufism provides a coherent ethical-psychological framework for addressing the misalignment between *qalb* and *nafs*, a condition that classical Sufi thinkers identified as the root of moral and cognitive dysfunction. According to Al-Ghazālī, the heart is the rightful ruler of human affairs. When its authority is displaced, affective and appetitive impulses dominate human reasoning and volition, thus producing inner turmoil and impaired judgment. Contemporary scholarship on his anthropology confirms the conceptual centrality of the heart in regulating emotion, ethical sensibility, and practical reason.⁵⁶

In addition, neuroscientific and psychological studies corroborate the Sufi claim in empirical terms: dysregulated appetites and impulsive affective states undermine reflective cognition and executive function, thereby compromising decision-making and short-term behavior.⁵⁷ Translating these insights into organizational language, the dominance of an unregulated *nafs* manifests as reduced responsibility, low work commitment, and poor service orientation. In management studies, these phenomena are linked to higher turnover, burnout, and ethical lapse. Integrative studies suggest that spiritual practices focusing on self-purification and reflective self-monitoring can help restore metacognitive control and promote ethical decision-making among leaders and staff.⁵⁸

Inculcating Sufi values in management can also provide diagnostic tools to identify organizational dysfunctions and offer remedial practices, such as reflective introspection, liturgical remembrances, and character development, to reorient intention and moral cognition. Research indicates that institutions that adopt these practices tend to improve their ethical climate, safety, and overall performance. Integrating Sufi interventions into management programs can foster responsible, resilient, and service-oriented organizations.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Suw, interview.

⁵⁶ Aliah B. Purwakania Hasan and Abas Mansur Tamam, “The Implementation of Mental Health Concept by Imam Al-Ghazali in Islamic Counseling Guidance,” *Journal of Strategic and Global Studies* 1, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.7454/jsgs.v1i1.1000>.

⁵⁷ Andrew B. Newberg, “The Neuroscientific Study of Spiritual Practices,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (2014): 215, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00215>.

⁵⁸ Donia Baldacchino, “Spiritual Care Education of Health Care Professionals,” *Religions* 6, no. 2 (2015): 594–613, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6020594>.

⁵⁹ Gilbert W. Fairholm, “Spiritual Leadership: Fulfilling Whole-self Needs at Work,” *Leadership &*

Conclusion

Sufism is not only compatible with personal, but also organizational self-purification. The steps taken in this process are the same steps taken in personal *tazkiyat al-nafs*. This study showed that the professional integrity of the university staff is improved through a contextual Sufism approach. It can stimulate wiser organizational behavior, innovations in organizational development, a strong desire to follow up on problem findings, and a better understanding of the individual and the institution. This process supports the improvement of institutional and organizational quality, both internally and externally.

However, this study is limited to examining the managerial experience and services of FTIK as a Sufism-based institution, employing a phenomenological approach. Future studies can broaden the research scope to yield more comprehensive results or compare findings with those of other institutions, managerial experiences, and administrations.

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S. came up with the grand idea of the research, directed the research flow, and wrote the article. I.S.N. collected data and wrote the first draft of the article. M.M. wrote part of the article and was responsible for the English translation. E.S.S. collected the data and wrote the first draft of the article.

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