

The Perspective of Sufism on the Indications of Transactional Practices in the Recruitment of Village Government Officials

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Abstract

Transactional practices in the recruitment of village government officials are generally studied from legal, political, and governance perspectives, whereas Sufism, as a moral-spiritual framework, remains underexplored. This study aims to analyze these transactional practices from a Sufism's perspective and to reflect the moral-spiritual crisis in modern society. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected from case reports, documents, Sufi literature, scientific journals, books, and previous studies through documentation and literature review. The data were analyzed descriptively and interpretively. The findings indicate that transactional practices reflect the dominance of *hubb al-dunya* and the weakening of *amanah* (trustworthiness), honesty, *zuhud*, and social responsibility, leading to public office being viewed as a means to obtain material gain. This research contributes to the study of Sufism by offering a moral-spiritual perspective on bureaucratic deviations and serving as a foundation for strengthening integrity in village governance.

Kata kunci: Morals, Sufism, Spirituality, Transactional practices, Village government officials

Abstrak

Praktik transaksional dalam rekrutmen perangkat desa umumnya dikaji dari perspektif hukum, politik, dan tata kelola pemerintahan, sedangkan pendekatan tasawuf sebagai kerangka analisis moral-spiritual masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis praktik transaksional dalam rekrutmen perangkat desa melalui perspektif tasawuf sebagai manifestasi krisis moral-spiritual pada masyarakat modern. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data diperoleh dari pemberitaan kasus, dokumen, literatur tasawuf, jurnal ilmiah, buku, dan penelitian terdahulu melalui studi dokumentasi dan kajian pustaka, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif-interpretatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik transaksional mencerminkan dominasi *hubb al-dunya*, melemahnya nilai amanah, kejujuran, zuhud, dan tanggung jawab sosial, sehingga jabatan publik dipandang sebagai sarana untuk memperoleh keuntungan material. Kondisi ini menunjukkan terjadinya degradasi akhlak yang berdampak pada rusaknya tatanan sosial dan birokrasi lokal. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memperkaya kajian tasawuf dengan menawarkan perspektif moral-spiritual dalam memahami penyimpangan birokrasi serta sebagai landasan penguatan integritas dalam tata kelola pemerintahan desa.

Kata kunci: Moral, Perangkat desa, Praktik transaksional, Spiritualitas, Tasawuf

Introduction

From the perspective of Sufism, humans are not only seen as rational and social creatures but also as spiritual beings with moral responsibilities before Allah (God). Sufism places the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) as the basis for the formation of social behavior with integrity (Harahap & Ependi, 2023). When life orientation is dominated by material interests, power, and worldly ambitions, humans can experience a spiritual crisis that weakens the values of trust, honesty, and social responsibility. The phenomenon of transactional practices in the process of filling village government officials (village apparatus) is one of the social events that indicates serious problems in the moral and spiritual life of contemporary society. This practice can be understood not only as a violation of administrative law or a bureaucratic deviation, but also as a social phenomenon that reveals a value crisis in modern society. In this context, public office, which should be seen as a mandate to serve the community, has shifted in meaning to become a means of obtaining economic benefits and social status.

The development of modern society, characterized by the rationalization of life, social competition, and an orientation towards material success, often leads to changes in societal value orientations (Rosana, 2015). Modernity has indeed brought advances in technology, economics, and social organization. However, it has also given rise to new problems, including the weakening of the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life. In conditions like these, social success is often measured

based on power, wealth, and structural position, while moral integrity and spiritual awareness tend to be marginalized. The moral-spiritual crisis in modern society is evident in the increasing number of deviant practices in social life, including corruption, bribery, manipulation of power, and various forms of abuse of office (Purwanto et al., 2020). This phenomenon shows that some individuals in the social structure no longer use ethical values as their primary guide in their actions. In the context of village government, transactional practices in the process of filling village government officials are a concrete example of how economic interests and power ambitions can displace the value of integrity. Charging village government officials is basically an important mechanism in the local government system because the position of village government officials has a strategic role in carrying out government administration and services to the community (Asrori, 2014). Therefore, the selection process for village government officials should be carried out in a transparent, fair, and competency-based manner. However, when transactional practices enter the process, the mechanisms meant to guarantee the quality of village government become distorted. Positions are no longer given to individuals with the best capacity and integrity, but rather to parties with the financial ability to influence the selection process.

This phenomenon shows that moral crises do not only occur at high bureaucratic levels, but can also reach government structures at the local level. This indicates that moral and spiritual problems in modern society are systemic because they relate to society's perspective on power, position, and social success. When a position is perceived as an economic investment that can generate future profits, transactional practices become one of the strategies some individuals consider rational for obtaining that position. This phenomenon was observed during the process of filling positions for village government officials in Kediri Regency. This development drew public attention due to the corruption trial at the Surabaya Corruption Court (*Pengadilan Tindak Pidana Korupsi Surabaya*). Based on media reports, the case involved mass filling of village government officials in 163 villages in 25 sub-districts with a total of 320 positions (Ardiansyah, 2026). This practice reveals transactional relations and systemic bureaucratic ethical deviations in the selection process for village government officials.

The choice of Kediri Regency as the research focus was based on the large scale of the case, the extensive involvement of village bureaucratic actors, and the strong indications of moral-spiritual degradation in the practice of filling public positions. This phenomenon is considered relevant to study from a Sufism's

perspective because it shows the relationship among material orientation, abuse of trust, and the weakening of spiritual values in local bureaucratic governance. From a social and spiritual perspective, this phenomenon can be understood as a manifestation of the spiritual crisis experienced by some modern societies. A spiritual crisis occurs when the orientation of human life becomes increasingly focused on worldly interests and ignores ethical dimensions and moral responsibility. When spiritual awareness weakens, values such as honesty, trust, responsibility, and justice will no longer serve as the primary basis for social action. As a result, various forms of moral deviation become more likely to occur across various areas of life, including government bureaucratic practices.

In the Islamic ethical tradition, transactional practices, or *risywah*, are seen as actions that undermine social justice and violate the principle of trust in the performance of public office (Syifaullah & Alif, 2025). Islam emphasizes that power and position are mandates that must be exercised with full responsibility and moral integrity. Therefore, abuse of position through transactional practices not only harms society socially and administratively but also reflects damage to the perpetrator's spiritual values. The phenomenon of transactional practices in the process of filling village government officials in Kediri Regency is therefore important to study academically, not only from a legal or government administration perspective, but also from the moral and spiritual perspective of modern society. It is hoped that this study will provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between the moral-spiritual crisis and the emergence of transactional practices in local bureaucratic structures. Through this understanding, this research attempts to critically portray how changes in value orientation in modern society can influence social practices related to power, position, and moral integrity in public life.

Several previous studies have discussed the issue of moral crisis, modern spirituality, and Sufism from various perspectives. Irawan (2019) in *Tasawuf sebagai Solusi Krisis Manusia Modern: Analisis Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Sufism as a Solution to the Crisis of Modern Man: An Analysis of the Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr) explains that modernity and secularization cause spiritual emptiness among modern humans, leading to the view that Sufism is a means of restoring the transcendental dimension of humanity. Hasibuan & Nasution (2025) in *Tasawuf sebagai Solusi Krisis Spiritual dalam Masyarakat Modern* (Sufism as a Solution to the Spiritual Crisis in Modern Society) show that Sufism values, such as

ikhlas, *zuhud*, patience, and *tawakal*, are relevant to overcoming moral degradation and spiritual emptiness in modern society.

Next, Brillianty & Taufik (2024), in *Dimensi Etika dan Spiritualitas dalam Tasawuf: Relevansi bagi Kehidupan Modern* (The Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Sufism: Relevance for Modern Life), explain that modernization and technological development not only bring progress but also give rise to a moral and spiritual crisis in modern society. This research shows that Sufism values such as *tazkiyah al-nafs*, *tawakal*, gratitude, patience, and honesty are relevant to building moral awareness and helping individuals face the psychological pressures of modern life. Apart from that, spiritual practices such as *dhikr*, meditation, and *muhasabah* are considered capable of fostering inner peace and strengthening human spiritual relationships with Allah. Thus, Sufism is understood as a model of ethics and spirituality relevant to responding to the moral crisis of modern society. Other research on Jariyah & Mujab (2025) in *Konsep Pendidikan Akhlak Tasawuf sebagai Solusi Krisis Moral di Era Modern* (The Concept of Sufism Moral Education as a Solution to the Moral Crisis in the Modern Era) explains that the moral values of Sufism can form self-control and spiritual awareness to overcome the phenomenon of moral degradation in modern life.

Meanwhile, another study by Nurlinda & Ali (2025) in *Pendidikan Islam dan Critical Pedagogy Paulo Freire: Upaya Pemberantasan Korupsi Sistemik* (Islamic Education and Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy: Efforts to Eradicate Systemic Corruption) explained that corruption in Indonesia has become part of a systemic social structure. This research emphasizes that Islamic education is not only about shaping individual morals but also about building collective critical awareness of corrupt practices within the social structure. This research shows the importance of forming ethical awareness, integrity, and social responsibility in efforts to eradicate systemic corruption. These findings show that the problem of corruption is not only related to violations of the law but also to the crisis of moral values in the social life of modern society (Nurlinda & Ali, 2025). In addition, Afiani (2025), in *Integrasi Tasawuf dalam Masyarakat Modern: Perspektif Sosiologi Agama* (Integration of Sufism in Modern Society: A Sociology of Religion Perspective), explains that Sufism serves a social function by fostering social transformation and spiritual integration in an increasingly individualistic modern society. Research by Imron (2018) in *Tasawuf dan Problem Psikologi Modern* (Sufism and the Problems of Modern Psychology) explained that modernity gave rise to various social and moral crises

rooted in the psychological problems of modern humans, leading to the view that Sufism could balance the physical and spiritual aspects of humans.

Based on various previous studies, most research still focuses on Sufism as a solution to the spiritual crisis of modern society, on moral education, and on the prevention of corruption in general. However, there has not been much research that specifically analyzes the phenomenon of transactional practices in filling village government officials as a manifestation of the moral-spiritual crisis through a Sufism's perspective. Therefore, this research attempts to fill the gap in this study by placing a Sufism's perspective as the main analytical tool in understanding moral and spiritual degradation in local bureaucracy. The phenomenon of transactional practices in filling public office can be understood through various social science and Sufism's perspectives. From a sociological perspective, Émile Durkheim explained that modernity can give rise to anomie, namely, the weakening of moral norms and values in society due to rapid social change (Fathoni et al., 2024). This condition causes individuals to lose ethical guidelines in their actions, making social deviations occur more easily. Meanwhile, Max Weber, through the concept of instrumental rationality, explains that modern society tends to place efficiency, pragmatic interests, and material benefits as the main orientation of social action (Tharom, 2025). As a result, public office is no longer understood as a social trust, but as a means of gaining power and economic gain. Karl Marx also saw that the dominance of materialism in modern life increasingly influences social relations with economic interests and power, so that moral values are often marginalized in social practice (Kurniawan, 2024).

From a Sufism's perspective, this phenomenon can be understood as a manifestation of the spiritual crisis of modern humans. Al-Ghazali explained that the dominance of *hubb al-dunya*, or excessive love for the world, is the root of human moral damage because a life orientation overly centered on material things and power will weaken spiritual awareness (Lailia et al., 2026). Hamka, in the context of modern Sufism, emphasizes that Sufism is not only concerned with individual spiritual life but also serves as a moral guide in social life, helping humans avoid being trapped in materialistic and pragmatic attitudes (Maghribi et al., 2025). Apart from that, Ibn Athaillah explained that heart diseases such as greed, *riya'*, and love of power can encourage humans to commit moral deviations in social life (Roihan, 2020). Seyyed Hossein Nasr also explained that modernity has given rise to a spiritual crisis because modern humans are increasingly moving away from transcendental values and becoming more oriented towards material achievement

(Thooyibah & Baharuddin, 2025). Therefore, the Sufism's perspective holds that ethical deviations in bureaucracy are not only related to weaknesses in the social system but also to the weakening of spiritual awareness and values in modern human life.

The main problem in this research is the emergence of transactional practices in the process of filling positions for village government officials in Kediri Regency, which indicates a moral and spiritual crisis in people's lives in the modern era. This phenomenon is not only related to legal violations in village government bureaucratic practices, but also reflects the weakening of ethical values, integrity, and spiritual awareness in community social life. Transaction practices involving the charging of village government officials in Kediri Regency are an interesting phenomenon to study because they reveal a contradiction between the community's normative values and the social practices that occur in everyday life. From a moral-spiritual perspective, this transactional practice can be understood as a form of value crisis arising from the weakening of the internalization of moral and spiritual teachings in public life. The values of honesty, *amanah*, responsibility, and awareness of the ethical dimensions of power management are marginalized by an orientation toward personal interests and material gain. Thus, the phenomenon of transactional practices in the process of filling positions in the village government can be understood not only as an administrative or legal issue but also as a symptom of the moral and spiritual crisis developing in modern society. Therefore, this research was conducted to analyze transactional phenomena in the filling of village government officials through a Sufism's perspective, as a manifestation of the moral-spiritual crisis of modern society.

In line with this main problem, this study poses a research question about how transactional practices in the process of filling village government official positions in Kediri Regency can be understood as a portrait of the moral and spiritual crisis in modern society. This problem formulation leads to the research objective of exploring in greater depth the social dynamics behind these transactional practices and how they reflect the weakening of moral and spiritual values in people's lives.

Research methods generally include several main aspects: research approaches and methods; types of data and data sources; data collection techniques; data analysis techniques; and the time and place of the research. (Wijaya, 2024). This research is a library-based study using a qualitative approach. Data sources consist of primary data, including news and documents related to the phenomenon

of filling village government positions, as well as secondary data, including books, journals, and relevant Sufism literature. Data collection techniques included documentation and literature studies. Data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical methods through a Sufism's perspective. The type of data used in this research is qualitative, namely, information, statements, and descriptions of social phenomena related to the practices of filling village government officials positions.

The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data sources were obtained from various information directly related to the phenomenon of transactional practices in the process of filling out village government officials in Kediri Regency, such as mass media reports, official documents, and information circulating in public space describing these practices. This primary data is the main basis for understanding the social reality that is the focus of research. Meanwhile, secondary data sources were obtained from relevant literature on the research topic, including books, scientific journal articles, and results of previous research on the moral crisis of modern society, corruption or bribery in the bureaucracy, and Sufism or spirituality from an Islamic perspective.

Data collection techniques in this research were conducted through documentation and literature studies. The documentation study was conducted by examining various documents and reports related to transactional practices in the process of filling out the village government officials in Kediri Regency. Through this technique, researchers collect various types of information describing the dynamics of events, the background of transactional practices, and the social impacts they cause. Apart from that, this research also uses a literature review to obtain a theoretical basis for the concept of moral-spiritual crisis in modern society, social ethics in Islam, and the Sufism's perspective on moral degradation.

The data analysis in this research was conducted in several stages: data inventory, data classification, and data analysis. The inventory stage involves collecting data relevant to the research topic from available sources. After the data is collected, the next stage is data classification, namely grouping data based on certain themes or categories related to the phenomenon of moral-spiritual crisis and transactional practices in filling village government officials. The final stage is data analysis, namely, interpreting the data classified using the conceptual framework developed in this research to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The Phenomenon of Transactional Practices from a Sufism's Perspective

From a Sufism's perspective, the practice of bribery by village government officials in Kediri Regency can be understood as a manifestation of a spiritual crisis characterized by the dominance of lust, a materialistic orientation, and a weakening of trust in public office. Positions, which should be viewed as a mandate and a means of serving the community, have become commodities that can be bought and sold for economic gain and access to power.

Sufism views that corrupt behavior is rooted in heart disease (*amradh al-qulub*), such as greed (*al-thama'*), excessive love of the world (*hubb al-dunya*), *riya'*, and weak awareness of Allah's supervision (*muraqabah*) (Nurjaman, 2026). In the case of village official appointments in Kediri Regency, transactional practices systematically demonstrate a materialistic orientation that overrides the values of honesty and justice. This situation aligns with the view that corrupt behavior is not only a violation of the law but also a form of spiritual degradation born of an individual's inability to control their desires. Research on Sufism and anti-corruption shows that corrupt behavior develops when humans lose their spiritual dimension and prioritize worldly interests over moral responsibility and religious awareness (Ramli, 2017).

The concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) in Sufism can help explain why bribery can occur in a structured manner and involve many actors. According to the Sufism approach, individuals who do not undergo the process of purifying the soul are more likely to fall into unethical behavior due to uncontrolled lustful impulses (Fermadi et al., 2025). In this case, the collective deposit mechanism demonstrates the normalization of deviant behavior within social and bureaucratic environments. When bribery is accepted as the norm, individuals tend to follow the prevailing pattern even if it conflicts with their moral and religious values. Hasan Mud'is's research explains that *tazkiyatun nafs* plays a role in the formation of moral intuition, enabling a person to distinguish between right and wrong actions and to reject unethical behavior even in the face of social pressure or personal interests (Mud'is, 2023).

Apart from that, this phenomenon can also be analyzed through the concepts of *muhasabah* (self-introspection), *muraqabah* (awareness of Allah's supervision), and *mujahadah* (struggle against lust). These three concepts are the main pillars of character development in Sufism. The massive practice of bribery shows the

weakness of the *muhasabah* process within the perpetrators, because the decisions taken are based more on material gain than ethical considerations. At the same time, low awareness of *muraqabah* leads individuals to no longer regard honesty and responsibility as the basis for carrying out the mandates of their positions. Research by Safa'at et al. (2025) emphasizes that *mujahadah*, *muraqabah*, and *muhasabah* are the foundations for building integrity because they foster inner discipline, self-control, and strong moral awareness in carrying out public duties (Safa'at et al., 2025).

From Al-Ghazali's Sufism's perspective, public office should be exercised based on moral principles such as *amanah*, justice, honesty, and responsibility. Conversely, transactional practices reflect the dominance of moral principles such as greed, love of the world, and abuse of power. When the recruitment process for village government officials is determined by financial ability, the principle of meritocracy loses its meaning, and the quality of public service can decline because positions are no longer awarded to the most competent individuals. This situation indicates that the main problem is not only the failure of the administrative system, but also the failure of the moral and spiritual development of the actors involved. Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* emphasizes the importance of cleansing the soul of reprehensible traits and cultivating praiseworthy morals as an effort to build individual integrity in social and governmental life (Khusnadin & Shihab, 2025).

Thus, the phenomenon of bribery among village government officials in Kediri Regency can be understood as a form of spiritual crisis, reflected in the dominance of lust, the weakening of trust, and the loss of moral awareness within the local bureaucracy. A Sufism's perspective suggests that eradicating such practices is not sufficient through legal and administrative approaches alone; it also requires strengthening the spiritual dimension by internalizing the values of *tazkiyatun nafs*, *muhasabah*, *muraqabah*, and *mujahadah* to cultivate village government officials with integrity, *amanah*, and a focus on the public good.

Sufism's Perspective on Moral Crisis in Transactional Practices

Transactional practices in appointing village government officials in Kediri Regency can be understood not only as a violation of the law but also as a manifestation of a moral and spiritual crisis from a Sufism's perspective. Sufism views deviant behavior in social life as fundamentally rooted in the inner state of human beings. When the heart is no longer controlled by divine values, various heart disorders (*amradh al-qulub*), such as greed, love of the world, and ambition for

power, will drive individuals to commit acts contrary to moral and religious values (Fitriani & Aswadi, 2025).

In the context of the village government officials appointment case in Kediri Regency, a moral crisis is evident in the changing meaning of public office. Positions, which should be understood as a mandate to serve the community, are instead perceived as commodities to be bought and sold. The Sufism's perspective explains that this condition is related to the dominance of *hubb al-dunya*, or excessive love of the world. According to Irawan's research, modernity often encourages people to place social status, power, and material things as the primary orientation of life, thereby increasingly marginalizing the spiritual dimension (Irawan, 2019). In such conditions, public office is no longer seen as a moral responsibility, but rather as a means of gaining economic benefits and social prestige.

The moral crisis in transactional practices also demonstrates the weakness of the *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) process. In Sufism, purification of the soul aims to rid humans of despicable traits such as greed (*thama'*), a desire for power, and the tendency to justify any means for personal gain (Suhartawan, 2025). Taufik and Brillianty's research confirms that the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* plays an important role in fostering ethical awareness and curbing the materialistic tendencies emerging in modern life (Brillianty & Taufik, 2024). Systematic transactional practices in filling village government positions show that economic interests have overridden moral considerations, turning the selection process, which should be based on competence, into a financial transaction.

Furthermore, this phenomenon reflects the loss of the value of *wara'* in bureaucratic life. In the Sufism tradition, *wara'* is an attitude of caution toward anything that has the potential to contain elements of sin, injustice, or moral deviation (Asy'ari, 2021). The involvement of multiple parties in transaction mechanisms demonstrates that actions that clearly contradict the values of justice are accepted as normal practice in certain social environments. This situation demonstrates the normalization of moral deviance, indicating a weakening of ethical controls within local bureaucratic systems.

These transactional practices can also be analyzed through the concepts of *muraqabah* and *muhasabah*. *Muraqabah* is the awareness that every human action is always under Allah's supervision, while *muhasabah* is the ability to evaluate and introspect one's own behavior (Hidayat, 2025). Ramli's research on the *maqamat* of Sufism as an anti-corruption therapy explains that low spiritual awareness makes it easier for individuals to fall into corrupt behavior because the decisions they make

are only based on worldly gain (Ramli, 2017). In the case of charging village government officials in Kediri Regency, the practice of structured bribery shows a weak awareness of *muraqabah* and *muhasabah*, so that the perpetrators no longer make religious values the main consideration in their actions.

Furthermore, this phenomenon indicates a crisis of *amanah* in village governance. Sufism places *amanah* as a form of praiseworthy morality (*akhlaq mahmudah*) that every individual, especially those holding public office, should possess (Muniir et al., 2026). When positions are obtained through economic transactions, the focus on public service can be displaced by efforts to recoup invested capital. This situation not only harms the public but also demonstrates how the value of trust has been degraded in government practices.

Thus, the transactional practices in appointing village government officials in Kediri Regency can be understood as an indication of a moral crisis rooted in a spiritual crisis. Sufism's perspective suggests that this phenomenon is related to the dominance of *hubb al-dunya* (the worldly self), a weakening of *tazkiyatun nafs* (the self-centeredness), a loss of *wara'* (the principle of self-control), and a low level of *muraqabah* (the principle of mutual understanding and reflection). Therefore, resolving the problem cannot be achieved solely through a legal approach; it also requires strengthening the spiritual dimension and fostering Sufism morals within the bureaucracy and government.

Sufism's Perspective on Spiritual Crisis in Transactional Practices

The practice of transactions by village government officials in Kediri Regency, viewed as a spiritual crisis from a modern perspective, not only constitutes legal violations and a moral crisis but also reflects a profound spiritual one. From a Sufism's perspective, social deviation is fundamentally rooted in a weakening of humanity's relationship with God and a loss of spiritual awareness in living life (Sirojuddin & Sabilillah, 2025). When the spiritual dimension is no longer the center of life's orientation, humans tend to become caught up in worldly interests, which encourage deviant behaviors, including bribery and corruption.

Sufism views that one of the main causes of spiritual crisis is a state of *ghaflah* (spiritual negligence), namely a condition when humans neglect to remember Allah and are more oriented towards worldly affairs (Achlamy, 2015). According to Irawan's research on the thoughts of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, modernity has given rise to spiritual alienation because humans are increasingly moving away from the transcendental dimension and placing matter as the center of life (Irawan, 2019). In

the context of filling village government positions in Kediri Regency, the practice of *risywah* shows how public office is viewed as an instrument for gaining worldly benefits, rather than as a mandate with dimensions of worship and accountability before Allah.

This spiritual crisis is also related to the dominance of *hubb al-dunya*, or excessive love of the world. In Sufism, *hubb al-dunya* is seen as the root of various heart diseases that can lead people to commit acts contrary to religious and moral values (Setiawan, 2025). Sufism values, such as *zuhud* and *ikhlas*, are needed to curb the materialistic tendencies developing in modern society (Hasibuan & Nasution, 2025). The practice of position transactions in filling village government officials positions shows that the orientation towards power and economic gain is more dominant compared to the values of devotion and service to the community.

Furthermore, this phenomenon reflects the condition of the *qalibun maridh* (sick heart). From a Sufism's perspective, a sick heart is characterized by the dominance of greed, love of power, showing off, and weak spiritual awareness. When the heart is filled with worldly orientations, individuals will more easily neglect the values of honesty and justice in order to achieve certain goals (Sirojuddin & Sabilillah, 2025). This is evident in the systematic transactional practices used to influence the selection of village government officials. This behavior demonstrates that moral and spiritual considerations are no longer the primary factors in decision-making.

The spiritual crisis is also evident in the weak awareness of *muraqabah* and *muhasabah*. In Sufism, *muraqabah* is the awareness that every human action is under Allah's supervision, while *muhasabah* is the process of continuous self-introspection regarding one's behavior (Hidayat, 2025). The principles of Sufism as an anti-corruption therapy explain that strengthening *muraqabah* and *muhasabah* can form spiritual integrity that prevents individuals from engaging in corrupt behavior (Ramli, 2017). On the other hand, structured bribery shows a low level of spiritual awareness, such that actions that clearly contradict religious teachings are still carried out for the sake of personal and group interests.

Furthermore, the spiritual crisis in this case also indicates that the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) is not yet optimal. Research by Brillianty and Taufik confirms that *tazkiyatun nafs* functions to cleanse humans of despicable traits and develop noble morals (Brillianty & Taufik, 2024). When the process of soul purification does not work properly, materialistic tendencies, ambition for power, and self-interest will more easily dominate an individual's behavior. As a result,

public office is no longer understood as a social and spiritual mandate, but rather as a means of gaining worldly gain.

Thus, the transactional practices in appointing village government officials in Kediri Regency can be understood as manifestations of a spiritual crisis characterized by *ghaflah*, the dominance of *hubb al-dunya*, the emergence of *qalibun maridh*, weak *muraqabah* and *muhasabah*, and suboptimal *tazkiyatun nafs*. The Sufism's perspective shows that the root of the problem lies not only in the weakness of the oversight system or law enforcement, but also in the weakening of spiritual awareness that should be the foundation of individual behavior in carrying out public mandates.

Analysis of the Phenomenon of Transactional Bribery Practices from a Sufism's Perspective

Transactional practices in appointing village government officials in Kediri Regency can be understood not only as violations of law and ethics, but also as manifestations of a spiritual crisis rooted in the inner state of humankind. From a Sufism's perspective, deviant behavior is fundamentally caused not only by structural and social factors but also by a mental state that has not yet been freed from the dominance of worldly desires and tendencies (Adibullah & Ni'am, 2024). Therefore, the phenomenon of transactions in filling village government officials positions can be analyzed as a form of individual failure to control materialistic urges and as a suboptimal process of spiritual development in social life.

Sufism identifies *hubb al-dunya*, or excessive love of the world, as one of the main roots of moral decay. This attitude arises when humans make wealth, position, and power their primary goals in life. Irawan's research on the thoughts of Seyyed Hossein Nasr explains that modernity has pushed humans away from the spiritual dimension, leading to a more focused life orientation on material achievement rather than transcendental values (Irawan, 2019). In the context of village government officials in Kediri Regency, the practice of buying and selling positions demonstrates that public office is no longer understood as a mandate to serve the community, but rather as an instrument for gaining social status, power, and economic gain. This situation reflects the dominance of the worldly sphere, which has marginalized spiritual values in governance.

This transactional phenomenon also indicates a sick heart, or *qalibun maridh*. In Sufism, the heart is the center of human spiritual awareness. When the heart is

filled with greed, ambition for power, and excessive worldly interests, the human ability to distinguish between good and evil is weakened (Musfah & Syarif, 2006). The practice of engaging in transactions to influence the selection of village officials demonstrates that moral and spiritual considerations are no longer the primary basis for decision-making. Individuals are more driven by pragmatic gain than by moral responsibility as members of society and as servants of Allah.

Furthermore, the systematic practice of bribery demonstrates the suboptimal process of *tazkiyatun nafs*, or soul purification. According to Brillianty and Taufik, *tazkiyatun nafs* is a spiritual development process aimed at cleansing humans of despicable traits such as greed, worldly desires, and abuse of power (Brillianty & Taufik, 2024). From a Sufism's perspective, the purification of the soul is a crucial foundation for developing an integrity of character. When this process fails, individuals are more likely to engage in behavior that harms others for personal gain. This is evident in the practice of bribery, which turns a competency-based selection mechanism into an economic transaction benefiting certain parties.

Apart from that, this phenomenon shows the weak awareness of *muraqabah* and *muhasabah* in social life. *Muraqabah* is the awareness that every human action is always under the supervision of Allah, while *muhasabah* is a process of self-introspection regarding the behavior carried out (Hidayat, 2025). Ramli's research on the *maqamat* of Sufism as an anti-corruption therapy explains that strengthening *muraqabah* and *muhasabah* can form moral integrity that can prevent corrupt behavior (Ramli, 2017). Among village government officials in Kediri Regency, the transactional practice of organized bribery demonstrates a low level of spiritual awareness. The perpetrators were more focused on short-term profits than on moral and spiritual accountability for their actions.

From a Sufism's perspective, this condition also indicates a weakening of the values of *wara'* and *zuhud*. *Wara'* is a cautious attitude toward anything that has the potential to lead to sin or injustice. At the same time, *zuhud* does not mean abandoning the world, but rather placing it in proportion and not making it the primary goal of life (Yaqin, 2026). Hasibuan and Nasution's research shows that Sufism values such as *ikhlas*, *zuhud*, and *tawakal* play an important role in overcoming the spiritual crisis in modern society (Hasibuan & Nasution, 2025). In the case of transactional practices in filling village government positions, the orientation towards positions and economic benefits shows that the values of *zuhud* have not been strongly internalized, so that worldly interests are more dominant than the values of devotion and service to the community.

Thus, the transactional practices in appointing village government officials in Kediri Regency can be understood as a manifestation of a spiritual crisis characterized by the dominance of *hubb al-dunya*, the emergence of *qalibun maridh*, weak *muraqabah* and *muhasabah*, and the suboptimal process of *tazkiyatun nafs*. The Sufism's perspective shows that the root of the problem lies not only in weak administrative oversight or law enforcement, but also in the weakening of the spiritual awareness of the individuals involved. Therefore, efforts to prevent bribery practices are not sufficient through a legal approach alone but also require strengthening Sufism values through moral development, purification of the soul, and internalization of the awareness that public office is a mandate that must be accounted for not only to the community but also to Allah SWT.

Social Implications of Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Local Bureaucracy

The transactional practices in appointing village government officials in Kediri Regency not only reflect a moral and spiritual crisis at the individual level but also have broad social implications for community life. One of the most obvious social implications is the weakening of public trust in village government institutions. From a Sufism's perspective, trustworthiness (*amanah*) is a form of morality that every public office holder must possess. When the process of appointing officials is carried out through bribery, the public perceives that *amanah* is no longer the primary foundation of governance. Consequently, public trust in village government officials declines, as people perceive positions as being determined more by economic power than by competence and integrity. This situation demonstrates how an individual's spiritual crisis can develop into a crisis of trust at the societal level.

Besides eroding public trust, transaction practices also have the potential to undermine the function of social ethics in society. Brillianty and Taufik explain that Sufism serves as an ethical foundation shaping social behavior around the values of honesty, responsibility, and concern for others (Brillianty & Taufik, 2024). When these values no longer guide the process of filling public office, society risks experiencing a shift in value orientation. Positions, which should be understood as public service mandates, become status symbols and means of gaining economic advantage. This shift can encourage the development of a pragmatic mindset that prioritizes results over the means to achieve them.

From a Sufism's perspective, this phenomenon demonstrates the dominance of *hubb al-dunya* (worldly good), which not only influences individuals but also shapes a culture oriented toward material interests. One of the functions of Sufism is to control the growing tendency toward materialism in modern life (Hasibuan & Nasution, 2025). When the values of *zuhud* and simplicity are no longer part of social life, society tends to judge success by power, position, and wealth. As a result, practices that conflict with moral values may be considered normal as long as they generate certain benefits.

Another implication is the weakening of character formation among the younger generation. In social life, the behavior of public office holders often serves as an example for society. When the practice of transactions by village government officials becomes widely known, the younger generation may come to view success as determined more by power relations and financial ability than by competence, hard work, and integrity. This condition indicates a crisis of social role models that can hinder the formation of moral character in society. Sufism's moral education plays a crucial role in building self-control, moral awareness, and character grounded in spiritual values (Jariyah & Mujab, 2025).

Furthermore, a moral-spiritual crisis within the local bureaucracy can disrupt social integration. Sufism research has a social function as a means of building solidarity, harmony, and social integration (Afiani, 2025). When Sufism values such as honesty, *amanah*, and social concern are weakened, the relationship between the community and government institutions becomes less harmonious. Communities can experience disappointment, political apathy, and even distrust of various development programs implemented by village governments. In the long term, this situation could hinder the social cooperation necessary for village community development.

From a Sufism's perspective, these social implications demonstrate that the spiritual crisis impacts not only individuals' personal lives but also broader social structures. As Ramli explains, the loss of spiritual values in public life can open up space for the development of corrupt behavior, ultimately undermining the overall social order (Ramli, 2017). Therefore, efforts to address transactional practices in village government officials cannot be achieved solely through law enforcement and bureaucratic reform, but also require strengthening Sufism values such as *amanah*, *zuhud*, *wara'*, *muraqabah*, and *muhasabah* to create governance with integrity and a more just and harmonious social life.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, transactional practices in village official appointments in Kediri Regency indicate a moral and spiritual crisis that is not only related to legal violations but also reflects a weakening of Sufism values within the local bureaucracy. This phenomenon is characterized by the dominance of *hubb al-dunya* (excessive love of the world), the emergence of greed and a materialistic orientation, and a weak awareness of *muraqabah*, *muhasabah*, *wara'*, and *amanah* (trustworthiness), which should underpin individual behavior in carrying out public office. From a Sufism's perspective, bribery is a manifestation of an inadequate process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), leading to public office being viewed as an economic commodity and a means of personal gain rather than a mandate to serve the community. This moral-spiritual crisis has resulted in declining public trust in government institutions, weakened the quality of local leadership, fostered a pragmatic culture within the bureaucracy, and disrupted the process of developing social character based on the values of honesty and integrity. Therefore, efforts to prevent transactional practices are not sufficient through law enforcement and institutional reform alone, but also require strengthening the values of Sufism through internalization of *tazkiyatun nafs*, *zuhud*, *wara'*, *muraqabah*, and *muhasabah* in order to build a bureaucracy that has integrity, is *amanah*, and is oriented towards the welfare of society.

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