

From Spiritual Leadership to Functional Leadership: A Qualitative Single-Case Study of Authority Mediation in Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, Lombok

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Abstract

This study responds to the tendency of tariqah studies in Indonesia that highlight elite figures and institutions, thereby neglecting how congregations maintain the continuity of Sufi practice in everyday life. By taking the case of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan (JWK-NW) in Lombok, this study examines how ritual authority, social relevance, and ethical productivity continue to operate when there is no doctrinal successor *murshid*, because TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid is positioned as the first and last *murshid*. The study uses a qualitative single-case design based on fieldwork (October to November 2023) through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation of *Hiziban*, *wirid*, and *muzakarah*, as well as document analysis (*Hizib* compilations, decrees, teaching materials, and related publications) with purposive and snowball sampling. Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis with source and method triangulation. The findings show that the continuity of the tariqah is maintained through the expansion of functional authority: appointed coordinators and representatives mediate *bay'ah*, ritual discipline (including *qada'*), and ethical guidance, without claiming themselves as autonomous *murshids*. Core practices are carried out in daily and weekly cycles, including congregational *Hiziban* on Monday night, collective *dhikr* on Wednesday, and a weekly *wazhifah* on Friday, and are reinforced by regular *muzakarah*. Members report increased spiritual awareness, emotional control, and inner tranquility, while also expanding solidarity through *infaq* and collective work to build *madrasah*, *TPQ*, and social services. Historically, the JWK-NW network is reported to have reached around 200,000 members in 1994. This study enriches lived Sufism scholarship by showing a concrete differentiation between spiritual leadership and functional leadership, and it offers the implication that *dhikr* routines and communal service can become a low-cost infrastructure for character education, youth mentoring, and social cohesion when aligned with local ritual ecology.

Keywords:

Living sufism, Nahdlatul Wathan, sufism, society, tariqah

Article History:

Submitted : 26 June 2025
Revised : 9 July 2025
12 September 2025
Accepted : 25 December 2025

Introduction

Studies on *tariqah* (Sufi orders) in Indonesia have predominantly focused on their historical development, organizational structures, and interactions with external social or political dynamics (Bruinessen, 1992). Many of these studies emphasize the role of prominent social actors who are often viewed as representative figures of the *tariqah* (Turmuzi, 1998). Consequently, the contribution of grassroots or marginalized members—namely, the congregation (*jamaah*)—has frequently been overlooked. This oversight diminishes recognition of the practical existence of the *tariqah*, even though the vitality of a *tariqah* is fundamentally sustained by the presence and activities of its followers. It is through the *jamaah* that the public can observe how *tariqah* practices are implemented and assess whether the *tariqah* remains active or has declined.

A compelling example of how a *tariqah* is practiced at the grassroots level is the *Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* (Hizib NW). This *tariqah* is particularly unique in that it diverges from conventional Sufi organizational norms, especially regarding *murshid* (spiritual guide) succession. The *murshid* of this order, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, is considered both the first and final spiritual leader. Despite his passing, the *tariqah* continues to exist without appointing a successor—a practice that challenges mainstream Sufi frameworks. Based on this unique structure, the present research focuses on the activities of *Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan*, exploring not only those activities directly related to Sufi rituals but also broader forms of social engagement such as community involvement and the cultivation of moral exemplars.

To contextualize this study, it is important to consider the foundational history of *Nahdlatul Wathan* (NW) and its *tariqah*, *Hizib NW*. According to Abdul Rasyad, NW and *Hizib NW* play a significant role in shaping both the religious and social identity of the people of Lombok. Founded in 1953 by TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, NW is not only a religious organization but also a vehicle for social transformation through Islamic education, *dawah*, and community service. *Hizib NW*, established in 1964, integrates Sufi values with flexible sharia-based practices, serving as a spiritual tool for community cohesion and moral development. Rituals such as *dhikr* and *Hiziban* help reinforce Islamic identity and communal solidarity (Rasyad et al., 2023).

M. Zaenul Muttaqin similarly highlights NW as the largest Islamic organization in West Nusa Tenggara, with considerable influence in religious, educational, social, and political spheres. His research notes the central role of Tuan Guru as a spiritual and social leader, and emphasizes NW's incorporation of local cultural symbols—such as the legend of Dewi Anjani—to enhance the reception of Islamic teachings within Sasak society. Furthermore, he discusses the internal conflict following the death of TGKH Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, which led to the division of NW into two factions: NW Pancor and NW Anjani. Despite this split, both factions continue to exert significant influence and contribute to the dynamism of the NW movement (Muttaqin, 2021).

This article examines conceptual issues, on the one hand, and empirical issues, on the other, that are crucial in contemporary studies of Sufism: how a Sufi order can continue to possess ritual authority, social relevance, and ethical productivity in the absence of a successor *murshid* who formally functions as the guardian of the highest spiritual authority. On the other hand, previous studies of *tariqah* have tended to focus attention on elite figures, formal institutions, or doctrinal genealogies. Attention to how Sufi life is sustained, transmitted, and re-signified at the level of everyday congregational practice remains relatively limited. Therefore, this study focuses on the community of *Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan* as an example of grassroots Sufism that operates through what can be called a functional expansion of spiritual authority: although TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid is recognized as the last *murshid* in a doctrinal sense, the continuity of practice remains maintained through appointed coordinators, who function as functional mediators in *bay'ah*, ritual discipline, and ethical guidance, rather than as autonomous spiritual teachers.

In line with this, this study is guided by three interrelated questions: (1) How are Sufi practices, particularly *wirid*, *Hiziban*, and *riyadah* (self-discipline), lived, organized, and transmitted within *Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan* at the congregational level? (2) What mechanisms enable the preservation and legitimation of Sufi authority in the absence of a successor *murshid*, and how are spiritual leadership and functional leadership differentiated in practice? (3) How are local cultural values, such as communal solidarity, moral exemplarity, ritual enactment, and social reciprocity, integrated into Sufi praxis, and what ethical and social functions does it produce within the broader context of Lombok society?

This article proposes a hypothesis that an understanding of lived Sufism as an ethical-spiritual praxis embedded in everyday social life, rather than as a system that is merely ritual or esoteric. By drawing on Sufism as a discipline of self-formation and moral cultivation, this study argues that Sufi practices within Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan function as a form of embodied ethics that shapes habitus, regulates emotions, and structures communal responsibility. Through an examination of how *dhikr*, *riyadah* (self-discipline), and collective service are negotiated through local cultural idioms, this study contributes to broader philosophical debates concerning ethics, religious subjectivity, and human well-being in Muslim societies. Empirically, this study enriches studies of Indonesian Sufism by highlighting the agency of grassroots congregations; theoretically, this study shows how Sufism operates as a living moral technology that connects inner transformation with social cohesion.

The study of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) and *tariqah* (Sufi order) represents two inseparable dimensions of Islamic spirituality. *Tasawwuf* constitutes the theoretical and conceptual foundation, while *tariqah* serves as its practical manifestation (Ghani, 2024; Leccese, 2021). In this symbiotic relationship, *tasawwuf* provides the spiritual and ethical principles that underpin communal Sufi practices, whereas *tariqah* operationalizes these principles through structured rituals, guidance, and discipline. The relationship is mutually reinforcing: *tasawwuf* inspires praxis through *tariqah*, and *tariqah* generates reflective insights that enrich the discourse of *tasawwuf*.

According to the 10th-century Sufi scholar Abu Abdurrahman al-Sulami, Sufism is a spiritual path aimed at attaining closeness to Allah through the purification of the heart, mastery over the ego (*nafs*), and complete devotion to the Divine (As-Sulami, 2003). It emphasizes noble character, self-examination, and direct experiential awareness of God's presence. In al-Sulami's classical framework, a *tariqah* is defined as a specific spiritual methodology followed by *salik* (spiritual wayfarers) to attain various spiritual stations. This journey typically involves disciplined practice, recitation (*dhikr*), special devotional acts, and mentorship under a *murshid* (spiritual guide), whose role is essential in guiding disciples toward *ma'rifat Allah* (gnosis or deep knowledge of God) (As-Sulami, 2003).

The institutionalization of Sufism through *tariqah* has deep historical roots and remains relevant in the contemporary Islamic world. Fazlur Rahman argues that Sufism initially emerged as a personal response to the growing formalism of Islamic legalism. It began as an individual pursuit of spiritual purification and nearness to God, eventually evolving into a systematized mystical path with a strong emphasis on metaphysical union with the Divine. This development occurred primarily in cultural hubs such as Iraq and Persia, where Sufism highlighted the transcendental dimensions of Islam (Rahman, 1979).

In contrast, Seyyed Hossein Nasr underscores the enduring relevance of Sufism and *tariqah* in the face of modern philosophical and scientific paradigms that often espouse reductionist views of religion. Nasr posits that Sufism offers both intellectual and spiritual resources capable of safeguarding Islamic spirituality against the secularizing forces of modernity, including rationalism and existentialism. For Nasr, Sufism presents a tradition-rooted yet flexible framework for addressing the existential needs of contemporary Muslims (Nasr, 1994).

In the Indonesian context, Martin van Bruinessen identifies the *tariqah*, particularly the Naqshbandi order, as multifaceted and dynamic. He notes that the evolution of Sufi orders in Indonesia cannot be fully understood through a singular theoretical model due to the diverse socio-cultural and historical forces at play. *Tariqah* in Indonesia often serve a dual role—as both a medium for spiritual purification (*jihad al-akbar*) and as a form of socio-political expression or protest (*jihad al-asghar*). During certain historical junctures, *tariqah* have played active roles in resistance movements, while at other times they have promoted introspection, patience (*tawakka*), and spiritual resilience (Bruinessen, 1992).

This dual function of Sufism in Indonesia is evidenced by various studies conducted in Lombok. M. Rohman Ziadi, for instance, observed a synergistic relationship between Sufism and political engagement (Ziadi, 2018). Similarly, Muzakki found that the consolidation of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan practices within local communities contributed to increased social cohesion, leading to a stronger sense of peace and collective well-being, especially among residents of Pringgasela (Muzakki et al., 2021, pp. 39–47). Meanwhile, Lalu Saudi analysis of Nahdlatul Wathan focuses on the internalization of ethical values embedded in the Hizib tradition and how these values shape the moral character of students (*santri*) at Pondok Pesantran (Islamic boarding School) Darul Muhibbin Nahdhatul Wathan Mispalah (Saudi, 2022, pp. 1–120).

Methods

This qualitative, fieldwork-based single-case study examines the practice of Sufism within Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan (JWK-NW) in Lombok, Indonesia. Using purposive and snowball sampling, we recruited informants across roles—coordinators, administrators, long-standing members, and knowledgeable external observers—to capture variation in experience and perspective. Between October and November 2023, we combined (i) semi-structured interviews, (ii) non-participant observation of weekly *Hiziban*, *wirid*, and *muzakarah* sessions, and (iii) document analysis (e.g., *Hizib* compendia, organizational decrees, teaching materials, and relevant publications/online sources). All interviews were audio-recorded with permission and supported by fieldnotes and artefact photographs where appropriate.

We conducted iterative, reflexive thematic analysis with open and axial coding, constant comparison across interviews, observations, and documents, and memo-writing to track interpretive moves. Emic categories central to the community's practice (e.g., *amaliyah*, *riyadah*, *bay'ah*, *Hizib*) were preserved and then related to the broader *tasawwuf*–*tariqah* literature to build an analytically rich account. Credibility was enhanced through triangulation of methods and sources, member-checking of factual descriptions with key informants, and peer debriefing. Dependability and confirmability were supported by an audit trail (fieldnotes, codebook iterations, document log). Thick description of setting and practices aids transferability. Participation was voluntary with written/oral informed consent; IR, WR, MZ, SR and other are part of interviewed man who indentifying details of ritual sites or financial practices are masked. The researchers maintained reflexive memos to monitor positionality vis-à-vis JWK-NW leadership and lay members throughout the study.

Results

Nahdlatul Wathan: Is It a Tariqa?

Islam in Lombok reflects a distinctive dynamic that intertwines Islamic teachings with the local traditions of the Sasak people. This synthesis illustrates the complex dialectic between religion and culture. Islam was first introduced to the island in the 16th century by Sunan Prapen, son of Sunan Giri, who employed a Sufi and cultural approach, such as puppetry (*wayang*), to facilitate its acceptance among the Sasak population, who previously adhered to the Boda religion—a belief system influenced by Hindu-Buddhist elements. The process of Islamization eventually led to a duality between *Islam Lima Waktu* (Time Five Islam), which adheres to orthodox Sunni practices, and *Islam Wetu Telu*, a syncretic form of Islam that incorporates indigenous beliefs and practices (Asnawi, 2005).

According to Mutawali, this acculturative approach resulted in unique religious expressions, including the rituals of *Wetu Telu*, which blend Islamic spiritual elements with Sasak cosmology. The ascendancy of *Lima Waktu* Islam was greatly supported by influential local religious figures, notably TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid. Through his *dawah* (Islamic proselytizing), establishment of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), and cultural engagement, he not only strengthened orthodox Islamic teachings but also preserved interreligious harmony among the Muslim majority and Hindu and other minority communities. Rooted in Pancasila values and the *pesantren* tradition, Islam in Lombok has successfully adapted to local contexts while maintaining its doctrinal integrity, contributing to what is often described as a moderate, *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation) form of Islam (Mutawali, 2016).

The traditions of *tasawwuf* and *tariqah* in Lombok have played a central role in shaping a philosophical and acculturative pattern of Islam that merges Islamic teachings with Sasak cultural elements. Sufism in this region emphasizes harmony between God, humanity, and nature, as reflected in the *Wetu Telu* cosmological framework. The spread of *tariqah* orders such as *Qadiriyyah* and *Naqshbandiyyah*, which were introduced via trade networks and the migration of scholars, helped Islam take deeper root by integrating mysticism with local traditions. This synthesis is documented in classical texts such as *Sayr al-Salikin* and *al-Tuhfah al-Mursalah* (Quddus & Ariadi, 2015).

By the 18th century, the role of the Tuan Guru—a title for scholars who had completed the Hajj and returned as *tariqah* leaders—further institutionalized Islamic norms. The Tuan Guru is a religious title given by the Sasak community to individuals who have fulfilled specific scholarly and

spiritual requirements (Jamaludin, [2011](#)). While this shift reinforced fiqh-based practices and reduced the mystical character of earlier Sufism, it nonetheless established a foundation for a philosophical-religious culture transmitted across generations. Over time, however, modernization contributed to the erosion of these mystical elements, and tariqah practices became increasingly aligned with formalist interpretations of Islamic law (Quddus & Ariadi, [2015](#)).

Among the most significant Sufi institutions in modern Lombok is Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, a tariqah-based congregation in East Lombok. This group practices the Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan, compiled by TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid between 1964 and 1967 (Rasyad et al., [2023](#), p. 1966). According to Arpan, two primary factors motivated the formation of this tariqah. First, there was widespread dissatisfaction with existing tariqah practices that either deviated from Islamic law or were too rigid for practical observance in the modern era. Second, the new tariqah emerged from TGKH Zainuddin Abdul Madjid's own inner spiritual experiences. As a result, it was intended to offer a clear and spiritually disciplined path for worshippers, especially in devotional acts such as *munajat* (praying or supplication) and *mujahadah* (spiritual struggle) (Arpan, [2020](#), p. 59).

As the administrator of the Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan in Gangga, North Lombok Regency, SR explained, "Over time, Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan evolved into an organized institution working in tandem with the larger Nahdlatul Wathan movement. Its core task is to guide and coordinate members who have received formal permission (*ijazah*) to practice specific wirid (litanies) either communally or individually. These practices include Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan, Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan, and *Ilmu-Ilmu Hikmah* (esoteric knowledge) (Interview with SR, October 31, 2023)."

A distinction must be drawn between Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan and Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan. The former is a comprehensive compilation of dhikr that includes Qur'anic verses, *sholawat* (praises of the Prophet), supplications, and *qasidah* (devotional poetry), making it accessible to the broader Muslim community, particularly followers of Nahdlatul Wathan (Irawan & Nurjannah, [2016](#), p. 228). The latter, however, is a more structured spiritual path that entails disciplined recitation under the guidance of a murshid (Arpan, [2020](#), p. 59). Based on narration expalind by IR as the administrator of the Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan in Kotaraja on November 5, 2023, "In this tariqah, every missed act of dhikr must be replaced (*qada*) by the disciple who has undergone bay'ah (allegiance) (Interview with IR, November 5, 2023)."

The Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan was conceived as a Sufi discipline to maintain the spiritual integrity of its members within the framework of Islamic law, echoing the models of Sufism found in the works of al-Ghazali and Junaid al-Baghdadi (Arikewuyo, [2019](#)). TGKH. Zainuddin Abdul Madjid's vision of Sufism aligns with the traditional fourfold spiritual path: shariah (law), tariqah (path), *haqiqat* (truth), and *ma'rifat* (gnosis) (Janssens, [2011](#)). He metaphorically illustrated this by saying that "sharia is like the ocean, tariqah is the boat, and haqiqat is the pearl—one can only attain the pearl by journeying across the ocean in a boat" (Rasyad et al., [2023](#), p. 1966).

Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan is even regarded as the final tariqah, complementing the spiritual legacies of past saints (Arpan, [2020](#), p. 59). This is articulated in a verse composed by TGKH Zainuddin Abdul Madjid:

THORIQAT HIZIB

Last Thariqat

With bisyarah "Al-Bashir al-Nadhir"

To Bermi al-faqir al-haqir

And quoted by al-Khidr. ([Madjid](#), n.d.)

Translation:

The last of the Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan tariqahs,

Announced directly by the Messenger (al-Bashir al-Nadhir),

To Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, the humble one from Bermi,

And confirmed by al-Khidr (Daniawan, [2011](#), p. 14).

In practice, while the members of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan maintain strict spiritual discipline under the guidance of a murshid, they exhibit independence in political matters, often exercising autonomous political choices. In the implementation of devotional practices (amaliyah), the congregation conducts a symbolic act known as throwing the *jumrah*, which

involves charitable giving (*infaq*) to support the construction and maintenance of facilities for their activities. Although the monetary contributions may vary among individuals, the act symbolizes collective solidarity and spiritual unity. This ritual is typically performed at the end of major wirid sessions and during regular weekly gatherings, held on Monday and Wednesday nights.

Tracing the Roots of Wirid Nahdlatul Wathan

Based on the narration delivered by MZ (personal interview, October 30, 2023), an administrator of the Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan in Kotaraja, it was stated that “information provided by the Coordinator of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan (TGKH Muhammad Muhsin Makbul), as well as historical accounts from al-Magfurlah Maulana Shaykh TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, the relationship between Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan (JWK NW) and the broader Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) organization is described as that of the soul and body. Nahdlatul Wathan represents the organizational structure (the body), while Jamaah Wirid Khusus constitutes its spiritual essence (the soul). Just as the human body requires a soul to live, NW is said to be spiritually enlivened by the presence of JWK NW.”

The formation of JWK NW was initiated by TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, who entrusted its coordination to select disciples. However, these individuals had to undergo rigorous spiritual trials and riyadah (ascetic discipline) before assuming leadership. As narrated by MZ (personal interview, October 30, 2023), “For instance, one of TGKH’s relatives, Haji Faisal, was once appointed to lead the congregation but ultimately was unable to withstand the tests. Other prominent scholars, including TGH Najmudin (Praya) and TGH Sakaki Kapek, also received similar mandates but were later dismissed due to their inability to complete the spiritual trials.”

Eventually, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid received a *mubashshirat* (a visionary spiritual message) during a moment of seclusion and worship, which affirmed that the leadership of the special wirid should be entrusted to his student, Haji Mukhsin Makbul. The informant further said that “The message, expressed in the local Sasak language, described him as the humblest and least formally educated disciple but divinely chosen to lead the congregation. He was referred to as “Amaq Sleha” (Haji Mukhsin Makbul), and this divine endorsement was relayed by TGKH himself.” Then, he explained, “On a Friday morning, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid summoned Haji Mukhsin Makbul through his driver, who conveyed the request with the words: “Amaq Sleha, please come—Maulana Shaykh has called you.” Since that moment, Haji Mukhsin Makbul has served as the central coordinator of JWK NW. He was the only individual among 113 candidates who successfully completed the necessary trials to assume this spiritual mandate” (Interview with MZ, October 30, 2023).

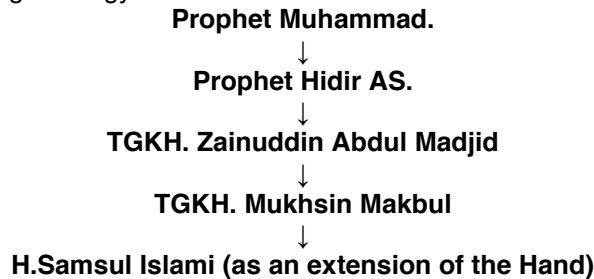
Initially, around 1975–1976, the precursor to JWK NW was known as the Kelompok Tawajjuh (Tawajjuh Group), which consisted of seven founding members: Haji Husnan Putradi, Abu Hindun, Husniadi, Amaq Mahsun, Amaq Mar, Amaq Ma’rifudin, and Haji Mukhsin Makbul (Interview with SR, October 31, 2023). SR point us that “This group, which always dressed in white, engag. ed in regular dhikr and spiritual training in Balik Batang (now known as Lendang Belo Village). Upon completion of the spiritual tests by Haji Mukhsin Makbul under the guidance of his teacher, the group was renamed Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan. It was formally inaugurated in 1975 at Musholla al-Abror, where the Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan and the associated Ilmu Hikmah (wisdom-based sciences) were first introduced” (Interview with SR, October 31, 2023).

JWK NW functions as a spiritual partner of the NW organization, working in tandem to uphold the organization’s mission of Islamic propagation (*dawah*) and education. SR said, “those who have not been initiated into JWK NW remain affiliated with NW only in a formal, *shar’ah*-based capacity. In contrast, those who have joined JWK NW are considered to have aligned themselves with NW in both outward practice (*sharia*) and inner essence (*haqiqat*), thus embodying a comprehensive spiritual commitment.” SR recounted that “The purpose of JWK NW is not only spiritual cultivation but also the strengthening of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood). The formal spiritual pledge (*bay’ah*) marks a person as a *mujahidin al-mukhlisin* (a sincere fighter in the path of God), and this unity is viewed as foundational for building educational and social institutions within the community” (Interview with SR, October 31, 2023). JWK NW follows the Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan, which is complemented by practices in Ilmu Hikmah. It has played a pivotal role in expanding the influence of the tariqah across Indonesia—including West Nusa Tenggara, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, DKI Jakarta, Bekasi, Bogor,

Riau, and Batam—as well as internationally, such as in Malaysia and India. By 1994, the number of members had reached approximately 200,000 (Studio Kafa Billah, 2017).

In terms of organizational structure, JWK NW and the Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan do not follow a rigid hierarchical leadership model. TGKH Muhammad Mukhsin Makbul, as the principal student of TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Majid, was granted the authority to initiate new members and conduct bay'ah. For SR, “No formal murshid (spiritual master) has succeeded him; rather, the continuation of spiritual leadership has been based on the direct designation of successors. TGKH Muhammad Mukhsin Makbul passed this responsibility to H. Syafruddin Pengembur, who in turn designated H. Samsul Islami—his son—as his successor” (Interview with SR, October 31, 2023).

The following is the genealogy:



For the official refinement decree issued on January 27, 1994M. / 15 Sha'ban 1414 H. can be seen in the following figure:

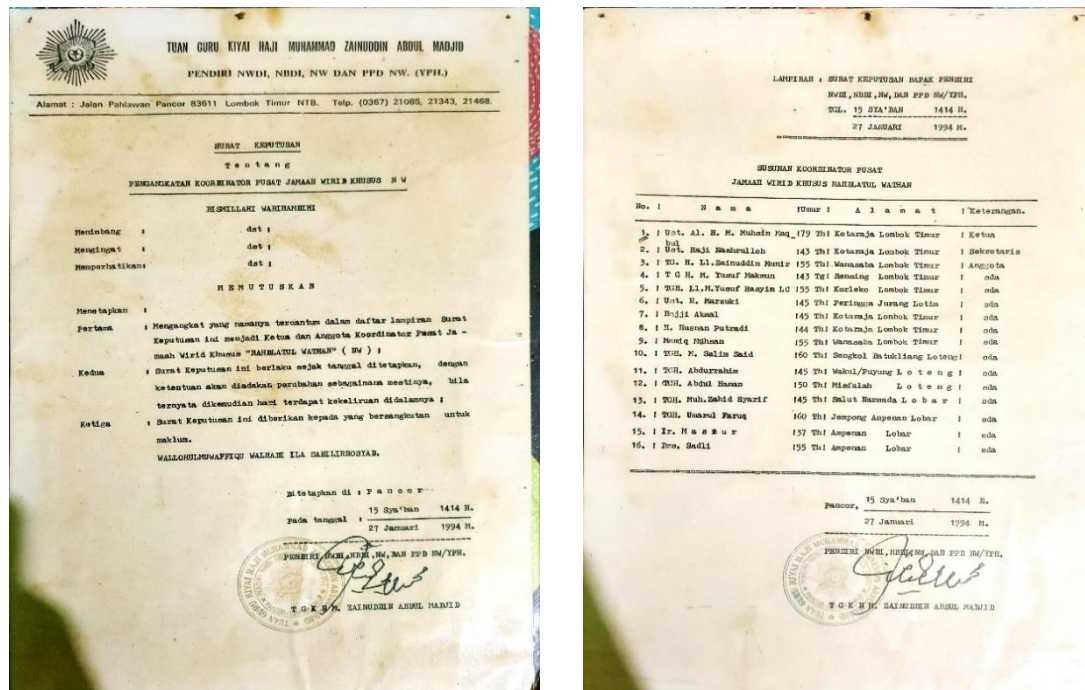


Figure 1. Refinement of Decree

Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan

To join as a member of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan there are four conditions that must be agreed upon, the conditions are the same as when you want to accept Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan. The four conditions, namely must obey Allah and His Messenger, ready to practice Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan every time after the five obligatory prayers, willing to help build Nahdlatul Wathan, and make alms only (Interview with MZ, October 30, 2023). After agreeing to these four conditions, the new member is ready to be sworn in and bai'at (pledge loyalty). Based on the delivery or narration of MZ, “Iqrar and bai'at are the requirements to enter

the wirid khusus Nahdlatul Wathan congregation and are the requirements to receive Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan. After making the pledge or bai'at, new members can receive the practices of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, both Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan and Ilmu Hikmah on the condition that they have been graduated" (Interview with MZ, October 30, 2023).

Main Activities *tariqat* in Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Watan

When we observed in the field, we find there are various kinds of activities and practices in Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, these kinds can be classified into two kinds, namely the main or core activities (*amaliyah*) and additional or supplementary activities. The main activities or *amaliyah* is a practice or practices of worship that is carried out based on the rules or procedures that have been passed down by the *murshid* (spiritual teacher) to their disciples (*murid*). The main practices that must be carried out by members of the Nahdlatul Wathan Special Wirid Congregation are all practices that have been accepted and certified in a collection of texts and read repeatedly, called *wirid*. They carry it out in the Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan forum. The main practices are Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, Ilmu Hikmah (the wisdom), and Riyadah (spiritual exercises).

Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan

Wirid khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, this consists of several structured wirid, including: (1) Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan. This is the foundational component of the wirid khusus Nahdlatul Wathan. The prescribed recitation begins with reading of surah al-Fatihah. The first reading of al-Fatihah is intended for the Prophet Muhammad, his family, friends, Prophets and Messengers. The second reading of al-Fatihah is intended for TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, his family, and his lovers. The third reading of al-Fatihah is intended for all Muslims and Muslims. There are four kinds of practices *wdhikr* yang dilakukan oleh komunitas ini. Di antaranya adalah; (a) *wazhifah ar-rawatib* (daily practices, rosaries, or prayers), this *wazhifah* recited after every five daily prayers, (b) *wirid ar-rabithah*, this rosaries recited at every sunset, (c) *wazhifah al-yaumiyah* (daily prayers or rosaries), this rosaries recited once in every day and night, and (d) *wazhifah al-usbu'yyah* (weekly prayers or rosaries), this rosaries recited once a every week.

Each member of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan reads and practices *wazhifah ar-rawatib*, *wirid ar-rabithah*, and *wazhifah al-yaumiyah* individually. In contrast, the practice and recitation of *wazhifah al-usbu'yyah* is carried out in congregation and led by the *murshid* or a representative appointed to lead the weekly *dhihr*, weekly *dhihr* is held every Juma'at. As stated by MZ (personal interview, October 30, 2023), "practicing Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan has many *fadilah* or benefits, including first, everything that feels difficult to others will feel easy for people who always routinely practice it, second, they will always feel sufficient and will never feel deprived, third by practicing this *tariqah* will always be given convenience when doing something."

(2) Benteng Umur or Fortress Age, to safeguard life from harm and calamities, the practice form of the Fortress of Ages are reciting *Bismillāhir-rahmānir-rahīm* and reciting surah al-taubah repetid or read three times before bathing, and reciting *Kullu nafsīn dzā'iqatul-ma'ūt*, three times after finishing the bath in facing the qibla. As explained by MZ, "this practice is a form of Ilmu Hikmah (wisdom knowledge) intended to spiritually protect individuals, families, and the Nahdlatul Wathan organization from harm, including black magic and malevolent intent" (Interview with MZ, October 30, 2023).

(3) Wirid Sumber Rezeki (sumber rizki rosaries), a wirid intended to be a source of livelihood for the one who recites it, it is practiced after every fajr praying, provided after completing reading the Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan in the *wazhifah ar-rawatib* section, after completing it, then practice *wirid sumber rizki*. This wirid are reciting surah al-fatihah one times, surah al-inshirah three times, and surah al-qadar 11 times. Then, it ends with reciting the prayer "Allāhumma yā man yakfī 'an khalqihī jamī'a wa lā yakfī 'anhu aḥadun min khalqihī, yā Aḥad, man lā Aḥad lahū, inqāṭa'a ar-rajā' illā minka wa khābat al-āmāl illā fika wa suddat aṭ-ṭuruq illā ilayk, yā ghayātha al-mustaghṭhīn, aghithnī, recited seven times". Based on the narration or delivery of MZ, "that the practice of wirid sumber rizki has many benefits, including, first, the fortune of the person who practices it will be facilitated, second, all affairs will be

smooth. This is also based on the virtue of reciting the letter al-Insyirah, which is an opening of fortune and will facilitate all affairs for practitioners" (Interview with MZ, October 30, 2023).

(4) Pusaka Hamzanwadi (Hamzanwadi legacy) are sentences: *Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāhil-‘aliyyil-‘azīm. Allāhumma laka al-ḥamdu wa minka al-faraj wa ilayka al-mushtakā wa bika al-musta‘ān wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāhil-‘aliyyil-‘azīm.* Those sentences recited three times and its done after finishing reading Tariqah Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan part of wazhifah al-rawatib at the time after Isha prayer, while holding hands. Based on the narration explained by MZ, "that the practice of this Hamzanwadi legacy has many benefits which includes when faced with a problem in life, one must believe that there is God who helps his servants to solve the problems faced in the best way. This wirid reinforces reliance on Allah in times of difficulty, emphasizing human weakness and divine strength. Pusaka Hamzanwadi shows the meaning that a person is only a weak servant and only asks Allah for help, because Allah is the All" (Interview with MZ, October 30, 2023).

(5) Kantung Ulama' (stronghold of Islamic scholars), wirid kantung Ulama is practiced in every time after Maghrib prayer) which is recited 100 times: *Subḥānallāhi wa biḥamdihi, subḥānallāhil-‘azīm wa biḥamdihi, astaghfirullāhal-‘azīm.* Based on the narration delivered by MZ (personal interview, October 30, 2023), "as explained by coordinator of wirid khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, *Wirid Kantung Ulama'* were practiced of the Ulama' and Auliya'. The practices has a very extraordinary reward, this is explained in the hadith H.R. Bukhari 6405: "whoever says *subḥānallāhi wa biḥamdihi* (Glory be to Allah and all that is His) a hundred times a day, his sins will be forgiven even if they are like the foam in the sea." The hadith means that the the practices has meaningfulness; one of them is that a person's sins are forgiven even if they are as numerous as the foam in the sea. The The informant further said, "it is a practice that is easy to say, but has a heavy weight, which is emphasized in the hadith of Bukhari and Muslim (in English translation): Two phrases that are light on the tongue, but heavy on the scales, and favored by Ar Rahman are "*Subḥānallāhi wa biḥamdihi, subḥānallāhil-‘azīm.*" (Glory be to Allah and all praise be to Him. Glory be to Allah, the Most Great)."

(6) Other spirituality as main activities, there are also activities that are routinely practiced twice a week in congregation, namely reading Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan on Monday nights and read the sura al-Ikhlās 100 times and recite *ddhikr al-tahlil* (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*) 1000 times as al-dhikr. This all can be termed as *syafa'ah* (intercession or the act of pleading or intervening on behalf of someone else to gain mercy, forgiveness, or a favorable outcome from Allah, especially on the Day of Judgment) or *musalsal bi al-ru'ya* (mean, that the dhikr continued with other dhikr). MZ said that, "This is in accordance with the virtues of reading the letter al- Ikhlās very much, including first strengthened faith and monotheism, second forgiven his sins. The dhikr in line with QS. al-Ahzab; 41. The verse explains that Allah calls all His believing servants to remember Him as much as possible by mentioning His name with the tongue and heart at all times, as a form of gratitude for a servant because it is Allah who gives them countless favors" (Interview with MZ, October 30, 2023).

Knowledge of Wisdom

The wisdom or knowledge of wisdom is a practical knowledge that exists in the jamaah wirid khusus Nahdlatul Wathan. The wisdom that can be practiced is the Science of Wisdom that has been accepted and authorized. The forms of Wisdom Science practice open with recite: "*Al-ḥamdu lillāh, Nahḍatul Wathan fī al-khayr, Nahḍatul Wathan fa-iṣṭabiqul-ākhirah, al-Shaykh Muḥammad Zainuddīn ‘Abdul-Mājid al-Anfānī, wa al-Shaykh al-Sayyid Muḥammad Amīn al-Kuṭbī, Āmīn... Āmīn... Āmīn...*" these phrases as basic knowledge of hikmah (*ilmu dasar*), then, recite *Hizb Imam Subliy* with; recite Surah Al-Fatihah 11 times, recite: "*Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāhil-‘aliyyil-‘azīm*" 11 times, recite the Benteng Wirid (protective wirid): "*Laqad jā’akum rasūlun min anfusikum ‘azīzun ‘alayhi mā ‘anittum ḥarīṣun ‘alaykum bil-mu’minīna ra’ufur-raḥīm. Fa-in tawallaw fa-qul: ḥasbiyallāhu lā ilāha illā huwa ‘alayhi tawakkaltu wa huwa rabbul-‘arshil-‘azīm.*", recite the Sholawat An-Nahdhatain 11 times., and finally, recite surah Al-Fatihah for preparation (*li al-istidad*) 7 times. MZ (personal interview, October 30, 2023) explained, "the science of wisdom is known in the culture of wisdom experts as a wirid or practice for self-defense or self-defense (defensive), but sometimes it is also offensive, such as Hizib and *Asma*. Through certain prayers it can help people fortify

themselves from others who have evil intentions. The Science of Wisdom comes from the Qur'an and Hadith."

Riyadhah

Riyadhah is an activity carried out by members of the Nahdlatul Wathan Special Wirid Congregation to perfect what has been received (dijazahkan) by the murshid.. H. Muiz concluded that, "there are forms of riyadhah that are carried out based on direct orders from the murshid, for example, such as fasting, dhikr, etc (Muiz, 2023)." The terminology of riyadhah used by Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan is the same as the terminology of riyadhah in general, so the riyadhah carried out in Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan is not contradictory (Adnan, 2017, p. 123).

A Sufi to control himself, his soul and his body is to carry out riyadhah, so that the spirit remains pure. Thus, riyadhah must be carried out voluntarily and seriously, because this can prevent a person from doing bad things, both towards humans and other creatures, especially towards God (Senali, 1998, p. 104).

It can be concluded that there are 2 types of riyadhah carried out in the Nahdlatul Wathan Special Wirid Congregation, namely *riyadah al-jizm* and *riyadhah al-nafs*, *riyadah al-jizm* is an exercise performed by physical movement to obtain physical health, while *riyadah al-nafs* is an inner exercise performed by fasting, dhikr, etc., with the aim of obtaining awareness or spiritual quality.

Additional Practices in Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Watan

Additional amaliyah is a practice or practice of worship that is carried out which does not have fixed rules or procedures. The following is an additional form of activity or amaliyah that exists in the Nahdlatul Wathan Special Wirid Congregation:

Learning Religion (Pengajian)

Islamic religious learning activities carried out in the community and taught by a recitation teacher (*dai*) to a number of people. That is what is often referred to as pengajian. The term recitation then became a religious terminology among the congregation of tarikhah in the form of activities to invite people to do good and follow the instructions of Allah SWT, to get good luck both in the world and in the hereafter. Based on the narration delivered by MZ, (personal interview, October 30, 2023) "as explained in QS. 3: 104. The verse can be understood as always inviting, calling for virtue, advocating the good, and preventing the bad. Thus, Muslims will be safe from disputes and influences from any party. Asking people to do good is not enough; they must also eliminate bad traits." Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan holds recitations with the aim of strengthening understanding of sharia and strengthening ukhuwah Islamiyah, namely to always maintain friendship with anyone, be it fellow Muslims or non-Muslims. SR explained that, "the recitation that is held is not only specifically for the Nahdlatul Wathan Special wirid congregation, but is open to the public (for anyone who wants to join the recitation). In addition, the recitation is also used as a place or place to stay in touch with members and non-members" (Interview with SR, October 31, 2023).

Bermuzakarah (discussions)

Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan not only holds recitations, but also routinely conducts muzakarah (discussions) every week. They hold muzakarah every Monday night after reading Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan and every Wednesday after carrying out syafa'ah or dhikr together (musalsal bi al-ru'ya). SR (personal interview, October 31, 2023) said, "in this muzakarah, they discuss various aspects related to Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, both in the social and academic fields. They base their understanding on QS. 42:38 and believe in the importance of muzakarah (deliberation) in decision-making. In addition, they utilize muzakarah to strengthen ties of friendship and brotherhood."

Working together to build an educational institution

Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan also contributes to building education for the nation's children. The members of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan work together to build educational institutions, such as building madrasahs, Al-Qur'an Education Parks (TPQ), and

building Orphanages (PA) for children who have no place to live as a form of social care. Through working together to build educational institutions, researchers analyze that the Nahdlatul Wathan Special Wirid Congregation is competing in goodness. Based on explanation of SR, “they make QS. 2: 148 as the basis for carrying out various collective social activities. In addition, they strengthen the spirit of togetherness by working together to build educational institutions.

Discussion

Spirituality and Self-Control

Based on the practices undertaken by members of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, three significant benefits are commonly experienced when these practices are carried out consistently and earnestly:

Cultivating Spiritual Aspects

One of the primary benefits felt by members is the enhancement of their spiritual dimension. This aspect pertains to the inner, non-material part of human existence, encompassing deep religious experiences and the pursuit of life’s ultimate meaning. MR, for instance, shared that before joining the Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, he felt spiritually empty and lacked direction. However, after engaging in the wirid practices, his life became more purposeful. He reported a noticeable transformation in his thought process and actions, characterized by a heightened sense of calmness and continuous remembrance of Allah in daily life (Interview with MR, October 12, 2023). I conclude that the wirid and teachings of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan foster spiritual proximity to Allah. Members reported a sense of tranquillity and mindfulness through regular dhikr practices. These routines are considered effective tools for enhancing spiritual consciousness and improving the overall quality of worship. These experiences indicate that wirid does not merely function as a devotional practice, but rather as an ethical discipline carried out repetitively, through which practitioners cultivate moral sensitivity, self-control, and a stable orientation toward God in everyday life. In this sense, spiritual awareness does not emerge as a momentary emotional state, but is formed as an embodied habitus that is internalized and ingrained within the self.

Cultivating Emotional Aspects

The emotional aspect involves one's ability to regulate and express emotions appropriately. This dimension significantly influences interpersonal relationships and one’s overall mental well-being. ER (personal interview, November 13, 2023) testified that the wirid practices had a profound impact on his emotional stability. Formerly prone to anger and lacking empathy, he experienced significant emotional growth after committing to the wirid teachings. He became more respectful toward his parents and more empathetic and emotionally composed in general. These findings as evidence that Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan contributes to emotional maturity. The values of love, compassion, and tolerance embedded in its teachings help members navigate emotional challenges more effectively, enhancing both their relationship with Allah and their interactions with others. From the perspective of lived Sufism, emotional regulation operates as an ethical pedagogy that is embodied within the self, in which ritual practices carried out repeatedly not only transmit doctrinal norms, but also actively shape moral dispositions. Through the discipline of dhikr and collective practices, emotional self-control becomes part of a shared moral habitus formed within the Sufi tradition.

Gaining Peace of Mind

Peace of mind, as fostered by the practices of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan, is not merely a state of emotional calm but a deeper sense of spiritual assurance and closeness to Allah SWT. AR (personal interview, November 23, 2023) recounted how engaging in wirid brought him a profound sense of serenity and security. He expressed that wherever he went, he felt protected and never afraid, as he constantly remembered Allah. These experiences suggest that the wirid practices help individuals internalize the presence of Allah in their lives, fostering emotional stability and inner peace. This aligns with the message of Surah Ar-Ra’d (13:28), which states that hearts find peace through the remembrance of Allah. In an increasingly complex world, where people often seek comfort in material luxuries, the

members of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan have found solace in spiritual devotion. They report that regular wirid practice provides greater tranquility than external sources of comfort. Inner tranquility in this context is not only understood as passive peacefulness or psychological comfort, but rather as a form of ethical stability produced through the discipline of dhikr that is carried out consistently. Through the repetition of dhikr, practitioners anchor themselves within a spiritual order that exerts a positive impact on the moral and social domains, thus enabling them to face uncertainty, fear, and the responsibilities of life with steadfastness and ethical clarity.

Moreover, Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan functions as a platform for dawah, promoting Islamic values, providing moral guidance, and fostering spiritual development. It also strengthens community ties, promoting solidarity and mutual support among members. Importantly, the congregation's positive social impact challenges the common stereotype that Sufi groups are inward-looking or isolated. As noted by ER, Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan is actively engaged in society, particularly in education, economic development, and community service. The group not only nurtures individual piety but also contributes significantly to social piety, showing how spiritual practice can coexist with social responsibility (Interview with ER, November 13, 2023). Based on interviews with community members, it is evident that Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan has made meaningful contributions to both the educational and social sectors of society, particularly in Lombok. This indicates that Sufi ritual discipline goes beyond personal piety and functions as a moral infrastructure for social cohesion. Interior spiritual training is translated into ethical action in the public sphere, such that Sufism can operate simultaneously as a practice of self-formation and as a source for the continuity and well-being of the community.

Conclusion

This study shows how the ritual grammar of Jamaah Wirid Khusus Nahdlatul Wathan—Hiziban, wirid, riyadah, and the disciplining bond of bay'ah—operates as a practical ethics of self-cultivation and communal care in contemporary Indonesia. By tracing emic categories and participants' interpretive logics, we demonstrate that Sufi practice here is neither a residual pietism nor a private spirituality, but a lived moral technology that reorganizes time, attention, and social obligation. The result is a distinctive form of Islamic flourishing: disciplined interiority coupled with outward civic comportment, mutual aid, and organizational durability.

Theoretically, the article advances a relational account of tasawwuf as embodied normativity: virtues are not merely taught but enacted through repetitive, collectively scaffolded acts that synchronize bodies, intentions, and memories. Methodologically, our reflexive, multi-source design (interviews, observation, and document analysis) shows the payoff of preserving emic terms before dialoguing with wider tasawwuf and tariqah literatures—thereby avoiding premature abstraction while still producing portable concepts. Substantively, we clarify how textual devotion (Hizib), rhythmic remembrance, and pedagogic authority are braided into everyday governance of the self and the group, offering an integrative picture of Islamic living that resonates with current debates on ethics, social cohesion, and human flourishing.

Practically, the findings suggest that faith-based associations can be effective partners for character education, youth mentoring, and mental-health adjacent care—provided programs respect local ritual ecologies and leadership structures. For Islamic education and community policy, structured remembrance and service routines may be leveraged as low-cost infrastructures of belonging, pro-social discipline, and ethical literacy—without collapsing them into state agendas or market logics.

This account is necessarily bounded: it is a single-case, time-bound portrait of one Lombok-based community with specific genealogies of authority and practice. Future research should (i) conduct comparative studies across tariqah and regions to test transferability, (ii) trace longitudinally how members' ethical dispositions evolve with shifting work–family pressures and digital mediation, and (iii) examine gendered participation and leadership pathways more closely. By situating Sufi practice at the intersection of interior discipline and public virtue, the article contributes an analytically precise yet field-grounded model of how Islamic traditions continue to generate actionable norms for life in a complex, mobile world.

Acknowledgments

We extend our profound gratitude to all individuals and entities who have contributed to the successful culmination of this research endeavor. It is my hope that the divine will reciprocate the benevolence you have demonstrated.

Declarations

Author contributions (CRediT)

Muhammad Aska Irfani: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Writing – Original Draft. **Harapandi Dahri:** Formal Analysis, Validation, Investigation, Writing.

Funding

No external funding was received for this research.

Data availability

In light of ethical and confidentiality concerns, the interview data underlying this study cannot be made publicly accessible. However, anonymized excerpts may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics approval

Conducted exclusively with adult participants, this study complied with the ethical principles governing social research. Prior to data collection, informed consent was secured from every participant. The research excluded minors.



Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Submission/originality statement

This manuscript is original, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration elsewhere.

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