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# Theological belief towards Islamic spiritual belief: Evidence from South Sulawesi, Indonesia



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Indonesia has the biggest Muslim population globally, and one of the Islamic beliefs among people of this nation is *tarekat*, which is sometimes considered as a heretic. Therefore, this article aims to analyse the meaning of diction *tarekat* according to the Qur'an and its implications for the Buginese community, one of the oldest ethnicities in Indonesia. This is a conceptual and empirical research with the purposive sampling method used to determine the informants from several *tarekat* leaders and congregations. Data were collected through documentation, observation and interviews and analysed using Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis technique. This process consists of data reduction, display and drawing conclusions. The study results showed that, firstly, the word *tarekat* in the Qur'an indicates the meaning of inner journey and the methods and ways of thinking, acting and behaving. Secondly, to the Buginese community, it implies a spiritual path to a higher level of appreciation towards their God. Thirdly, the meaning of the diction *tarekat* in the Qur'an has implications for its understanding, which can be seen in the practice of *dhikr*, spiritual behaviour and the way of life of those implementing these heretics.

**Contribution:** This article enriched the religious belief among Muslims, which scholars rarely uncover. Adherents of Islam in Indonesia have a social and political responsibility regarding religious tolerance within and outside other religions. This proves that Muslims contribute to world peace in Middle-East and South-Eastern Asia.

**Keywords:** *tarekat*; Al-Qur'an; Buginese community; spiritual; *dhikr*.

## Introduction

Human existence is controversial because personal experiences usually contradict personal belief. Therefore, an individuals' transformation must be in line with Islamic law (Azwar 2018; Sakhok & Arismunandar 2019). According to Knoetze (2022) and Ni'am (2016), human perfection has two dimensions, namely, the physical and spiritual aspects. Its essence lies in the synergy between these two dimensions, thereby causing humans to feel alienated from themselves, their environment and God as the creator of the universe. This feeling tends to trigger an individual's 'spiritual quest'. These humans are forced to begin their spiritual journey in search of God, which is realised through *tarekat* (Ruslan 2021). The term *tarekat* in Arabic means road, path or way – the Muslim spiritual way through direct knowledge of Allah (God). This term has become an endless discourse among Muslim intellectuals. Ironically, it occasionally places the practitioners of *tarekat* as heretics or infidels. Some Muslim intellectuals state that it has no basis in the Qur'an as the main reference in determining whether a spiritual practice is permissible (Junaidi et al. 2022; Karabulatova et al. 2017; Suwito et al. 2022). Indonesians believe that *tarekat* plays an important role in supporting the Islamisation process and the social, cultural, political and economic aspects of collective piety and obedience. It also encourages people to develop a firm community and embrace societal changes.

A comprehensive understanding of each word in the Qur'an is the key to *ijtihad*. *Ijtihad* is defined as an attempt to provide an original interpretation of problems covered by Islamic law or traditions concerning Prophet Muhammad's life and utterances, as well as the consensus of Islamic scholars. Meanwhile, the verses hide deep and beautiful meanings, causing readers to have different opinions and interpretations (Falyouna 2020; Purkon 2022; Sunesti & Putri 2022). The flexibility of these verses and the phenomena of the discourse have attracted several Islamic scholars to examine matters related to *tarekat*. For example, Kosasih (2015) and Mohammadi, Arabi and Farsani (2019) state that *tarekat* [spiritual learning] through *dhikr* [holy phrases] practised during the Timurid era, known as the revival period of the Sufis, especially during the Nazarene Dynasty, was completely loyal to their leaders. Yusuf (2020) further reports that respect for the *tarekat murshid* tends to help people to improve their spiritual experiences and pass various life tests.

*Khalwat* (*suluk*) has both subjective and intersubjective meanings, which are necessary for one to reach the highest *maqamat* [state]. Its subjective meaning is performing more of *dhikr*, *muraqabah*, *tawajjuh* and *uzlah*. At the same time, intersubjective is the interactive session held with the *murshid* through *rabithah murshid*, *talqin*, *bai'at* and *sungkem*, including a pilgrimage to the *murshid's* grave (Yusuf 2020). Pajarianto, Pribadi and Sari (2022) reveal that local wisdom value and culture play an important role in encouraging peace in society. The Tariqat Qodiriyah Naqsyabandiyah *dhikr* method practised by addicts at selected drug rehabilitation centres positively impacts addicts in Malaysia. This study implies that it fundamentally enhances and harmonises existing procedures of drug rehabilitation in Malaysia. This is because the principle of *dhikr* therapy is proven to improve one's spiritual and mental health, besides helping addicts to completely recover (Irawan 2022; Junaidi 2022; Mansor, Yassin & Ahmad 2020; Syukur 2022).

*Tarekat* is derived from the Arabic word *tariqa* which has been standardised in Indonesian vocabulary. It has several meanings, namely (1) the way, (2) the path to truth, (3) the way or rule of life and (4) the fellowship with followers of Sufism. *Tarekat* is defined as a way to obtain an appropriate view in order to have a deeper understanding and knowledge of God (Allah). However, not all Muslims are serious about this Islamic belief. According to the Al-Qur'an, Allah stated in Surah Jin Verse 6, 'Had the deniers followed the right way, He would have certainly granted them abundant rain to drink'. From this statement, Allah (God) revealed three important points, namely, *istiqomah* [personal commitment] and Islam as the right way and reward from Allah (God). It also refers to personal commitment towards a method or technique to actualise this process. *Tarekat* addresses Muslims based on Islamic law and respects the permissible (*halal*) and prohibits (*haram*) rules (Hadarah & Gani 2019). Its activities are centred on strengthening one's relationship with God and the basis of Muslim life. Globally, it is known as Sufi (Ubaedillah 2017). Those who practise *Tarekat* want to learn about their mistakes towards ritual Islamic prayer to gain spiritual perfection, such as remembering God (ALLAH) in the hearth and actions that are mentioned by the tongue.

Several communities practise *tarekat* in Sulawesi Selatan district, Indonesia, such as Khalwatiyah and Naqsabandiyah. For the Buginese, this word is popularly used for objects with religious connotations. The term *tarekat* has even become one of the forms or ways of life practised by the Buginese Muslim community to enhance their devotion and the practice of Islamic teachings (Hadarah & Gani 2019). In Islam, several terms concern humans based on their level of closeness with Allah SWT, namely *nās* [ordinary people], *mu'min* [believers], *Muslims* [those who embrace Islam], *muttaqīm* [the pious individuals], *mukhlīshīn* [sincere ones] and special people (those who are given grace). Likewise, the Buginese believe in some human levels in which the highest one can only be obtained through *tarekat*. This term implies a spiritual journey to the highest human level. According to the Buginese, the first is *tau-tau*, those without initiative. Individuals in this

category follow their *toto* [destiny], they are like *pajo-pajo* [puppet] who does not have self-will and ability. Other people only drive them; moreover, this is the lowest human level.

The second is *watakkale tau*, and in this circumstance, only their bodies are in human form. Their thoughts and actions are not yet fully human. They still need to be protected by other people. Young people who cannot distinguish between good and bad are categorised in this level. It is distinguished from the previous group because the *tau-tau* is no longer existent, while *watakkale tau* still has the opportunity to advance to the next human level. The third is *rupa tau*, which is slightly better in contrast to the *watakkale tau* and *rupa tau*. They are humans whose faces and physical appearances are perfectly formed. These individuals have *sumange'* [spirit] in the form of the willpower to survive. The fourth is *tau*; these are complete human beings with three perfect elements, namely, physical aspect, mind and soul. They are physically healthy, have a mature mind and possess souls full of wisdom. Fortunately, they possess the following characteristics: honesty, responsibility, caring and kindness to everyone. Besides, humans at this level are far above the previous ones.

The fifth is *tau tongeng*, which is a process that enables humans to equip themselves with various kinds of knowledge. In Buginese terms, they are called *tau massulapa eppa*, meaning those who possess knowledge from four directions. They are humans who can manage their bodies, morals and thoughts. In Sufism terms, they have had *takhalli* and *tahalli*, meaning they cleansed themselves from despicable attitudes and infilled themselves with praiseworthy qualities. The sixth is *tau bettu*, the highest human level in the Buginese community. They are perfect humans and are above the *tau tongeng* level. Their knowledge is not only acquired through learning but it is also a direct gift (*pammase*) from Allah SWT. In the Sufism world, humans at this level are those who have reached *mukāsyafah* or *ma'rifah* [knowledge after ignorance] to Allah SWT. They are often referred to as *wali* [master or guardian], which possess various kinds of *karamah* [sincerity].

The implication of the correct *tarekat* according to the guidance of Prophet Muhammad and his companions is for those who practise it in the introduction to Allah SWT, which is represented in their attitude. The divinity that radiates from them is bound to be felt by those around them. Therefore, people who practise *tarekat* have reached a high level (*maqam*) and are given an instrument for *mappadecengi* [doing good] because they have *ripadecengi* [improved by Allah SWT] when performing these rituals. Nobody can spread love except they are blessed by Allah SWT and are also shown special mercy (Q.S. Ali Imran [3] Verse 74). However, the demand for acquiring knowledge regarding the meaning of the diction *tarekat* in the Qur'an and its implications in the Buginese community is yet to be comprehensively investigated, as stated in preliminary research (Burga 2021). This study is deemed necessary because it analyses the meaning of the diction *tarekat* in the

**Qur'an** and also reviews it in the societal context. Hence, it is not considered heresy, blame, misleading or denial.

The blaming of one another, particularly among Muslims who practise *tarekat* and other communities among the Buginese ethnic group and in Indonesia, is not witnessed to date. This is because the spiritual practice of the Buginese community touches on various aspects, including culture and local traditions. Islamic mysticism has always been a topic for spiritually educating the Buginese Muslim community from one generation to another. Therefore, it is important to carry out a study to discern the meaning of the diction *tarekat* with respect to the Qur'an and its implications based on Buginese context. The problems addressed are divided into three, namely (1) the meaning of the diction *tarekat* concerning the Qur'an, (2) its analysis for the Soppeng-Buginese community and (3) the implications in the Buginese community.

## Research design and methodology

Firstly, the documentation and interview were carried out to explain the cultural notions and *tarekat* in various literatures. Secondly, focus group discussions were held with the *tarekat* leader and followers to ascertain their knowledge and views about this practice. Lastly, an interview approach was adopted to determine community activities and social behaviour. This study used the descriptive phenomenological approach to analyse the *tarekat* group. Furthermore, it focuses on the descriptive method to examine societal problems, including their current situation, activities, attitudes and views. The selection of informants for reliable information sources is essential in this study, such as the leader and members of the *tarekat* community among Buginese, who have knowledge about *tarekat* in the Buginese context. In qualitative approach, data validity refers to participant trustworthiness and credibility. It is also measured by assessing the consistency and effectiveness of the interview. Hence, the participants' comments and information are valuable in this study.

## Results and discussion

The practice of *tarekat* by the Buginese community does not only involve spiritual rituals such as *dhikr*, *salat* [praying] and fasting. However, it also needs to be equipped with efforts to spread love to fellow humans. Only individuals who have reached the highest human level are used as an instrument by Allah SWT to do good. This proves the strong relationship between Islamic law and *tarekat* dimensions such as *hakikat* [essence] and *salat* [prayer]. It also implies that all the dimensions complied with Islamic principles (*rukun*) and the views of fiqh scholars, including the close relationship with the *hakikat* [essence] aspect. The lovers of Allah SWT are not preoccupied with being alone or isolating themselves from worldly activities. Still, it serves as a tool to capture the divine light reflected in their hearts. In other words, *tarekat* followers are traders, politicians, lecturers, teachers, employees, farmers and others.

This study also concluded that, axiologically, the actualisation of the meaning and the spirit behind the sentence Allah (God) is the only way to human existence is essentially the substance of *tarekat* because it tends to always lead to divine consciousness in him. This is described as the complete consciousness of its true meaning. It is in line with the words of Allah SWT in Qur'an Surah Qaf (50) verse 16, that 'And We (Allah) are closer to him than [his] jugular vein'. Furthermore, it was also written in the Qur'an Surah Al-Hadid (57) verse 4 that 'And He (Allah) is with you wherever you are'. The closeness and togetherness of Allah SWT with his servant is not prohibited by distance, time and place. He is God, and nothing escapes his sight, although this can only be interpreted in terms of the cosmos' existence. Likewise, Allah SWT's form became known after this cosmos' existence, including humans. Therefore, it was understood that applying the meaning and spirit of Islamic law wrapped around *tarekat* as a manifestation of the elaboration of the piety undoubtedly attracts various forms of conveniences from Allah SWT to his servants. Another benefit gained from the *hadith* is Prophet Muhammad's answers. In explaining its benefits, this sentence implied the command to make it *wird* in *dhikr*. This is because it is the basic foundation of the Islamic faith, and that is also why it is called the sentence of *tauhid*. It contains the meaning of *al-tasbīh* and *al-taqdīs*, purifying the belief in Allah SWT from the dependence on place and time, various forms of imagination, description and characterisation of him, and different kinds of emotions as well as weaknesses and shortcomings.

Therefore, an understanding of Islam that is *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* [is valuable for all aspects, worldwide] through the practice of *tarekat*, is important. The life of Muslims from the time of Prophet Muhammad PBUH till today continues to evolve along with the emergent needs and problems of life that urge humans to maximise all their potential. This is performed to gain the most ideal and appropriate answers, resulting in peace, tranquility, as well as inner and outer well-being. In certain cases, the spirituality approach plays a significant role. On the contrary, spirituality-related problems are a principal and fundamental issue. This is resolved through the way of life that emanated from Islamic law (*tarekat*) namely *syar'i* [daily activities compliant to Islamic law]. It is because, basically, the most appropriate *tarekat* is the fruit of Islamic law, including the fact that the true *al-haqiqah* is *al-haqiqah* [truth].

The problems of past, present and future life never cease even when a *sharia* approach is adopted without any real application in the practice of *tarekat*. *Sharia* is nothing more than words that contain *taklīfī* [commands and prohibitions], while *tarekat* is exhibited as a concrete behaviour. In addition, *hakikat* and *ma'rifah* are also necessary. *Hakikat* is a state of spirituality (*ahwal*), and *ma'rifah* [interior knowledge of God] is its capital. Therefore, functionally, *tarekat* tends to boost the value of practising religious teachings from *khidmah* or engaging in worship activities (*mahdah*), with the conditions and pillars determined directly by Allah SWT to the level of *taqarrub* [seeking closeness to God]. Based on this, a person

who practises *tarekat* is expected to reach the level of *hakikat* and *syuhud* [witnessing his power]. This is the pinnacle of spirituality, although the level of faith is no longer merely *‘ilm al-yaqīn* [the knowledge of certainty] and *‘aīn al-yaqīn* [certainty] but has reached the epistemology of *al-tahqīqī* (*Haq al-yaqīn*) [reality on certainty], and this is called *tauhid zātī* [lives based on Islamic law and the tradition and practices of Prophet Muhammad].

The practice of *tarekat* involves the adherence to five basic principles, which are stated as follows:

1. Always enrich oneself with knowledge because this aids religious orders to be carried out perfectly.
2. There is a need to boost the intensity of meetings held with *sheikh* or *murshid* and fellow disciples to improve further the function of *al-bashirah* or that of the heart.
3. Do not lead oneself to make far-fetched efforts or interpretations that facilitate the worship practices to perform *mujahadah* consistently.
4. Always embrace the attitude of consistency (*istiqāmah*) and be punctual when performing the *wirid* that is usually practised alongside the *tarekat* to increase *al-hudūr* [heart devotion to Allah SWT] at all times.
5. There is a need to be aware of all realities to overcome temptations of lust that lead to misguidance.

## Implications

The diction *tarekat* in the Qur’an does not only mean an inner journey but also implies social characteristics and behaviour, which has certain implications on the understanding of the Soppeng-Buginese community. This is elaborated using three indicators, namely (1) the practice of *tarekat* in the form of *dhikr* [remembering of God towards tongue] and its procedures, (2) the spiritual conditions perceived as inner experience and (3) the attitude exhibited by the leaders of these groups daily, such as their way of thinking, behaving and acting.

Generally, *dhikr* is a worship service indulged by all humans who always rely on Allah SWT in the context of seeking his pleasure. Similarly, those who practise *tarekat* also indulge in *dhikr* through distinctive body movements that align with the *jihar* sound [loud] and conducted by the *wirid* [prayer read after praying for God’s forgiveness]. This is performed in the mosque or praying house and led directly by a *murshid* or the caliph [leader] of the *tarekat* group to a certain level of *maqam* [sincerity level].

In the *tarekat* tradition, *dhikr* is highly recommended for the followers because it brings about togetherness for both external and spiritual easiness, especially if it is led by a *murshid* [Muslim religious teacher]. Therefore, it serves as a medium of learning for the disciples in terms of successfully embarking on their inner journey and receiving the blessings associated with it at every stage. *Tarekat* is a practical method to attract Allah’s grace because its members are sincere, exhibit obedience in worship and patience, and do not indulge in lust. There is *syar’i* [consistency] in carrying out

religious teachings and high moral integrity. All these attributes aid in producing a true Muslim figure with characters loved by Allah SWT.

The state of spirituality for the *tarekat* community is related to the condition of the heart. Imam al-Gazali stated that there are four types, namely, increase, open, decrease and static. The heart experiences an increase in *dhikr* to Allah SWT. Likewise, it tends to be open to the pleasures derived from Allah SWT. On the other hand, the heart is said to decline because it is busy with activities that lack divine values and can be static because of negligence and forgetfulness to Allah SWT.

An indication of an increase in the heart is the existence of conformity, loss of contradiction and the endless longing for Allah SWT. The indicators of open-heartedness are trust, honesty and belief. Meanwhile, a decline is noticed in the presence of *‘ujub*, *riya’*, and *tamak* [greed]. Death and cessation are evident when they no longer feel the sweetness and bitterness of obedience and disobedience, including the mix between *halal* and *haram*.

Interestingly, those who love Allah in the truest sense are characterised by the following qualities: (1) they see their offerings to Allah SWT as little even though it is enormous. These individuals receive many blessings from Allah SWT irrespective of the fact that it is perceived as few. (2) They give all their potential resources, including efforts and time, to Allah SWT, leaving nothing for themselves or others. (3) Such individuals incorporate the attributes of Allah SWT to replace that of those who love them. (4) Love is drunkenness; lovers get excited whenever they see the one they love (Allah SWT). Meanwhile, the drunkenness that comes with seeing the one they love can no longer be characterised (expressed in words).

These indicators are a general description of the innumerable expressions of those who practise *tarekat*. Although these are a smaller version of what is described in words, there is still much stored in the deepest heart of the lovers of Allah SWT and his Messenger. These individuals are successful and are on a spiritual journey to his presence. They have undergone several stages until they reach the end of their inner journey to meet Allah SWT. A *salik*’s inner journey’s transience occurs when the veil is completely lifted (disappeared) before him. His witness to an Absolute One has reached *al-Syuhud al-Zati* [witnessing his God] or, in other words, is called *haqqul yaqien*. They are staring at absolute existence and completely turn away from limited forms, and this is the true way of *tauhid*. Ibn ‘Arabi described it with the following expression ‘*Dzat* is veiled by nature, which is veiled by *af’al* [actions], and then, in turn, is veiled by the cosmos’. Moreover, whosoever *tajalli* on *af’al* when the veil of the cosmos is lifted becomes a *tawakal*. Whosoever *tajalli* on the nature when the veil of *af’al* is lifted becomes a *ridha* and surrenders. Any individual that *tajalli* on *Dzat* when the veil of nature is lifted becomes a mortal. At that time, the true *tauhid* is implemented. These conditions of spirituality need to be accompanied by consistent *sharia* practices, including those that are obligatory

and those that are *sunnah*. They also have to avoid practices that do not have a *syar'iy* basis.

It was reported that those who practise *tarekat* are framed in a life structure full of values (*uluhiyah*, *syar'iyah* and *khuluqiyah*). Their philosophy is to perform every task based on knowledge of *hakikat* and *ma'rifat*. Therefore, both ritual and social activities are based on *hakikat* and *ma'rifat*. Its knowledge needs to grow from the attitude of pure *tauhid*, which is in line with the demands of *sharia*, wrapped with *adab* [politeness].

### Adab

Politeness is necessary for the lives of those who practise *tarekat*. It is a tangible form of mindset and has been reflected in the personality and behaviour of Prophet Muhammad PBUH since he was a child as a process (*tarekat*) under the direct guidance of Allah SWT. It refers to actualising a noble personality and is the key to all goodness. Such individuals are always bound to practise *istihsān* when interacting with God in quiet and rowdy places. They usually recognise themselves because, indeed, humans are part of the nature and *af'al* [actions] of Allah SWT. In this context, the lovers of Allah SWT are patient, *tawadu* [humble], sincere, kind, thoughtful and honour all creatures around them.

### Sharia

A fundamental aspect of those who practise *tarekat* is their consistency in practising the *sharia* law. Such individuals are not only obedient to Allah SWT, but they also tend to do good deeds to fellow humans, other creatures and the universe. This is because the normative *sharia* rules are implemented to maintain the stability of all God's creatures. Meanwhile, when those that practise *tarekat* have decided to focus on studying and carrying out the *sharia* rules and have witnessed the absolute truth, it simply means that they have done good deeds to Allah SWT. This is only possible if three factors are combined, namely *sharia*, *tarekat* and *ma'rifat*. It was advised that lovers of Allah SWT need not abandon the *sharia* law after practising *tarekat* as well as leaving it after being *ma'rifat*. These three remain united in their daily worship patterns.

### Tauhid

*Tauhid* does not only mean uniting with God, it also implies purification from impossibilities. Therefore, a person's ability to unite in *tauhid* is largely determined by their understanding of the form, defined as the one and only true God (*al-Haq*). This is inseparable from diversity, and God appears (*tajalli*), in many forms that are not limited to the universe.

### Hakikat

The term *hakikat* is used by those who practise *tarekat* to translate the objects and targets intended for spiritual journeys and are also attached to their diverse activities. In addition, outward activity is a form of devotion to the commandments of *sharia*, while the inner one involves actualising the demands of *hakikat*. Both need to be fully

integrated into the form of attitude or, in other words, two dimensions in one. Accentuating the meaning of *hakikat* as an epistemological system is always oriented towards *al-wushul* [reaching] because it is, in fact, obtained through *kasyf* and *syuhud*. In the field of *tarekat*, it is highly emphasised that belief and faith are not only limited to logical arguments but also *al-iman al-haqiqiy* because only with *al-iman al-haqiqiy*, does a person not cease from having faith.

### Ma'rifat

One more aspect that needs the attention of those who practise *tarekat* is an intuitive recognition called *ma'rifat*. It is carried out directly without requiring any symbols or representations, as experienced by Sufis and the Prophets. In addition, it does not need text, letters or even concepts. For the Sufis, *ma'rifat* is realised by those who have purified their inner potentials because only with purity and clarity can they receive illumination from Allah SWT. The higher the inner sanctity of a Sufi is, the better his *bashirah* [vision] and intuitive recognition of God's revelations, thereby making them enjoy their closeness to God.

The relationship between love for Allah (God) and love for others, which is explicitly advocated in Qur'anic teaching and supported by Islamic law, is of importance to the study implications for the field of empirical theology. Empirical theology acknowledges the role of theologians to examine how theologically structured goals play out in the context of actual human experience. The current study has shown how well-established theoretical frameworks in the psychology of religion might assist empirical theologians in operationalising such research implications and questions. Three significant issues were raised by the empirical *Tarekat* of religion: how to operationalise love for Allah in terms of how *Tarekat* affects locals; how to operationalise love for others in terms of empathy; and how crucial it is to take into account the impact of psychological factors through *Tarekat* practice. The main conclusion from this study is that Muslims in Soppeng, Sulawesi Selatan Province, Indonesia, who are taught through their Islamic belief and tradition, develop positive religious feelings (love for Allah) and show better levels of empathy (love for others). This field of study on the nature and correlation of religiosity among people, not just in Indonesia and in the context of Muslims, but internationally, has the potential to flourish.

## Conclusion

Firstly, the strong relationship between social culture and Islam in Sulawesi Selatan district, Indonesia, led to the emergence of the *tarekat* movement. In addition, this practice not only denotes the meaning of the inner journey but also involves ways of thinking, behaving and acting, as well as a legal aspect of Islamic law.

Secondly, *tarekat* for the Soppeng-Buginese community means a spiritual path to appreciate God highly. Its practice is not only related to ritual worship such as *dhikr*, *salat* [prayer] and fasting, but also to social relationships and mental conditions associated with accepting various provisions from Allah SWT.

Thirdly, the meaning of the diction *tarekat* in the Qur'an has certain implications related to the Soppeng-Buginese's understanding, which are stated as follows: (1) the practice of *dhikr*, such as its procedures are recited, by the congregation, through body movements and *wirid* (2) states of spirituality are reflected by the inner condition of belief, pleasure and love only for Allah SWT and (3) those who engage in this practice always have (1) noble *adab* [politeness], (2) consistency in executing *sharia* law, (3) a solid *tauhid*, (4) inner clarity in every activity as the actualisation of the demands of nature and (5) *ma'rifat*, namely direct intuitive recognition without the need for symbol intermediaries.

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## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

## Authors' contributions

R.R. conceived of the presented idea, developed the theory, wrote and edited the manuscript, and verified the analytical methods. M.A.B. contributed to the design and implementation of the research and M.U.N. supervised the final draft of the manuscript and also assured that the manuscript complied with the author guidelines. All three authors discussed the reviewers' suggestions and made appropriate amendments.

## Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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