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Local Traditions and Islamic Religious Education: A Study of the Integration of Islamic Values in Local Culture

Achmad Yusuf¹

Sekolah Tinggi Islam Kendal

e-mail: ahmadyusuf25@stik-kendal.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the integration of Islamic values in local traditions and their relevance to the practice of Islamic religious education in the community. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation of communities that still actively practice local traditions with Islamic nuances. The results show that local traditions such as selamatan (celebration), Maulid Nabi (Prophet's Birthday), tahlilan (religious gathering), and kenduri (celebration) contain strong Islamic values and can be effective media for religious learning. Religious and traditional leaders play a crucial role in the process of integrating these values through a down-to-earth cultural approach. However, this integration still faces obstacles, such as the lack of accommodation in the curriculum and resistance from some groups. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a more contextual model of Islamic religious education based on local wisdom to strengthen the understanding of Islamic values comprehensively.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education has a very crucial role in shaping the character, noble morals, and spirituality of the younger generation (Ramadhan et al., 2025). Amidst the increasingly rapid flow of globalization and modernization, religious education serves not only as an instrument of Islamic knowledge but also as a foundation for morals and ethics in daily life. Through religious education, the values of monotheism, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and discipline can be instilled from an early age, thereby creating individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually mature (Guna et al., 2024).

The urgency becomes even more apparent when we consider the challenges of modern education, which prioritizes cognitive aspects and academic achievement alone, while often neglecting affective and spiritual aspects. This has led to a moral and identity crisis among the younger generation. Therefore, Islamic religious education

needs to be designed holistically to balance religious knowledge, attitudes, and practices in real life. (Moslimany et al., 2024).

Indonesia is an archipelagic nation rich in cultural diversity, languages, customs, and local traditions, stretching from Sabang to Merauke. Each region possesses unique local wisdom that reflects the identity of its people. This diversity is not only a national cultural asset but also a social force that can strengthen national identity and enrich religious life. (Simbiak et al., 2019).

This richness of local culture often embodies noble values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, respect for parents and ancestors, and concern for others. These values are in fact aligned with the moral and ethical teachings of Islam, such as the principles of justice, compassion, mutual assistance (ta'awun), and brotherhood (ukhuwah). Traditions such as thanksgiving (selametan), traditional wedding customs, or traditional harvest ceremonies are examples of how local culture can coexist with Islamic principles when packaged with a wise cultural approach. ('Mutual Cooperation', 2019).

In this context, Islam in Indonesia grew and developed not through confrontation, but through an accommodating and persuasive cultural approach. Many past scholars and religious figures preached through local arts, culture, and languages as a medium for conveying Islamic teachings, as did the Wali Songo (Nahdlatul Ulama) in Java. Therefore, preserving local culture is not only important from a cultural perspective but also has strategic value in strengthening friendly and tolerant Islamic preaching. Collaboration between Islamic values and local culture can be a solution for building social harmony and preventing identity conflicts in a multicultural society. (Setiawan, 2025).

Islam in the Indonesian archipelago has a long and unique history compared to other regions in the Islamic world. The spread of Islam in Indonesia was not achieved through military conquest, but through a peaceful, cultural approach. Islamic missionaries, such as the Wali Songo in Java, successfully converted the Indonesian archipelago by accommodating local cultural values, thus making Islam well-received by communities that had previously adhered to specific belief systems and customs. (Azman & Supriadi, 2025).

This cultural da'wah approach results in a harmonious integration of Islamic values and local culture. Traditions such as tahlilan (collective prayer for the deceased), selametan (thanksgiving for an important event), sekaten (celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad with a palace-like atmosphere), Maulid Nabi (the Prophet's birthday), and grebeg (a ritual of giving alms to the earth or harvest) are concrete manifestations of the fusion of Islamic teachings and local traditions. These practices are not merely ceremonial activities, but are imbued with spiritual, social, and symbolic meaning, reflecting Islamic values such as gratitude, togetherness, and prayer. (Husaini & Islamy, 2022).

The potential for integration between Islam and local culture has not only proven effective in the history of da'wah (Islamic outreach), but has also become a crucial social asset in building interfaith harmony, strengthening an inclusive Islamic identity, and preventing radicalism and identity polarization. This integration also demonstrates that Islam can adapt to local contexts without losing the substance of its teachings, thus reinforcing the message that Islam is a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe). (Ridho & Sa'ad, 2025).

Local traditions have significant relevance in the development of Islamic education, particularly in the context of contextual and down-to-earth learning. As part of the cultural heritage that lives within communities, local traditions contain moral, spiritual, and social values that align with Islamic principles. Therefore, local traditions can serve not only as objects for cultural preservation but also as effective educational media for conveying Islamic teachings more intimately and touching the real lives of the community. (Nurhayati, 2022).

In practice, a religious education approach rooted in local traditions can bridge the text and context between normative Islamic values and the socio-cultural realities of society. For example, the traditions of tahlilan, selamatan, maulidan, or barzanji are not merely religious rituals, but also informal educational tools that teach the values of togetherness, communal prayer, remembrance of God (zikir), and respect for ancestors. These traditions create a space for social interaction that is both religious and educational, highly relevant in shaping the collective Islamic character of society. (Galib & Fajar, 2025).

Furthermore, religious education that synergizes with local wisdom also has the potential to increase the level of understanding, acceptance, and community involvement in Islamic teachings. This is because Islamic values are conveyed in a form that is already familiar and understood by the community. Rather than being abstract and normative, Islamic teachings become concrete and applicable in everyday life. This is what makes local traditions a strategic pedagogical approach for grounding Islamic values in an inclusive, tolerant, and relevant way in multicultural communities. ('Second Thoughts About the Anthropology of Islam, or How to Make Sense of Grand Schemes in Every Day Life', 2022).

One significant challenge in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia is the lack of contextual studies that seriously integrate Islamic values with local cultural realities. The current religious education curriculum is generally normative-doctrinal in orientation, emphasizing cognitive aspects such as memorizing Islamic texts, Islamic jurisprudence, and worship procedures, while paying little attention to contextual aspects such as cultural and social backgrounds and local values prevalent within the community. (Supriyanto et al., 2022).

In fact, as a multicultural nation, Indonesia possesses a wealth of traditions and local wisdom that can be an effective medium for internalizing Islamic teachings. A curriculum that is unresponsive to local contexts risks making religious education rigid, disconnected from students' real lives, and can even create a barrier between Islam and community culture. This has the potential to foster a narrow understanding of Islam and weaken the relevance of religious education in shaping character and a holistic social ethic. (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

Furthermore, academically, there is still a lack of literature, research, and scientific studies that explicitly and systematically examine the integration of Islamic values into local traditional practices. Existing studies are often descriptive and limited to documentation of religious traditions without critical analysis of the Islamic values contained within them. Yet, interdisciplinary research between education, anthropology, and Islamic studies is urgently needed to build a theoretical and practical framework for developing an Islamic education curriculum based on local wisdom. (Nasucha et al., 2023).

This lack of a contextual approach also demonstrates that Islamic education needs to be accompanied by a new paradigm that positions local culture as a partner,

not an adversary, ¹ Islamic preaching. This is not only for pedagogical purposes, but also to create an Islamic education that is inclusive, adaptive, and relevant to the complex and pluralistic dynamics of Indonesian society. (Utari et al., 2024).

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Table 1. Representation of Local Cultural Values in the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Several Regions in Indonesia

No	Area	Local Traditions with Islamic Nuances	Included in the School Curriculum?	Form of Integration in Schools (if any)
1	Yogyakarta	Sekaten, Grebeg Maulud	No	Delivered informally through extracurricular activities
2	East Java	Traditions of Maulidan, Yasinan, Celebration	Limited	Only mentioned in the context of local culture
3	Aceh	Peusijek, Maulid Feast	Part	Integrated into school subject matter and practice
4	South Kalimantan	Baayun Maulid, Haul of the Sekumpul Teachers	No	Not in the formal curriculum
5	South Sulawesi	Maudu Lompoa (Mawlid commemoration)	No	Only in the form of community activities

Source: Compilation of initial observation data and literature studies (2022–2024)

Table 1 illustrates the reality in several regions in Indonesia that possess a wealth of local traditions with Islamic nuances, yet these traditions have not yet been fully incorporated into the formal Islamic religious education curriculum. For example, in Yogyakarta, the Sekaten and Grebeg Maulud traditions possess strong Islamic spiritual elements, yet they are not formally included in the school curriculum and are only introduced through informal activities. Similarly, in South Kalimantan and South Sulawesi, although traditions such as Baayun Maulid and Maudu Lompoa have the potential to serve as a medium for Islamic morality and history education, they have not yet been utilized in school contexts. Only a few regions, such as Aceh, have begun to systematically integrate traditional values into religious instruction.

This phenomenon demonstrates a gap between the richness of local culture, rich in Islamic values, and a religious education system ⁷ that still relies on a textual approach and lacks contextualization. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the potential for integrating Islamic values into local culture as an effort to enrich and contextualize Islamic religious education in Indonesia. (Sanjani et al., 2024).

The selection of this research topic is based on the urgency to examine more deeply how Islamic values can be harmoniously integrated into local traditional practices, particularly in the context of education. Amidst the challenges of modernization and globalization, which often separate religion from the cultural roots of society, this approach is considered crucial for developing a model of Islamic

religious education that is not only normative and textual, but also contextual and down-to-earth. To date, approaches to religious education have tended to be oriented toward the cognitive aspects of memorization, doctrinal understanding, and an emphasis on Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), but have provided little space for the local dimension, which actually holds great potential in supporting the internalization of Islamic values. Local traditions such as tahlilan (religious gatherings), selamatan (celebrating the Prophet's birthday), or the custom of mutual cooperation (gotong royong), are often considered merely cultural heritage, even though they contain Islamic values such as togetherness (ukhuwah), gratitude (syukur), sincerity (ikhlas), and social concern (ta'awun). Unfortunately, there are still few scientific studies that systematically discuss the relationship between local cultural practices and Islamic religious education.

By addressing this topic, this research aims to make a tangible contribution to the development of Islamic religious education concepts and practices relevant to the socio-cultural context of Indonesian society. In addition to enriching the body of knowledge in the field of Islamic studies and education, this research is also expected to serve as a reference for educators, policymakers, and educational institutions in formulating curricula and learning methods based on Islamic values entrenched in society. Thus, this research has not only theoretical value but also practical significance in developing an inclusive, humanistic, and local wisdom-based Islamic education model as part of a strategy for cultural preservation and strengthening religious identity, which is a blessing for all the worlds.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in depth the integration of Islamic values in local traditional practices related to religious education. (Chanifah et al., 2021) A qualitative approach was chosen because this research seeks to understand the meaning, values, and socio-cultural processes that occur in society, particularly in the context of preserving Islamic traditions. The case study method allows researchers to focus attention on the phenomenon of the integration of Islamic values into local culture in a particular community in a holistic and contextual manner. The research location was chosen purposively based on the richness of local traditions that are still preserved and have a close relationship with the values of Islamic education, such as local culture-based Islamic boarding schools or indigenous communities that still practice Islamic religious rituals within a cultural framework.

The research subjects included religious leaders (ustaz, kiai), traditional leaders, Islamic religious education teachers, students (santri) or students, and local communities directly involved in these traditions and religious practices. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore the subjects' understanding and perceptions of Islamic values within local traditions, while participant observation was conducted to directly observe cultural practices containing elements of Islamic education. Documentation such as traditional manuscripts, photographs of activities, and local curricula containing Islamic values were also collected as supporting data.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, with steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This analysis aimed to identify key themes such as the form of integration of Islamic values into local culture,

the methods of transmitting these values, and community perceptions of the relevance of tradition-based religious education. To ensure data validity, source and technique triangulation, member checking with key informants, and peer debriefing were used to avoid researcher bias. With this approach it is hoped that the research results will provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between local traditions and Islamic religious education in the context of Indonesia's pluralistic and culturally rich society. (Peel, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that several local traditions are actively practiced by the community and embody strong Islamic values. Traditions such as the "selamatan" (celebration of the Prophet's Birthday), the "tahlil" (religious gathering), and the "kenduri" (feast) not only serve as cultural rituals but also serve as a medium for transmitting Islamic values such as brotherhood (ukhuwah), gratitude, trust (taqwal), and respect for ancestors and Islamic history. These traditions include the use of Islamic prayers, the recitation of the "mawlid" (religious message), public religious studies, and the delivery of religious advice, demonstrating the integration of cultural elements and Islamic teachings.

Religious figures such as kiai (Islamic scholars) and ustaz (Islamic teachers), along with local traditional leaders, play a crucial role in maintaining the continuity of these traditions. They not only lead rituals but also provide contextual religious understanding to the younger generation through cultural approaches. Religious education teachers in schools have also begun to link teaching materials to local traditions, although this is still informal and not yet structured in the curriculum. Some teachers utilize Islamic folklore, the practice of slametan (celebrating religious rites), or visits to local Islamic cultural sites as part of their learning. (Faisal et al., 2022).

The public response to this integration has tended to be positive. The majority of informants stated that local traditions make Islamic teachings easier to understand and accept, especially for children and adolescents growing up in this socio-cultural environment. (Deliyati et al., 2025) They believe that values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social awareness taught in local traditions are very much in line with Islamic teachings. However, they also face obstacles, such as minimal support from the national curriculum, the perception by some groups that such traditions are not purely Islamic, and limited documentation and teaching materials that accommodate local values.

Overall, this study found that local traditions can be an effective medium for strengthening contextual and down-to-earth Islamic religious education. Through a cultural approach, Islamic values are not only taught normatively but also internalized through social and spiritual experiences that are closely related to community life. Therefore, the integration of Islamic education and local culture needs to be further developed, both in learning practices in schools and in educational policies that are more inclusive of local wisdom. (Mu'ti & Amirrachman, 2025).

Identifying Local Traditions Containing Islamic Values

One form of Indonesia's cultural richness that remains enduring today is local traditions containing spiritual and social elements. These traditions do not stand alone as mere cultural expressions, but in many cases are the result of an acculturation between Islamic teachings and local wisdom. In the context of education and strengthening

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religious values in society, these local traditions can serve as a means of internalizing Islamic values in an applicable, contextual, and participatory manner.(Agus et al., 2021).

The following are several local traditions that are still actively practiced by communities in various regions in Indonesia, along with an identification of the Islamic values contained within them:

1. Maulidan (Commemoration of the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW)
2. Tahlilan
3. Celebration / Slametan
4. Feast
5. Grebeg(Sari & Sabardila, 2023).

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The Role of Religious and Traditional Figures in Preserving Traditions

Religious figures and traditional figures have a strategic position in the social structure of Indonesian society, especially in maintaining the continuity of the noble values contained in local traditions.(Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023). Amidst the currents of modernization and globalization that often degrade cultural values, their role is crucial in nurturing and preserving traditions that contain spiritual, ethical, and local wisdom. In the context of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago, kiai, ustaz, religious teachers, and traditional leaders play a significant role in ensuring that traditions developing in society remain aligned with Islamic teachings.

Religious figures such as kiai (Islamic scholars) and ustaz (Islamic teachers) not only serve as normative teachers of Islamic teachings but also as guardians of cultural heritage with religious value. They often serve as instructors or leaders in religious traditions such as tahlilan (religious recitation), maulidan (religious recitation), selamatan (celebration), and Qur'an recitation. In this role, they not only lead the rituals but also transmit the spiritual meaning and Islamic ethics contained within them. Through their cultural da'wah (preaching), local traditions become educational tools for instilling Islamic values in a practical way.(Kuswana & Puzian, 2023).

Meanwhile, traditional figures such as traditional leaders, village heads, or village elders play a crucial role in maintaining social structures, local norms, and the continuity of cultural practices. They understand the value structure within traditions and act as guardians of intergenerational cultural continuity. Their presence in the implementation of traditions ensures their connection to local community identity.(Nursanty et al., 2023).

More importantly, harmonious collaboration between religious and traditional leaders is fostered. This collaboration creates space for dialogue and synergy in preserving traditions while maintaining the substance of Islamic teachings. In many communities, particularly in rural areas, this collaboration manifests itself in the joint planning of religious and cultural activities, the allocation of roles in traditional ceremonies, and the development of moral advice to be recited at traditional events. This collaboration emphasizes that tradition and religion are not two entities to be opposed, but rather can strengthen each other as instruments of moral and spiritual education.(Maela & Emsley, 2024).

Forms of Integration of Islamic Values in Local Traditional Practices

The integration of Islamic values into local traditions is a hallmark of the development of Islam in Indonesia, which prioritizes a cultural approach in

disseminating its teachings. This approach does not erase the existence of local culture, but rather enriches and Islamizes it gradually and wisely. In practice, Islamic values are inserted subtly and continuously, eventually becoming the core of the tradition itself. (Corresponding Author) et al., 2024).

This integration is evident in how elements of faith, worship, morals, and social interactions are explicitly and implicitly present in various cultural processes. Tradition serves not only as a social space but also as a medium for learning and internalizing Islamic values, conveyed symbolically, verbally, and through collective action. (Walkaromah & Khomairoh, 2024).

Local Culture-Based Religious Learning Strategies

Contextual and life-relevant Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a crucial need in today's education system. In the context of Indonesian society, rich in local culture and social traditions, a locally based approach to religious learning offers a strategic alternative: strengthening the understanding and internalization of Islamic values. This strategy aims to bridge the gap between universal Islamic teachings and the local and particular socio-cultural realities of students. (Sya'bani, 2024).

Teachers or educators play a central role in this effort. They are required not only to master religious material normatively but also to be sensitive to the cultural context in which they teach. Through an adaptive pedagogical approach, teachers can connect Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material to local traditions steeped in Islamic values, making learning more lively, applicable, and meaningful. (Adibah & Chasanah, 2025).

Public Response and Perception to the Integration of Islamic Values and Local Culture

Community responses to the integration of Islamic values into local cultural practices exhibit diverse dynamics, depending on social background, education, age, and the influence of globalization and the growing purgation of religion. In general, Indonesian society, particularly in rural areas and indigenous communities, has responded positively to the continuation of traditions containing Islamic values. For them, traditions are not merely ancestral legacies but also a means of transmitting moral and spiritual values that have been proven to strengthen social cohesion and enrich religious practices contextually. (Hartati et al., 2025).

Many people believe that traditions such as thanksgiving, tahlilan (religious gatherings), maulidan (religious remembrance), kenduri (celebration ceremonies), and other traditional ceremonies have high educational and religious value. These traditions are understood as expressions of gratitude to God, respect for ancestors, a means of fostering friendship, and a reminder of spiritual life. Within this framework, the integration of Islamic values is not seen as a deviation or syncretism, but rather as a peaceful and civilized adaptation of Islam to local cultures. This reflects the spirit of Nusantara Islam, which is inclusive, tolerant, and based on local wisdom. (Nasir, 2019).

However, there is also resistance from some segments of society, particularly those influenced by puritan or scripturalist ideologies, who believe that local traditions contain elements of heresy, superstition, and even polytheism. This group tends to prioritize a textual understanding of religion and rejects any form of culture not explicitly mentioned in the Quran or Hadith. They believe the fusion of local culture and religion obscures the purity of Islamic teachings. This type of rejection often sparks

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debate at the grassroots level and creates polarization within Muslim society.(Agustono, 2023).

However, amid these differing perceptions, there is a tendency for society to seek a harmonious middle ground namely, by preserving local traditions that do not conflict with basic Islamic principles, while abandoning cultural practices deemed irrelevant or contrary to Islamic law. In this regard, the role of religious and traditional leaders is crucial in bridging differing perspectives and educating the public so they can understand the substantial meaning behind the integration of religious and cultural values.(Sirait & Olis, 2024).

Obstacles in Integrating Local Culture into Islamic Education

Although an integrative approach between local culture and Islamic education offers great potential for strengthening character, spirituality, and the relevance of learning, its implementation in the field still faces various obstacles. These obstacles are structural, cultural, and epistemological, which contribute to the minimal adoption of this approach in both formal and non-formal education systems.(Surbakti et al., 2024).

1. The National Curriculum is Rigid and Lacks Flexibility

One major obstacle is the centralized structure of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, which tends to ignore local cultural diversity. The nationally designed curriculum fails to fully accommodate the exploration of local values in religious learning. The material taught is often universal and textual, without considering the diverse cultural contexts of students in various regions.

In fact, in a modern pedagogical approach, contextual learning based on real-life experiences leads to higher student retention. This curriculum's inflexibility makes it difficult for teachers to integrate examples of local traditions into the learning process, fearing that they will be judged inconsistent with academic requirements or national exam standards.

2. Concerns about Syncretism and Heresy

The second significant obstacle is the growing concern among some community members and religious leaders regarding the integration of culture and religion. They believe that combining local traditions with Islamic teachings has the potential to lead to syncretism, even being considered a form of bid'ah (religious innovation) or khurafat (superstition).(Pamungkas et al., 2023).

This view often stems from a scripturalist and exclusive interpretation of Islamic teachings, which only accepts forms of worship and religious expression explicitly contained in the texts (texts) of the Quran and Hadith. However, not all forms of local culture contradict Islamic principles. Many traditions actually reinforce the values of monotheism, gratitude, brotherhood, and noble morals. Without a space for dialogue and education, these concerns can become a serious obstacle to developing a local culture-based approach to Islamic education.(Çoruh, 2019).

3. Lack of Documentation and Academic Research

Another obstacle is the lack of scientific documentation and in-depth local research on the relationship between local culture and Islamic values in the context of education. Most local traditions are passed down orally and passed down through generations, without any systematic study that could explain the Islamic values they contain.

This literature gap means that the integrative approach lacks a strong academic foundation, making it difficult to adopt as part of curriculum design or formal learning modules. Furthermore, the lack of research also makes it difficult for policymakers and teachers to find valid and contextual references when developing teaching materials.(Vanlommel & Schildkamp, 2019).

Implications for a Contextual Islamic Education Model

1 The integration of Islamic values into local culture has significant implications for the development of a more contextual, adaptive, and relevant model of Islamic religious education to meet the needs of students in various regions of Indonesia. A contextual Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model prioritizes a down-to-earth approach, utilizing the social and cultural environment as learning resources, rather than relying solely on abstract texts and theories.(Mala & Hunaida, 2023).

1. Potential for Developing Local Wisdom-Based Learning Models

By highlighting local traditions and wisdom as part of the learning process, PAI can be developed into an educational model that is more participatory, applicable and has values. For example, amaletan, tahlilan, or maulidan activities that have taken root in society can be used as study material in learning morals, fiqh, or the history of Islamic culture. This provides space for students to not only understand Islam theoretically, but also to experience it in the context of their social life(Rugaiyah & Ma`arif, 2025)This model encourages interactive, experience-based religious education, where students not only listen and take notes but also experience and reflect on Islamic teachings through the socio-cultural practices around them.

1.5 Increase Students' Interest and Understanding of Islamic Values

One of the main challenges in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is low student interest and active participation, especially when the material is perceived as far removed from the realities of their lives. With a contextual approach that utilizes local culture, students will more easily understand, appreciate, and internalize Islamic values because they are presented in a familiar, concrete, and meaningful format. The connection between the lesson and students' cultural experiences will foster emotional and cognitive connections, thus strengthening and sustaining their understanding of values such as monotheism, brotherhood, gratitude, and morals. In the long term, this increases the effectiveness of religious education in shaping religious, ethical, and social individuals.(Rasyidi & Idrus, 2024).

3. Contribution to the Preservation of Local Culture and Character Building

19 Islamic education that is sensitive to local culture serves not only as a medium for the transfer of religious knowledge but also as an instrument for preserving cultural identity and developing national character. Local traditions embodying noble values such as mutual cooperation, mutual respect, social solidarity, and gratitude are part of a cultural heritage that aligns with Islamic values.(Rahman & Azzahra, 2024).

By incorporating local culture into the learning process, schools and teachers indirectly contribute to preserving traditions rich in meaning and morality. This is crucial amidst the growing cultural homogenization driven by globalization and technology, which can erode the roots of traditional cultures and values. Furthermore,

strengthening students' character through an Islamic-infused local cultural approach will simultaneously strengthen their national and Islamic identities. They will grow as individuals who are both religious and passionate about their nation's culture—an integration that is key to holistic character education. (Fatahillah et al., 2023).

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CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that local traditions developing within Indonesian society contain many relevant and contextual Islamic values. Values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), gratitude, *tawakal* (trust), and social concern are reflected in various cultural practices such as *selamatan* (prayer gatherings), *tahlilan* (religious gatherings), *maulidan* (religious remembrance), and *kenduri* (celebration ceremonies). These traditions have become a vehicle for the internalization of Islamic values that are alive and grounded in the daily lives of the community and support the formation of an inclusive and humanistic religious character. The integration of Islamic values and local traditions has proven harmonious and mutually reinforcing. This harmony is realized through the active role of religious leaders (such as *kiai*, *ustaz*, and Quran teachers) and traditional leaders who collaboratively maintain the continuity of traditions steeped in Islamic values. Their role is very strategic in bridging normative Islamic teachings with local practices that are deeply rooted in society.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) linked to local culture has proven to be more easily accepted by the community, primarily because the approach is contextual and aligned with the socio-cultural realities of students. This learning model enables students not only to understand Islamic teachings theoretically but also to internalize them in real-world practices close to their environment. However, the strategy of integrating Islamic values with local culture in schools remains informal and not yet structured in the national curriculum. While some teachers have taken the initiative to link religious subject matter to local cultural practices, this remains individual and is not supported by an explicit curriculum system or policy.

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