

Revitalization of Islamic Education Based on Archipelago Culture in Indonesia

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Abstract: The revitalization of Islamic education based on the culture of the archipelago is a strategic response to the challenges of modernization, which tends to ignore local values in the education system. This study aims to examine the integration of local culture in Islamic education practices in Indonesia, focusing on the role of Islamic boarding schools, oral traditions, and the contributions of traditional leaders and scholars in shaping the character of students. The method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques in the form of literature studies, interviews, and limited observations in representative regions, namely Banten, Central Java, and Aceh. The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach between Islamic education, local culture, and social communities, which has not been widely explored in contemporary Islamic education studies. The results of the study show that Islamic education that adopts the cultural values of the archipelago can strengthen a moderate, tolerant, and contextual Islamic identity. The theoretical and practical implications of this study point to the development of a contextual curriculum, teacher training based on local culture, and collaboration between educational institutions and cultural communities. Thus, Islamic education based on Nusantara culture has the potential to become an important foundation in shaping a generation that is characterful, cultured, and able to respond to the challenges of globalization without losing its traditional roots.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Nusantara Culture, Islamic Civilization, Moderate Islam, Local Identity



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Introduction

Islamic education in Indonesia plays a crucial role in shaping the character and identity of the nation. However, the relevance of local cultural values in Islamic education has become increasingly urgent in the context of rapid modernization. The background to this issue stems from the fundamental need to preserve cultural values that are often marginalized by the dominance of global modern educational approaches. In many cases, these approaches ignore the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the archipelago, ultimately threatening the sustainability of the religious and cultural identity of Indonesian society (Rafi'i, 2020; (Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023). Therefore, efforts to revitalize Islamic education based on the cultural heritage of the Nusantara are not merely an alternative but a necessity to strengthen the position of Islamic education in facing the challenges of the times.

A significant problem identified in Islamic education in Indonesia is the dominance of modern approaches that often reduce local diversity and ignore history and cultural traditions. This is a major challenge, especially in the context of education, which should shape students' character and identity (Suparjo & Hidayah, 2023; Setyaningsih et al., 2024). There is concern that without proper efforts, future generations will lose their connection to their cultural roots, which in turn may affect their perspective on Islamic values that are appropriate to the local context (Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023; Fuadi et al., 2023). Therefore, the integration of Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago is expected to create a more inclusive and relevant learning environment.

In the literature review, the concept of Islamic civilization needs to be considered as a foundation in understanding the relevance of local culture-based education. This theory emphasizes that Islam as a civilization is not only spiritual in nature, but also related to local wisdom that exists in society (Muhammad & Duderija, 2022; Qomar, 2019). Education based on local culture, on the other hand, can integrate Islamic values into the local cultural context, as emphasized in the study of Islam Nusantara, which bridges local traditions with moderate Islamic teachings (Afawadzi, 2023; Hasyim & Nurdyanti, 2023). The concept of Islam Nusantara itself is an effort by to adapt Islamic teachings to local wisdom in Indonesia, thereby presenting a friendly face of Islam that is capable of maintaining harmony among communities (Ningsih et al., 2023). The integration of local values into Islamic education not only enables relevant teaching but is also a strategic step in strengthening the character of the younger generation (Huda, 2024).

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Nusantara culture in strengthening Islamic education in Indonesia. Through this approach, it is hoped that a systematic framework can be developed to support Islamic education that is responsive to the local context while adhering to universal Islamic values. This is in line with the aspirations of Islamic education to shape individuals who not only understand religion but also have a strong attachment to their culture and society (Rafi'i, 2020; Esfandiar, 2022). Thus, an integrative matrix between Islamic Education and Nusantara Culture is expected to facilitate the creation of a generation with character, culture, and moderation.

Considering this context, it is necessary to implement a more comprehensive and integrated educational strategy, given that cultural preservation is a vital element in creating harmonious Islamic education that is relevant to the current reality of Indonesian society.

Research Methods

The research subjects consist of several key categories that are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the theme being discussed. Educational figures will represent strategic voices and ideas in the development of Islamic education. Teachers are expected to share their experiences and learning practices in the field. In addition, analysis of curriculum documents and learning practices was chosen to understand how the culture of the archipelago can be integrated into Islamic education (Ronaldy, 2023; Radiyah, 2024).

The techniques used in data collection include literature studies, interviews, and limited observations. Literature studies will help researchers refer to relevant primary and secondary sources related to the themes of Islamic education and Nusantara culture. Semi-structured interviews with education figures and teachers will enable researchers to explore practical experiences and understand their perspectives on the revitalization of Islamic education (Fuaida et al., 2023; Radiyah, 2024).

Limited observation is carried out to directly observe learning practices in the field, so that attitudes and actual activities can be recorded and analyzed in greater depth (Hadi et al., 2019).

Data analysis will be conducted using thematic and contextual approaches. The thematic approach refers to the identification of main themes that emerge from interview and observation data, which will then be grouped and categorized for analysis. Meanwhile, contextual analysis aims to connect the findings with the broader social, cultural, and educational context, thereby providing a deeper understanding of how Islamic education is integrated with the culture of the archipelago. This analysis is expected to reveal the challenges and opportunities that exist in the revitalization of Islamic education in Indonesia (Futaqi, 2020; Radiyah, 2024; Orlando et al., 2025).

From the findings of this analysis, it is hoped that there will be recommendations that can contribute positively to education policies that are more relevant and appropriate to the cultural context in Indonesia, while strengthening the identity of Islamic education in facing the challenges of globalization today (Radiyah, 2024; Orlando et al., 2025).

Results and Discussion

Results

This section discusses a number of findings related to Islamic education practices that integrate local culture, the role of scholars in education, and Islamic civilizational values reflected in the culture of the archipelago.

1. Islamic Educational Practices that Integrate Local Culture

The integration of Islamic education and local culture in Indonesia is realized through various forms of practice, one of which is pesantren-based education that adopts local traditions. Research shows that pesantren serve as bastions of Indonesian tradition, strengthening the continuity of Islamic values and local culture (Susanto & Abadi, 2016; Sarhindi, 2020). In this context, the concept of "Islam Nusantara" has developed as a response to the interaction between Islam and local culture, where Islamic education in pesantren focuses not only on spiritual aspects, but also cultural ones (Khoirurrijal, 2017; Fuadi et al., 2024).

Tradition-based education also plays an important role in integrating Islamic educational values with local wisdom. For example, traditions teach character values and religious teachings through storytelling and poetry, which are practiced in various communities across the archipelago (Khuluqi et al., 2025; Salam, 2025). Knowledge taught in this way not only

preserve cultural heritage but also builds collective awareness of spiritual and moral values that are in line with Islamic teachings.

2. The Role of Traditional Leaders and Ulama in Education

Traditional leaders and religious scholars play a central role in education in Indonesia, especially in the context of Islamic education based on locality. They act as mediators between the community and Islamic teachings, helping to interpret religious values in diverse cultural contexts (Yasin et al., 2025; A'yuniyah et al., 2025). Religious scholars, especially those involved in the development of Islamic boarding schools, are responsible for disseminating religious knowledge and moral values that are important to the community.

This role is further strengthened by an educational tradition that emphasizes character, in which traditional leaders and religious scholars serve as role models in society (Samino & Mahmudah, 2023; Fakhurokhman et al., 2022). For example, through various educational initiatives, they promote values of tolerance and harmony among different groups in Indonesia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society (A'yuniyah et al., 2025; Fakhurokhman et al., 2022).

3. Islamic Civilization Values Reflected in the Culture of the Archipelago

The integration of Islamic values into the culture of the archipelago has created a unique form of civilization, enriching local identities without eliminating the essence of religious teachings. Islam in the archipelago promotes the principles of moderation, tolerance, and respect for pluralism, which are characteristic of Indonesian society (Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023; Fuadi et al., 2024). These values can

be seen in various traditions and social practices carried out daily, including in celebrations, ceremonies, and social interactions.

Recent studies reveal the important role of values in Islam Nusantara as a strengthener of social cohesion and harmony between communities in Indonesia, which provides a deeper understanding of cultural diversity (Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023). These values serve as a bridge that unites diverse cultural backgrounds, creating collective awareness and mutual respect among individuals of different ethnicities and religions (Saumantri, 2022). In this context, education based on the values of Islam Nusantara is highly expected to guide future generations to develop an appreciation for existing diversity, such as the importance of tolerance and moderation in social interactions (Putra & Suyadi, 2022).

Education that integrates the values of Islam Nusantara does not only focus on understanding religious texts, but also strives to create an inclusive and adaptive learning environment that responds to evolving social dynamics (Saepurrohman et al., 2023). For example, teaching in Islamic boarding schools that integrates local culture with Islamic values enables students to better understand their social context and foster attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect (Burga & Damopolii, 2022). This is particularly important in responding to the challenges of globalization, which increasingly encourages greater interaction with foreign cultures (Qomar, 2019).

Research shows that multicultural education in the context of Islam, particularly in Islamic boarding schools, plays a crucial role in easing social tensions and conflicts that may arise due to differences in background (Djamaluddin et al., 2024). In addition, an educational approach that focuses on the values of moderation and respect for differences, such as in the nyadran tradition, shows how Islamic values can be harmonized with local cultural practices (Muhyiddin et al., 2023). Through this initiative, it is hoped that the next generation will not only have a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, but also the ability to interact harmoniously with various community groups (Tamam & Suherman, 2024).

Therefore, the implementation of education based on Islamic values in the archipelago is expected to create a generation that not only understands religion but also supports the creation of harmonious diversity in society (Moussa et al., 2023). This is a strategic step in the framework of strengthening national identity rooted in Indonesia's diverse cultures, as well as creating a more tolerant and mutually respectful society (Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023).

Overall, Islamic educational practices that integrate local culture in Indonesia contribute significantly to strengthening the cultural identity of the community, accompanied by the crucial role of traditional leaders and religious scholars. Islamic values are reflected not only in enriching the cultural heritage of the archipelago, but also in facilitating dialogue and harmony between cultures in a diverse and multi-ethnic society. Knowledge transferred through locally-based educational methods has a positive impact on the character building of individuals and communities within the framework of religious moderation.

Discussion

1. Relevance to the theory of Islamic civilization

The revitalization of Islamic education based on the culture of the archipelago can be linked to the theory of Islamic civilization, which emphasizes the importance of integration between religion and culture. This theory refers to the view that education in Islam should not be separated from the local values that exist in society. The culture of the archipelago, with its rich traditions and distinctive values, provides a rich context for the development of Islamic education that is more responsive and contextual. According to Nasir et al. (2022), systematic thinking in education can help design a curriculum that promotes local wisdom. In this case, Islamic education is not only based on texts, but also on cultural practices that are part of the identity of the Islamic community in Indonesia.

2. Contribution to strengthening the character and identity of students

The integration of cultural elements in education is very important in shaping the character and identity of students. Education based on local cultural values shows that character education that uses culture as its foundation has a significant impact on strengthening the character and identity of

students. Research by Yusrianti et al. (2023) proves that involvement in educational traditions can strengthen students' identity and character, helping them internalize the norms that apply in society (Yusrianti et al., 2023). For example, cultural activities such as mutual cooperation show that students not only learn the values of cooperation but also understand the importance of mutual respect in a multicultural society (Chrysty, 2024).

The existence of educational programs that prioritize local values provides space for strengthening students' character. Putri and Arifin et al. (2022) explain how learning through novels that are rich in character education values can help students understand and appreciate their own culture (Putri & Arifin, 2022). This means that culture-based character building is not just an additional activity, but an integral part of the educational process. The importance of a culture-based educational approach is also reinforced by research by (Syafruddin et al., 2022), which shows that introducing cultural values in learning can increase student participation and create a positive learning environment (Syafruddin et al., 2022). Furthermore, Hidayati and Akbar (2023) show that education involving local wisdom shapes students to be more tolerant and appreciative of diversity (Hidayati & Akbar, 2023). Learning activities based on local wisdom not only teach students about cultural heritage but also equip them with social skills that are important in modern society.

Finally, strengthening character education and student identity through culture is an important step in creating a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also solid in human values. Various studies have confirmed that values-based character education rooted in local values can develop the positive character traits necessary for the success of both individuals and society as a whole (Yusrianti et al., 2023; Devina et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to continue implementing and developing curricula that prioritize local wisdom values to shape the character and identity of students who are competitive.

3. Challenges and opportunities in revitalizing culture-based education

The revitalization of culture-based education in Indonesia is not without challenges and opportunities. Some of the challenges faced include insufficient resources and learning that is not relevant to the context of local wisdom. Hidayat and Haryani et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of government support in developing a curriculum that integrates local values to address the challenges of globalization that have the potential to destroy cultural identity. On the other hand, opportunities arise from increased awareness of the importance of multicultural education that promotes the integration of cultural values in teaching. As shown by Gultom and Lubis (Gultom & Lubis, 2024), the implementation of multicultural Islamic education can create synergy between different beliefs and cultures in schools, which ultimately enhances social cohesion. In conclusion, the revitalization of Islamic education based on the culture of the archipelago is not only relevant to the theory of Islamic civilization, but also makes an important contribution to strengthening the character and identity of students. Thus, education must face existing challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities to provide a more holistic and meaningful education.

Conclusion

In this paper, we conclude that Islamic education based on the culture of the archipelago has significant potential in strengthening Islamic values in Indonesia. A number of studies show that education that integrates local cultural values can increase students' understanding and appreciation of Islamic teachings. This can be seen in the research by Ramadhana et al. (2023), which discusses how the culture of the archipelago functions as a medium for conveying Islamic spiritual values. In addition, Khairiyah & Abdillah (2023) also highlight that Islamic civilization in the archipelago has distinctive local characteristics, indicating that education based on local culture is not only relevant but also vital in the context of Islamic religious education.

The theoretical implications of this discussion indicate that an Islamic education approach that accommodates local wisdom can encourage the development of excellent and tolerant character in students, as stated by Khoiriyah et al. (2024). From a practical perspective, the implementation of local culture-based Islamic education also has the potential to create a more enjoyable and relevant learning

environment, as revealed by Habibullah et al. (2022) in the context of contextual curriculum development.

Following these implications, suggestions for the development of Islamic education based on the culture of the archipelago should be the main focus. First, the development of a contextual curriculum that includes local content will help students understand the interconnection between culture and religious teachings. Habibullah et al. (2022) demonstrate the importance of a curriculum that respects local traditions to support effective learning. Second, teacher training based on local culture needs to be carried out, as teachers play a key role in transferring cultural and religious values to students, as evidenced by research results showing higher levels of student engagement with teachers who integrate local culture into their teaching (Khoiriyah et al., 2024). Third, collaboration between educational institutions and cultural communities can strengthen the development of programs that support culture-based education. This proposed collaboration has been proven by Pinandhita and Gultom (2024), who suggest integrating cultural exchange programs as part of education.

Through this approach, we hope that Islamic education in Indonesia will not only be a process of knowledge transfer, but also a vehicle for nurturing a generation that appreciates and preserves local culture, which in turn enriches the wealth of Islamic education in the archipelago.

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