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Strengthening Islamic Values Through Integration of Local Culture in Islamic Religious Education Materials

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has an important role in instilling Islamic values in students. However, in practice, PAI learning is often less associated with local social and cultural realities inherent in students' lives. Integration of local culture into PAI materials is an important strategy to make learning more contextual, meaningful, and close to students' daily lives. Local culture that is full of moral values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, politeness, and responsibility can be used as an entry point in introducing Islamic concepts. This paper discusses the importance of integrating local culture as a means to strengthen Islamic values in the educational environment. Through a contextual and dialogical approach, PAI learning becomes more inclusive and is able to shape students' characters that are rooted in Islamic values while loving their own culture. In addition, cultural integration also contributes to the preservation of local identity in accordance with Islamic principles. Innovation from teachers and policy support are needed so that this process can run effectively and sustainably. Thus, cultural integration into PAI materials is a strategic step to create education that is inclusive and relevant to the socio-cultural context of students. Collaborative efforts from various parties are needed to overcome existing challenges and optimize the potential of this integration in Islamic Religious Education learning.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:

Education, Islam, Character Integration Culture

1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in the formation of character and noble morals of students. In practice, PAI is often delivered textually and normatively, without being linked to the local social and cultural context in which students grow and develop. In fact, local culture contains many noble values that are in line with Islamic teachings, such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, politeness, and social concern.

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Integrating local culture into PAI materials not only makes learning more contextual, but also strengthens students' identity as part of society and Muslims who are deeply rooted in tradition.

One promising approach to enhancing Islamic character education is through the integration of local culture into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction. Local cultures often embody rich values of wisdom that have been passed down through generations, many of which are in harmony with Islamic teachings. These include values such as mutual cooperation, respect for others, social harmony, honesty, and communal responsibility. By connecting PAI material to the local cultural context that students are already familiar with in their daily lives, the learning experience becomes more meaningful, contextualized, and engaging. This culturally responsive pedagogy not only facilitates students' understanding of Islamic principles in a concrete and relatable manner but also reinforces their Islamic identity in a way that is grounded in their own cultural experiences. As a result, students are more likely to internalize Islamic values not as abstract concepts, but as practical virtues they observe and practice within their communities. This integration can therefore serve as a powerful medium for cultivating enduring Islamic character, fostering a sense of belonging, and nurturing morally conscious individuals who are rooted in both faith and culture.

However, in actual practice, Islamic Religious Education in many schools including at Budi Mulia Junior High School, which operates under the Budi Mulia Tangerang Education Foundation still tends to be predominantly textual and normative in nature. The teaching often focuses heavily on memorization of Qur'anic verses, legal rulings (fiqh), and formal religious knowledge, without meaningful connection to students' everyday lives. The lessons rarely explore or integrate the richness of the local cultural environment that surrounds the students. As a result, the learning process frequently becomes monotonous, teacher-centered, and less engaging for students. Islamic teachings are often perceived merely as abstract concepts or academic content to be memorized for exams rather than as values to be lived and embodied in their social interactions. This disconnect hinders the internalization of Islamic values, making it difficult for students to translate what they learn into concrete behavior and moral decision-making in real-life situations. Therefore, there is a pressing need for a more contextualized, student-centered, and culturally grounded approach to teaching Islamic Religious Education, one that can foster deeper understanding, greater engagement, and stronger character formation rooted in both faith and cultural identity..

This condition encourages the need for innovation in Islamic Religious Education learning strategies, especially by integrating local cultural elements as a bridge to transform Islamic values into the souls and practices of students in real

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terms. Through this approach, students not only understand Islam as a teaching, but also feel it as part of the life and culture they have known since childhood.

Based on this phenomenon, this study was conducted to explore and examine how strengthening Islamic values can be done through the integration of local culture in Islamic Religious Education materials at Budi Mulia Junior High School. This study is expected to be able to contribute to the development of a more contextual, relevant, and down-to-earth Islamic Religious Education learning model in students' daily lives. Based on the description above, the author gives the title for the research conducted by the author is "Strengthening Islamic Values Through the Integration of Local Culture in Islamic Religious Education Materials".

2. Literature Review

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role in shaping the character of students through internalization of Islamic values. These values include aspects of faith, worship, and morals that are not only understood cognitively, but must also be reflected in daily attitudes and behavior. According to Mulyasa (2022), value education in Islam should be holistic, touching on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions, and relevant to the socio-cultural conditions of students in order to be more effective in responding to the challenges of the times.

One approach to strengthening Islamic values in learning is through the integration of local culture. Local culture contains wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation and contains noble values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, politeness, and tolerance, all of which are in line with Islamic teachings. (Aryadita, 2019) emphasizes that the integration of local culture in education can strengthen students' understanding because they feel closer emotionally and culturally to the material being taught. This approach not only strengthens cultural identity, but also facilitates a deeper internalization of values.

In the context of learning, the application of a contextual approach is very important, especially in Islamic Religious Education. Contextual learning links the content of the subject matter to the real experiences of students, so that Islamic values are not only memorized, but also part of everyday life practices. Hasanah dan Rahman (2024) shows that a contextual approach in Islamic Religious Education can increase the effectiveness and depth of students' understanding of religious teachings, because they can relate them directly to the social reality around them.

Furthermore, the integration of Islamic education and local wisdom also contributes to strengthening students' religious and national identities. Local wisdom not only enriches learning methods, but also becomes a means to instill moderate, inclusive, and contextual Islam. Zamzami (2024) stated that this integration is able to be a solution to the

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development of extreme religious understanding, because students see that Islamic teachings do not conflict with the culture they know and live since childhood. Thus, the integration of local culture in Islamic Religious Education learning not only increases the relevance of the material to the lives of students, but also becomes an effective strategy to strengthen Islamic values in a more contextual and down-to-earth manner.

3. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type, which aims to deeply understand the process of integrating local culture into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials as an effort to strengthen Islamic values at SMP Budi Mulia, under the Budi Mulia Education Foundation, Tangerang. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to describe the phenomenon holistically and deeply, in accordance with the socio-cultural context being studied.

The research was conducted at Budi Mulia Junior High School, Tangerang. The subjects of the research included Islamic Religious Education teachers, students, principals, and local figures or parents who were considered to understand the local cultural values that live in the school environment. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques, namely selection based on certain considerations that are relevant to the focus of the research.

Data Sources Primary Data: Primary data was obtained directly from Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, students, and local community or traditional figures through interviews, observations, and documentation. Secondary Data: Secondary data came from curriculum documents, learning modules, journal articles, textbooks, and educational regulations related to the integration of cultural values in Islamic religious education.

Data Collection Techniques In-depth Interview: Conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers and principals to find out the views, strategies, and implementation of local cultural integration in learning. Participatory Observation: Researchers directly observed classroom learning activities that contained elements of local culture, as well as student participation in culture-based materials. Documentation Study: Collecting data from syllabus documents, lesson plans, teaching materials, school cultural activity records, and other archives relevant to the research theme, or data described in the data collected through the following techniques:

1) Participatory observation, namely direct observation of the Islamic Religious Education learning process in the classroom, including how local cultural values are integrated in the delivery of materials.
2) In-depth interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, students, and local cultural figures to explore

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understanding, experiences, and practices of local cultural integration in learning.

3) Documentation studies, such as syllabus, lesson plans, teaching materials, or school activity records related to local content and Islamic values.

sThe collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, as developed by Miles dkk, (2014), which included three stages:

1) Data reduction, namely by filtering, summarizing, and selecting important data that is relevant to the focus of the research.
2) Data presentation, namely arranging data in the form of narratives, tables, or matrices to facilitate understanding of research findings.
3) Drawing conclusions and verification, namely formulating key findings and rechecking data consistency.

Data Analysis Techniques Data analysis was conducted qualitatively interactively using the Miles & Huberman model, through the following three stages: Data Reduction: Sorting and summarizing important data from interviews, observations, and documentation that are relevant to the focus of the research. Data Display: Presenting data in narrative, matrix, table or diagram form so that the relationship between data is easier to understand. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Drawing temporary conclusions which are then re-tested for validity using source and method triangulation techniques. Data Validity (Triangulation) To ensure data validity, researchers use source and technique triangulation, namely comparing information from various informants and comparing interview results, observations, and documents.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Conditions of Internalization of Islamic Values in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The results of observations and interviews show that the internalization of Islamic values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Budi Mulia Junior High School has been carried out through various methods, such as delivering teaching materials, teacher role models, and religious activities. However, the approach used still tends to be cognitive and has not fully linked Islamic teachings to the local cultural context in the students' environment.

Based on observations and interviews with teachers and students, it is known that the process of internalizing Islamic values at Budi Mulia Junior High School has been running systematically. PAI teachers have integrated Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance in the learning process, both through materials and role models.

However, this internalization is still dominated by textual and cognitive approaches, without being contextually linked to students' daily lives. This makes some students unable to translate Islamic

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values into real actions outside the classroom. This finding is in line with the opinion of Hasanah dan Rahman (2024), that religious education will be more effective if it uses a contextual approach that links teaching materials to students' social realities. Thus, strengthening Islamic values needs to be developed through an approach that is down to earth and relevant to their lives, one of which is through local culture.

1) Delivery of Teaching Materials: Teachers convey Islamic teachings through the established PAI curriculum
2) Teacher Exemplary Behavior: Teachers behave in accordance with Islamic values, becoming an example for students.
3) Religious Activities: Schools hold activities such as congregational prayers, recitations, and commemoration of Islamic holidays.

4.2 Identify Relevant Local Cultures to Integrate

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the use of local culture not only enriches teaching materials, but also strengthens the relevance of Islamic values in students' real lives. Education rooted in local culture has great potential in building students' character more authentically, because local culture holds noble values that are in line with the principles of Islamic teachings, such as mutual cooperation, manners towards parents and teachers, and the spirit of togetherness in social life.

At Budi Mulia Junior High School, which is located in a community that still upholds local customs and values, this opportunity is very large to be utilized in learning. Teachers, as the main facilitators of learning, have a strategic role in exploring, understanding, and linking local cultural elements into religious learning. This approach is also in line with the principles of contextual pedagogy, where learning will be more meaningful when linked to students' experiences and living environment. Through a series of interviews and observations, researchers identified a number of local cultural elements that not only still exist, but also contain strong Islamic values. This cultural integration aims to help students understand Islamic teachings within the framework of their daily lives, making it not only memorized knowledge, but also lived values.

Through interviews with community leaders and Islamic Religious Education teachers, it was found that there are several local cultures that still exist and are relevant to be integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning, including:

1) The tradition of tahlilan and yasinan as a form of collective spirituality.

The tradition of tahlilan and yasinan which are usually carried out in people's homes when there is a disaster or haul reflects Islamic values such as joint prayer, dhikr, ukhuwah, and strengthening collective spirituality. This tradition can be integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning on the material about the importance of prayer, dhikr, and praying for fellow Muslims.

2) Mutual cooperation in community

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activities.

Mutual cooperation, which is seen in activities to clean the environment, help residents, or prepare for school events, contains the values of mutual assistance, social responsibility, and Islamic brotherhood. These values are appropriate to be included in Islamic Religious Education materials on social morals, community ethics, and cooperation in Islam.

3) *Unggah-ungguh* (manners) in speaking to parents and teachers.

Unggah-ungguh or manners in interacting with parents, teachers, and elders reflect manners, respect, and noble morals. This culture supports PAI material that discusses manners in Islam and the importance of respecting parents and teachers.

4) Marawis and qasidah performances in school events.

Marawis and qasidah performances that are usually performed in school religious events or Islamic holy days are a manifestation of love for the Prophet, Islamic propagation, and Islamic art expression. This can be integrated into PAI material about love for the Prophet, Islamic art, and the meaning of Islamic celebrations.

These traditions contain Islamic values such as ukhuwah, adab, and syiar, which are very potential to be raised in Islamic Religious Education learning materials. This is in line with the opinion put forward by Zamzami (2024), the integration of local wisdom such as marawis, silaturahmi, and polite culture is a form of Islam that is down to earth and strengthens students' Islamic identity. Local culture is not a threat to Islam, but can be an effective medium for preaching.

4.3 Local Cultural Integration Strategy in Islamic Religious Education Learning

Islamic Religious Education teachers at Budi Mulia Junior High School have developed a strategy for integrating local culture into learning. This strategy shows a contextual and interactive learning approach. In line with Sutrisno and Herawati (2023), the use of local culture in learning creates students' emotional attachment to the values taught, making them easier to absorb and apply. including:

a) Contextual Learning, Linking teaching materials with local culture known to students.
b) Class Project, Students create works that combine Islamic teachings and local culture.
c) Extracurricular Activities, Such as marawis and hadroh that contain Islamic values.

4.4 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Local Cultural Integration

Based on the results of observations and interviews with the author, there are several supporting factors including:

1) Principal Support, The principal gives teachers the freedom to innovate in learning.
2) Student Enthusiasm, Students show a high interest in learning that links local culture.
3) Availability of Resources, The

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existence of facilities and resources that support local culture-based activities.

As for the inhibiting factors, they include:

1) Lack of Teacher Training, Teachers have not received special training on the integration of local culture in Islamic Religious Education.
2) Time constraints, The tight lesson schedule makes it difficult to implement additional activities.
3) Lack of Teaching Materials, There are no books or modules that integrate local culture in Islamic Religious Education.

This condition shows that the success of local cultural integration in Islamic Religious Education is greatly influenced by structural and cultural factors. Mulyasa (2022) emphasized the importance of curriculum management and teacher innovation so that character values can grow within a local cultural framework that is in line with Islamic teachings.

4.5 The Impact of Local Cultural Integration on Strengthening Islamic Values

Integration of local culture in Islamic Religious Education learning has a positive impact on strengthening Islamic values in students, including:

1) Improved Understanding, Students find it easier to understand Islamic teachings that are linked to the culture they know.
2) Strengthening Identity, Students feel proud of local culture that is in line with Islamic teachings.
3) Positive Behavior, There is an increase in student attitudes and behavior in accordance with Islamic values.

The most prominent positive impact of local cultural integration in Islamic Religious Education learning is increased student participation, ease of understanding values, and changes in behavior that are more polite and respectful of the surrounding environment. Students become more active in discussions, are able to associate Islamic values with traditions they know, and show a more cooperative attitude in social activities. This proves that when religious education is delivered through a cultural approach, students not only understand Islamic teachings as dogma, but also as a relevant and familiar guide to life. As explained by Hasanah dan Rahman (2024), this approach creates a deep awareness of values because it is directly related to student identity.

5. Conclusion

Based on the description above, the author draws the following conclusions:

1) Based on observations and interviews with teachers and students, it is known that the process of internalizing Islamic values in Budi Mulia Junior High School has been running systematically. Islamic Religious Education teachers have integrated Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance in the learning process, both through materials and examples.

2) However, this internalization is still dominated by textual and cognitive approaches, without being contextually linked to students' daily lives. Through a series of interviews and observations, researchers identified a number of local cultural elements that not only still exist, but also contain strong Islamic values. This cultural integration aims to help students understand Islamic teachings within the framework of their daily lives such as: Tahlilan tradition, Gotong royong, Unggah-ungguh (manners) and Marawis and qasidah performances in school events.
3) Islamic Religious Education teachers at Budi Mulia Junior High School have developed a strategy for integrating local culture into learning, this strategy shows a contextual and interactive learning approach such as: Contextual learning, class projects and extracurricular activities.
4) There are several supporting factors including: Principal support, student enthusiasm and availability of resources. Furthermore, there are inhibiting factors including: Lack of teacher training, limited time and lack of teaching materials.

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