Integrating Local Wisdom In Transformative Islamic Education: A Sustainable Model For Character Development At Madrasah Aliyah

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Abstract--Islamic education in Indonesia faces the challenge of integrating rich local values with more holistic educational goals. This study explores local wisdom's application in transformative Islamic education, focusing on student character development at MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviewed to 18 informants, participatory observation and document analysis. The results showed that integrating local values such as unggah-ungguh, guyub, srawung, and nrimo ing pandum has successfully strengthened students' character in social responsibility, tolerance, and spiritual resilience. However, the main challenges in implementation are the diversity of local values in Indonesia and educators' limited understanding of the importance of local wisdom integration. The findings suggest further training for educators and closer collaboration between madrasahs, families and communities. This research contributes to developing local wisdom-based Islamic education models and opens opportunities for further studies on applying similar models in different cultural contexts.

Keywords: Local wisdom, transformative Islamic education, character development, local value integration, madrasah

Abstrak-- Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia menghadapi tantangan untuk mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai lokal yang kaya dengan tujuan pendidikan yang lebih holistik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penerapan kearifan lokal dalam pendidikan Islam transformatif, dengan fokus pada pengembangan karakter siswa di MAN 1 Kudus dan MAN Demak. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengintegrasian nilai-nilai lokal seperti unggah-ungguh, guyub, srawung, dan nrimo ing pandum telah berhasil memperkuat karakter siswa dalam aspek tanggung jawab sosial, toleransi, dan ketangguhan spiritual. Namun, tantangan utama dalam implementasi adalah keberagaman nilai lokal yang ada di Indonesia dan pemahaman pendidik yang terbatas mengenai pentingnya integrasi kearifan lokal. Temuan ini menyarankan perlunya pelatihan lebih lanjut bagi pendidik dan kolaborasi yang lebih erat antara madrasah, keluarga, dan masyarakat. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada pengembangan model pendidikan Islam berbasis kearifan lokal dan membuka peluang untuk studi lebih lanjut mengenai penerapan model serupa di konteks budaya yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: Kearifan lokal, pendidikan Islam transformatif, pengembangan karakter, integrasi nilai lokal, madrasah

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is essential in developing human resources in Indonesia, especially in the character-building of the younger generation (Hakim et al., 2024; Rohana, 2018; Taufikin,

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2021). The country, with its rich cultural diversity and local values, needs an educational approach that is not only oriented towards understanding religious knowledge but also on integrating local values that can support the development of students' characters (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024; Taufikin, 2022). In this context, transformative Islamic education emerges as one of the alternatives to create an intellectually intelligent, wise, civilized and virtuous generation. Transformative Islamic education explores individual potential by prioritizing better social change through religious values adapted to local values (Awaludin, 2024). Therefore, it is important to examine how Islamic education can be integrated with local wisdom to create a sustainable education model based on the cultural values of the local community.

Local wisdom is knowledge and practices passed down from generation to generation in a community, which guides life in living social interactions and maintaining natural balance (Azwar, 2018; Purba et al., 2021). In education, local wisdom is seen as part of cultural traditions and a force that can develop students' character. Local values such as *gotong royong*, harmonization, and respect for others and nature can shape a holistic student's character. In Indonesia, the diversity of cultures and ethnicities provides an excellent opportunity to develop an educational model that is not only based on the universal values of Islam but also on local wisdom that can be the foundation for the development of the character of the younger generation (Bandura, 1977; S & Das, 2025; Suri & Chandra, 2021).

However, although local wisdom has great potential to support character education, often in educational practices, especially in madrasahs, integrating local values in the curriculum and educational activities is still not maximized (Yusuf et al., 2024). One of the biggest challenges is adapting diverse local values within the established education system, which tends to focus on academic achievement (Karomi et al., 2025). On the other hand, there is a need to develop an Islamic education model that teaches theological aspects and includes social values that can strengthen students' character and positive attitudes. Therefore, this study explores how local wisdom can be integrated into transformative Islamic education for students' character development.

Based on the literature review, experts have proposed several solutions related to the problem of integrating local wisdom into Islamic education. One is through an educational approach based on local cultural values, which shapes character spiritually and socially. Previous studies have shown that education integrating local wisdom can strengthen the values of togetherness, tolerance, and cooperation in society (Arsal et al., 2023; Rahayu, 2024). For example, in some madrasas that have adopted local values such as gotong royong, cooperation and harmony in daily activities, it has been proven to increase students' sense of social responsibility and discipline. In addition, local values such as the *nrimo ing pandum* (accepting fate gracefully) can help students develop mental and spiritual resilience when facing life's challenges.

Related literature also shows that the integration of local wisdom in education can be done through a character-based curriculum and habituation of positive values in daily life (Ilham & Rahman, 2024; Novitasari & Walid, 2024). Many studies highlight the importance of habituation, such as unggah-ungguh (good manners), *guyub* (togetherness), and srawung (friendship) in character education (Abidin, 2021; Huda, 2021; Lickona, 1996; Purwaningsih & Ridha, 2024). Internalizing these values involves direct interaction with the surrounding community and respect for existing traditions. Thus, transformative Islamic education focuses on academic achievement and strengthening character that can enrich students' social lives outside of school.

However, although many studies have been conducted on integrating local values in Islamic education, there is still a gap in research examining how the local wisdom-based transformative Islamic education model can be implemented sustainably and structured in Madrasah. This study aims to fill the gap by offering a character development model based on local wisdom, which can be applied in madrasas in Indonesia, especially in MAN 1 Kudus and

MAN Demak. These two madrasahs were chosen because they have successfully integrated local wisdom into their learning activities and religious programs.

This study aims to identify how local wisdom can be applied in transformative Islamic education for student character development and to develop a sustainable model that can be implemented in madrasahs. The research also aims to explore the challenges and opportunities in integrating local wisdom in education and how the model can positively impact student character. Based on the existing gaps in the literature, this research is expected to contribute to developing a more holistic and sustainable model of Islamic education, which not only focuses on academic aspects but also on building strong character based on local values.

The research questions raised in this study are: (1) How is local wisdom integrated into Islamic education at MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak? (2) How does integrating local wisdom affect student character development? (3) What challenges and opportunities are faced in integrating local wisdom in transformative Islamic education in Madrasah? Through this research, a model can be found that can be widely applied in other madrasas so that transformative Islamic education based on local wisdom can become an integral part of the education system in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study explored the integration of local wisdom in transformative Islamic education in madrasahs as a sustainable model for student character development. To achieve this goal, a qualitative approach was used with a case study design in two madrasahs: MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak. This approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of how local wisdom is applied in Islamic education and its impact on students' character development.

Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine social phenomena in depth and holistically (Haki et al., 2024; Khan, 2022; Muurlink & Thomsen, 2024). This approach is suitable for exploring experiences, views and perceptions of integrating local wisdom in transformative Islamic education. In addition, this method also allows researchers to understand the social and cultural contexts that influence the application of local values in education. According to (Creswell, 2014), the qualitative approach provides space for researchers to capture the meaning behind human behaviour, which relates to integrating local wisdom in the madrasah environment.

Case Study Design

The case study design (Gustafsson, 2024; Halkias et al., 2022) is used to deeply understand how the two madrasas integrate local wisdom in Islamic education. Case studies allow researchers to focus on one phenomenon that occurs in a particular context to provide a clear picture of the application of local wisdom in teaching and student character-building. MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak madrasas were chosen as the research objects because both have successfully implemented local values in their educational activities, making them relevant examples of case studies.

Data Collection Technique

Data in this study were collected through three primary methods: in-depth interviews, participatory observation and document analysis (Carter et al., 2014). In-depth interviews were conducted with relevant parties, such as the madrasah head, teachers and students, to explore their understanding of the application of local wisdom in Islamic education. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), in-depth interviews allow researchers to obtain more detailed and personalized information, which is difficult to obtain through other methods.

Participatory observations were conducted in the classroom and in the daily activities of the Madrasah to understand first-hand how local values are applied in educational practices. In this observation, the researcher was actively involved in school activities to gain a deeper

understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that occur in the field. In addition, document analysis was conducted to examine the curriculum, lesson plans, and programs related to local values in Islamic education. These documents provided additional evidence of integrating local wisdom into the formal structure of education in the Madrasah.

Data Analysis Technique

Data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis were analyzedanalyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Thematic analysis allows researchers to identify patterns and themes from the collected data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is an effective method for analyzing qualitative data, as it can help researchers identify the main themes related to the research. This study's themes relate to how local wisdom is applied in Islamic education and its impact on students' character development.

Data Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study used triangulation techniques, namely by comparing data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Triangulation helps increase research results' credibility and reduce data interpretation bias (Carter et al., 2014). In addition, researchers also conducted member checking by asking for confirmation from informants regarding the findings obtained from interviews to ensure the accuracy of the data collected.

Overall, the methods used in this research are designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the application of local wisdom in Islamic education and its impact on student character development in Madrasah. Using a qualitative approach and case study design, this research is expected to significantly contribute to developing an Islamic education model based on local wisdom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores how local wisdom is integrated into Islamic education at MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak and its impact on student character development. It also identifies the challenges and opportunities faced in implementing local wisdom integration in transformative Islamic education in madrasahs. The results show that both madrasas have successfully integrated local wisdom in various aspects of their education, which positively impacts students' character development.

Integration of Local Wisdom in Islamic Education

Local wisdom in MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak is integrated into various aspects of Islamic education through curriculum, daily activities, and religious programs. This integration involves local cultural values such as unggah-ungguh (good manners), *guyub* (togetherness), srawung (friendship), and *nrimo ing pandum* (accepting fate gracefully).

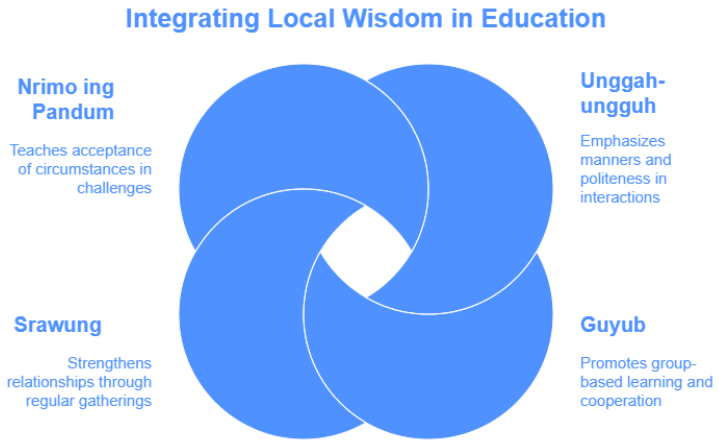
Based on interviews with madrasah principals and teachers in both madrasahs, it was found that these local values are internalized internally in the curriculum and extracurricular activities. For example, at MAN 1 Kudus, the value of unggah-ungguh is taught in the context of social interaction inside and outside the classroom. Teachers try to provide examples of polite manners to students, which are practised in everyday life. At MAN Demak, the value of *guyub* is applied in group-based learning and cooperation, which teaches students to support each other and appreciate differences.

Table 1 and Figure 1: Integration of Local Wisdom in Islamic Education at MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak

Local Value	MAN 1 Kudus	MAN Demak
Unggah-ungguh	Taught in social interactions and learning activities (interview with teacher)	EmphasizedEmphasized manners and politeness in every activity (interview with students)

Guyub	Group-based learning, cooperation in extracurricular activities	Collaboration in community service programs and classroom activities (interviews with students)
srawung	Gathering activities are held regularly to strengthen relationships between students and teachers.	Regular religious studies program involving all elements of the Madrasah
Nrimo ing pandum	InternalizationInternalization through habituation of acceptance of circumstances in every learning challenge	Taught to face life's tests and challenges (interview with teacher)

Figure 1.



Integrating local wisdom in Islamic education at MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak shows significant results in student character building. The results of this research align with the theory of Islamic education, which emphasizes the importance of local values in shaping a balanced person between spiritual, social, and intellectual aspects (Abdullah et al., 2019; Astuti, 2024; Hasan, 2020). In this case, Islamic education does not only teach religious knowledge but also social and cultural values inherent in the life of the local community. Integrating local values such as unggah-ungguh, *guyub*, srawung, and *nrimo ing pandum* into the Islamic education curriculum can enrich students' learning experience and make it more relevant to their socio-cultural context.

The transformative education theory proposed by Mezirow (1978) can also explain the transformation process that occurs in students when they apply these local values (Effendi, Bafadal, Sudana, et al., 2020; Uyun et al., 2024). Transformative Islamic education focuses on knowledge transfer and changing students' perspectives towards themselves and society. The local values taught in Islamic education in both madrasas enable students to better understand the relationship between religion and their culture. Thus, Islamic education becomes more contextualized, which can result in better social change.

However, the two madrasahs differ in how local values are applied. In MAN 1 Kudus, the value of unggah-ungguh is emphasized more in social interactions between students and teachers. In contrast, in MAN Demak, the value of *guyub* is applied more through cooperation in groups and social activities. This difference reflects the diversity of ways madrasahs adapt local wisdom in their education, which can also be influenced by socio-cultural differences in each region. This shows that integrating local wisdom in Islamic education requires adaptation to specific local contexts by existing cultural characteristics.

Impact of Local Wisdom Integration on Student Character Development

The integration of local wisdom in Islamic education in both madrasahs significantly impacts students' character development. Based on interviews and observations, students

involved in activities that integrate local values showed better character development, especially in terms of social responsibility, tolerance, and spiritual resilience.

At MAN 1 Kudus, students are involved in activities emphasizing the value of *guyub* and showing increased mutual support and respect between friends. Students are also more open to differences in religious and cultural backgrounds, which strengthens tolerance. For example, one student stated, "By working together in groups, I feel closer to friends of different religions; we learn to respect each other."

At MAN Demak, integrating the value of *nrimo ing pandum* helps students face exam challenges and their personal problems. Students become more resilient in dealing with academic pressures and daily life. One student revealed, "Whenever there are exams or difficulties, I always remember to accept and not give up. That is what our teachers teach us."

Table 2: Impact of Local Wisdom Integration on Student Character at MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak

Impact	MAN 1 Kudus	MAN Demak
Social Responsibility	Improved cooperation among students, concern for friends	Increased participation in social activities and group cooperation
Tolerance	Respectful attitude among students with different backgrounds	Increased mutual understanding and acceptance of differences within the madrasah community
Spiritual Resilience	Increase students' resilience in facing life's trials and tribulations	Teaches students to accept every destiny and keep trying without giving up hope

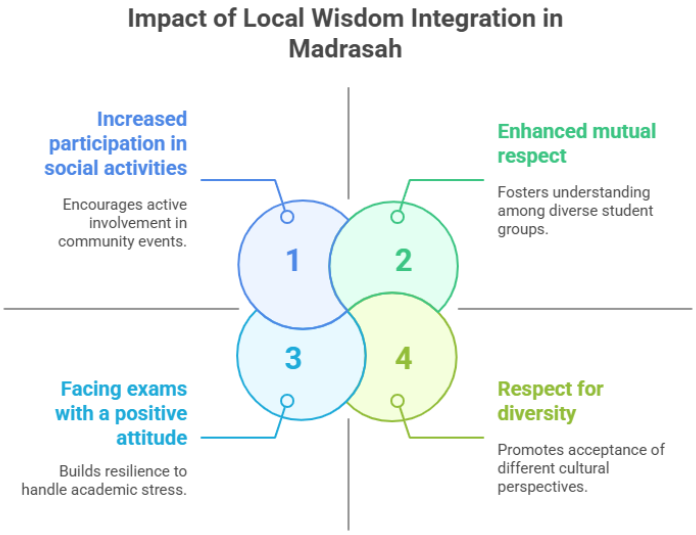
The impact of integrating local wisdom on student character development can be seen in increased social responsibility, tolerance, and spiritual resilience. In line with the results of this study, previous research shows that integrating local values in education can strengthen students' social character, especially in terms of cooperation, sense of responsibility, and respect for diversity (Bassar et al., 2021; Untung et al., 2022). At MAN 1 Kudus, the *guyub* value applied in group-based learning allows students to appreciate differences and work together to handle assigned tasks. This creates an atmosphere supporting positive character development, such as empathy and solidarity.

At MAN Demak, the value of *nrimo ing pandum* teaches students to accept the reality of life gracefully and not give up easily. Applying this value in daily life helps students cope with academic and personal challenges more wisely. This aligns with the resilience theory proposed by (Damianakis et al., 2025; Shackleton et al., 2024), which stated that spiritual resilience is survival and thriving despite adversity. Integrating local wisdom such as *nrimo ing pandum* provides students with tools to manage stress and develop stronger mental resilience.

Table 3 and Figure 2: Impact of Local Wisdom Integration on Student Character

Impact	MAN 1 Kudus	MAN Demak
Social Responsibility	Improved group cooperation, caring for friends	Increased participation in social activities, group cooperation
Tolerance	Enhance mutual respect among students of different religions and cultural backgrounds.	Respect for diversity, interaction between students from different backgrounds
Spiritual Resilience	Facing exams with a positive attitude and not giving up easily	Develop mental resilience in facing academic and life challenges

Figure 2.



The application of local values in Islamic education is also in line with the views of Al-Ghazali (2005), who emphasizes the importance of character education in educating students to become individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also virtuous. This shows that Islamic education that integrates local wisdom has excellent potential in shaping the character of good, academically intelligent students with mental, social and spiritual resilience.

Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of Local Wisdom Integration

Implementing local wisdom integration in Islamic education in both madrasahs faces several challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the diversity of local values in Indonesian society. Each region has different local values, which can affect how local wisdom is integrated into education. Several informants also recognized this, stating that although universal values can be accepted in many places, there are differences in the way they are applied.

In addition, some educators lack understanding and awareness of the importance of integrating local wisdom in the curriculum. Most educators are more focused on academic materials and do not pay much attention to strengthening student character through local values. One teacher at MAN 1 Kudus revealed, "Sometimes we find it difficult to link local values with religious subject matter."

However, this study also found great opportunities in integrating local wisdom. One of them is increased cooperation between schools, families and communities. Programs that involve parents and local communities can be an effective means of introducing local values to students. In both madrasahs, community service programs and gathering activities are great opportunities to strengthen the application of local wisdom outside the classroom. This can also enrich students' experiences and strengthen their social ties with the surrounding community.

Table 4: Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of Local Wisdom Integration

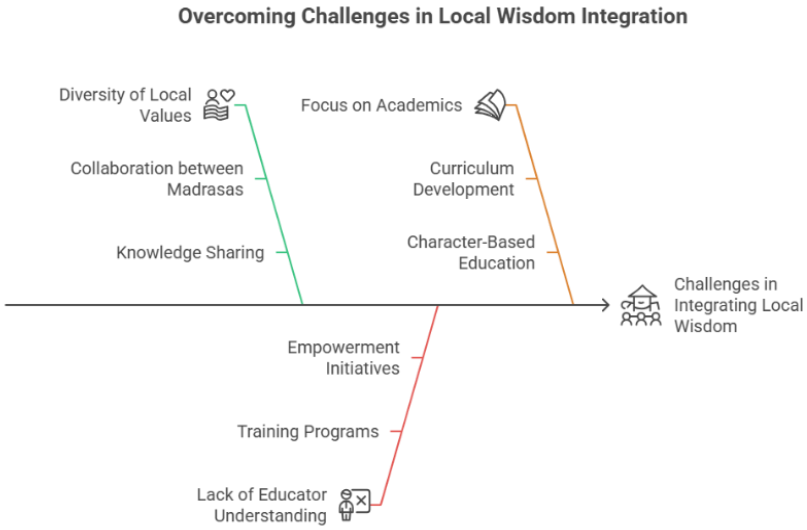
Challenge	Opportunities
Diversity of Local Values	Collaboration between madrasas to share experiences and wider adaptation of local values
Lack of Educator Understanding	Training for educators to understand the importance of local values in character education
Focusing Too Much on Academics	Increasing collaboration between the Madrasah and community in local wisdom-based programs

The biggest challenge in implementing the integration of local wisdom in Islamic education is the diversity of local values in Indonesia. As stated by several previous researchers, although Indonesia has many local values that can support character education, cultural

differences between regions make the application of these values complex (Agustina, 2022; Effendi, Bafadal, Degeng, et al., 2020; Mahartini et al., 2024). In the two madrasahs studied, although local values were positively received, there were variations in how they were implemented, which different local cultural factors could influence. This shows that integrating local wisdom must be done with an approach sensitive to the local cultural context. In addition, educators' lack of understanding of the importance of integrating local values into the curriculum is also a challenge. (Wibowo et al., 2025) stated that most educators are more focused on academic achievement and pay less attention to developing student character through local cultural values. Therefore, educators need to be trained and empowered to integrate local wisdom in education.

However, this study also found several opportunities to optimize the integration of local wisdom in Islamic education. One of them is to strengthen collaboration between schools, families, and communities. Local wisdom-based programs, such as community service activities and hospitality, can effectively introduce and internalize local values to students. It also shows that collaboration between madrasahs and local communities can improve the relevance of Islamic education to the social needs of the community.

Figure 3. Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of Local Wisdom Integration



Novelty and Contribution of Research

This research offers novelty in developing a local wisdom-based Islamic education model that can be sustainably implemented in madrasahs. While many previous studies have discussed the importance of character education and the integration of local values, this study highlights a concrete model implemented in two different madrasahs, focusing on the direct application of local values in students' lives. In addition, this study also provides insights into the challenges and opportunities faced in implementing local wisdom integration in Islamic education, which can serve as a reference for the development of similar educational models in other madrasahs. Thus, this research contributes to the development of Islamic education that is more holistic and based on local cultural values and provides recommendations to strengthen the role of local wisdom in education in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the integration of local wisdom in transformative Islamic education in two madrasahs in Indonesia, MAN 1 Kudus and MAN Demak, to understand how local values can be applied in education and their impact on students' character development. The results showed that both madrasas successfully integrated local values such as unggah-ungguh, *guyub*, srawung, and *nrimo ing pandum* into their curriculum, daily habituation activities, and religious

programs. The implementation of these values strengthens students' character in the aspects of social responsibility, tolerance, and spiritual resilience. The positive impact can be seen in students' increased mutual respect and ability to face life's challenges with calmness and courage.

The main finding of this study is that integrating local wisdom in Islamic education enriches students' learning experience and supports better character building. This result aligns with the theory of transformative Islamic education, which emphasizes positive individual changes through strengthening local cultural values. However, the study also shows some challenges in implementation, such as the diversity of local values in Indonesia and the lack of understanding among educators regarding the importance of integrating local wisdom into the curriculum. Therefore, further training for educators and closer cooperation between madrasahs, families and communities are needed.

This research contributes to developing an Islamic education model based on local wisdom and its relevance in developing student character in Madrasah. This research provides new insights into how to systematically integrate local values in Islamic education and the challenges and opportunities associated with its implementation. As recommendations for future research, it is important to conduct further studies on the implementation of similar models in other madrasahs with different cultural backgrounds and explore the influence of local wisdom on other dimensions of student character development, such as leadership and work ethics.

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