



Local Cultural Wisdom in Islamic Religious Education: A Qualitative Case Study of Religious Moderation at UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in plural societies serves not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to provide a space for interpreting the relationship between religious commitment and sociocultural context. This study analyzes how local cultural wisdom is incorporated into PAI and how this incorporation is interpreted in relation to religious moderation at UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu, Pinrang Regency. A qualitative case study design was employed with three purposively selected participants: the principal, one PAI teacher, and one student. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document review and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive qualitative data-analysis model through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal three interrelated patterns: the institutional positioning of religion and local culture as complementary domains, teacher mediation linking local practices with Islamic ethical concepts, and experiential participation in religious and cultural activities. Local wisdom was more evident through P5 activities, religious routines, and school-based cultural practices than as a fully embedded component of formal PAI instruction. These findings suggest that local wisdom can function as a contextual bridge in PAI; however, they are specific to the studied case and do not demonstrate student attitude change or causal effectiveness. The study offers a provisional conceptual synthesis of the relationships among the school environment, teacher mediation, and experiential participation in religious moderation education.



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) in Indonesia operates within a socially and religiously plural educational environment. Its educational function therefore extends beyond the transmission of doctrinal knowledge to the formation of ethical dispositions that enable learners to maintain religious commitment while engaging constructively with social difference. Scholarship on Indonesian religious education has long emphasized the importance of peaceful coexistence and the role of school culture in addressing interreligious tensions (Parker 2014). More recent studies likewise show that religious education in public-school settings is closely connected with questions of tolerance, interreligious competence, and the capacity of students to live within a multireligious society (Utami 2022; Rahmat et al. 2025). Within this study, religious moderation is consequently understood as an educational orientation toward balanced religiosity, tolerance, nonviolence, social responsibility, and respectful coexistence rather than as a single measurable outcome.

The growing emphasis on religious moderation has generated an expanding literature on how these values are represented and enacted in Islamic education. At the junior-secondary level, Mulyana (2023) shows that moderation values are present in PAI textbooks and school implementation, but their educational significance depends on how they are translated into practice. Research involving PAI teachers also indicates that moderation is not transmitted only

through conceptual explanation; it is mediated through teachers' interpretations, classroom interaction, and the everyday pedagogical choices through which religious values are connected to social life (Muslih et al. 2024). Studies in secondary-school and multifaith settings further suggest that reflective, participatory, and lived forms of pedagogy can provide important spaces for students to encounter difference and interpret religious commitments in relation to social coexistence (Sihotang et al. 2024; Sufiani and Sumardona 2026). These findings support an understanding of moderation as a situated educational process whose meaning is shaped by curriculum, teachers, school culture, and students' experiences.

A culturally grounded approach is especially relevant in communities where religious learning takes place alongside enduring local traditions. Local wisdom can provide familiar social practices, symbols, narratives, and forms of cooperation through which abstract ethical and religious concepts become intelligible in students' lived environments. Evidence from Indonesian educational contexts shows that local cultural values can enter schooling through curriculum innovation, habituation, school programs, community-linked activities, and character education (Hasan, Monita, and Sukiman 2026; Yani et al. 2025; Asror et al. 2026). Research on Islamic religious education in culturally distinctive communities similarly demonstrates that indigenous practices can serve as vehicles for religious transmission when they are interpreted in relation to Islamic ethical meanings rather than treated as culturally neutral additions to instruction (Zulkarnain et al. 2026). This perspective is consistent with a context-responsive view of PAI in which local culture is neither automatically rejected nor uncritically equated with religious teaching, but pedagogically mediated.

The relationship between religious commitment, tolerance, and cultural contextualization also requires analytical caution. Inclusive and dialogical approaches to religious education may create opportunities for openness and respectful interaction, but the presence of religious or cultural activities alone does not establish that students' attitudes have changed. Recent Indonesian research has therefore increasingly distinguished between the normative aims of tolerance education and the concrete educational processes through which such aims are pursued (Faridi and Mardiana 2026; Supriadi et al. 2025). This distinction is particularly important for qualitative case studies, where the principal contribution lies in explaining how educational practices are organized, interpreted, and experienced within a bounded context rather than in estimating population-level effects.

Despite the growth of scholarship in this area, several gaps remain relevant to the present study. First, a substantial portion of the literature examines religious moderation through curriculum content, teacher perspectives, pedagogical interventions, or attitudinal outcomes, while comparatively less attention has been given to how formal PAI, school-based religious routines, cultural activities, and institutional practices interact within a single secondary-school case. Second, studies of local wisdom in Indonesian education have demonstrated its potential contribution to curriculum and character formation across different cultural settings, yet the specific pedagogical mechanism through which teachers connect local practices with Islamic ethical concepts is not always made explicit. Third, emerging research on religious moderation as lived pedagogy highlights the importance of examining everyday school practices, but context-rich evidence from secondary schools in locally distinctive communities remains limited (Sufiani and Sumardona 2026). These gaps indicate the need for case-based analysis that focuses on processes of mediation and meaning-making rather than assuming causal effects.

UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu, Pinrang Regency, provides a relevant setting for such analysis because the study records describe a school environment in which PAI, religious routines, P5 activities, and local cultural practices coexist. The local values documented in this study include cooperation, deliberation, togetherness, and social harmony, while school activities include Iqro', IMTAQ, Maulid-related activities, P5, and participation in community cultural practices. Rather than presuming that these activities automatically produce religious moderation, the present study examines how school actors position and interpret the relationship between Islamic teachings and local cultural meanings. This focus responds to calls for religious education that is attentive both to doctrinal integrity and to the social contexts in which students encounter religious and cultural diversity (Mulyana 2023; Utami 2022).

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how local cultural wisdom is incorporated into Islamic Religious Education at UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu and how this incorporation is interpreted in relation to religious moderation within the bounded school context. The inquiry is guided by three questions:

- 1) How is local cultural wisdom incorporated into Islamic Religious Education at UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu, Pinrang Regency?
- 2) How is this incorporation interpreted in relation to religious moderation within the studied case?
- 3) What roles do the PAI teacher and school-based practices play in mediating the relationship between Islamic teachings and local cultural practices?

The study contributes a context-sensitive account of the mechanisms through which religious and cultural meanings are brought into relation in a secondary-school setting. Its intended contribution is analytical rather than causal: it examines institutional positioning, teacher mediation, and experiential participation as case-specific processes that may

help explain how culturally responsive PAI is practiced. In doing so, the study extends discussion of religious moderation beyond curriculum content or generalized claims of effectiveness and toward a more precise examination of how moderation-related meanings are negotiated across formal learning and the wider school environment.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to examine how local cultural wisdom was incorporated into Islamic Religious Education and how this incorporation was interpreted in relation to students' religious moderation within a specific school and sociocultural setting. The case was bounded by UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu, Pinrang Regency, the June 2026 fieldwork period, and the formal learning and school-based religious and cultural activities included in the data collection. A case study design was appropriate because the study sought an in-depth, context-sensitive account of practices and meanings rather than population-level estimation.

The research was conducted at UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu, Pinrang Regency, in June 2026. The location was deliberately selected because the Mattiro Bulu community preserves the Wetu Telu Islamic tradition, which in the context of this study is associated with local-wisdom values such as intercommunity cooperation, deliberation, togetherness, and social harmony. This sociocultural setting therefore provided a relevant bounded context for examining the relationship between local culture and Islamic Religious Education.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling on the basis of their direct relevance to the case and research questions. The sample comprised one Islamic Religious Education teacher, the principal, and one student. The teacher contributed evidence concerning instructional practice, the principal provided an institutional and policy perspective, and the student contributed an experiential perspective on participation in local wisdom-based Islamic Religious Education. Purposive sampling is appropriate when participants are deliberately selected for their capacity to provide information relevant to the study aim (Campbell et al. 2020). In qualitative inquiry, sample adequacy is related not only to participant numbers but also to the specificity and relevance of the information available for the research aim (Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora 2016). Nevertheless, because only one participant represented each stakeholder role, this study does not claim statistical representativeness or data saturation; interpretations are deliberately restricted to this bounded case and are corroborated, where possible, with observational and documentary evidence.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document review. Interviews were conducted face-to-face for approximately 30–60 minutes using an interview guide that allowed focused exploration of participants' accounts while maintaining alignment with the research questions. Participant observation focused on classroom learning and cultural and religious activities, including begawé (traditional communal ceremonies) and Maulid celebrations; observed practices were documented through field notes and photographs. Documentary sources included the Islamic Religious Education syllabus, school records, student work, and archives of religious and cultural activities. These three sources were treated as complementary forms of evidence so that interview accounts could be examined alongside observed practices and institutional documents.

The research instruments consisted of a semi-structured interview guide and observation sheets developed with reference to character education theory and the religious moderation framework. The instruments focused on tolerance, nonviolence, patriotism, national commitment, and local-wisdom values, including cooperation, deliberation, and respect for cultural diversity. The instruments underwent expert content review to examine their relevance and alignment with the research objectives and theoretical indicators, consistent with the validation procedure reported in the study. Instrument development and expert review were aligned with Arifin's (2020) perspective on character education and the religious moderation framework proposed by Nurdin (2023). Because the available study records do not report a numerical content-validity coefficient or further quantitative validation results, the procedure is described as expert content review rather than quantified instrument validation.

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative data-analysis model of Miles and Huberman (1984), comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were reviewed and manually coded to identify units of meaning relevant to the research questions. Related codes were then organized into categories and recurring patterns concerning the integration of local wisdom and religious moderation. During data reduction, information directly relevant to the research questions was selected and organized; during data display, the reduced evidence was arranged in descriptive narratives and matrices to facilitate comparison across participants and data-collection techniques. Conclusions were developed iteratively and checked against the original interview, observational, and documentary evidence before being incorporated into the findings.

Data credibility was addressed through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation involved comparing information provided by the principal, Islamic Religious Education teacher, and student, whereas technique triangulation compared evidence obtained through interviews, observations, and

documentation. These sources were examined together during interpretation to assess the consistency and contextual meaning of the evidence. Member checking was conducted by confirming the accuracy of interpretations with participants. Ethical safeguards included voluntary consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of all informants throughout the research process.

Taken together, these procedures were used to strengthen the credibility and transparency of the case analysis. Given the small, role-specific sample and single-school setting, the findings are interpreted as context-bound analytic insights rather than as estimates that can be generalized to a wider student population.

RESULTS

The findings are presented as case-specific patterns derived from the accounts of the principal, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, and one student, considered alongside observational and documentary evidence. Consistent with the bounded qualitative design, the results are not intended to represent all students at the school. Across the available evidence, local wisdom was incorporated through a combination of religious routines, P5 activities, and participation in local cultural practices, with the clearest indications of integration occurring through school-based and experiential activities rather than as a fully embedded component of formal PAI instruction. Table 1 summarizes the activities, associated values, educational approaches, and reported or observed indications documented in this case.

Table 1. Case-Based Synthesis of Local-Wisdom-Related Activities at UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu, Pinrang Regency

Activity	Religious/Cultural Values	Educational Method	Indications
Weekly Iqro'	Social Responsibility (Ta'awun)	Peer-tutoring Mentoring	Empathy and Quranic literacy
Maulid Adat	Cultural Appreciation	Contextual Interviews and Writing	Critical thinking and Literacy
P5 Program	Mutual Cooperation (Gotong Royong)	Project-based learning	Tolerance and Social awareness
Routine IMTAQ	Spiritual Discipline	Collective Recitation and Public Speaking	Confidence and Moral character

Note. The final column summarizes indications reported by participants or recorded in the observational and documentary evidence available to this case; these entries should not be interpreted as independently measured student outcomes or causal effects.

1. Theme 1. Institutional Positioning of Religious Education and Local Cultural Wisdom

The principal participant described religious moderation as maintaining a balance between Islamic values and local community wisdom. In his account, religion and culture were treated as distinct but complementary elements in student character formation. Importantly, he stated that local wisdom was not directly integrated into formal classroom instruction; instead, it was given space mainly through school-based activities, including the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). This distinction indicates that, within this case, cultural integration operated primarily through the broader school experience rather than through a fully embedded formal PAI curriculum. The principal associated these activities with cooperation and mutual tolerance, while formal religious education remained oriented toward faith, morality, and ethical character.

Supporting school activities included the weekly Friday Iqro' program, in which peer tutoring enabled more proficient students to assist classmates, and the Maulid celebration, during which students interviewed community leaders and documented their findings in written articles. These practices provided concrete settings in which religious learning, social responsibility, and cultural participation were brought into relation. Because the present study did not measure changes in student attitudes quantitatively, these activities are interpreted as contextual opportunities for the expression and development of empathy, cooperation, and cultural appreciation rather than as evidence of measured effects.

2. Theme 2. Teacher Mediation Between Islamic Concepts and Local Cultural Practices

The PAI teacher participant described religious moderation in terms of harmonious social interaction that is responsive to the cultural conditions of the Mattiro Bulu community. Her account emphasized habituation through congregational prayer, religious study sessions, and the weekly IMTAQ program, alongside participation in local traditions such as begawé. In this case, the teacher's role extended beyond the delivery of religious content to mediating the relationship between Islamic teachings and the students' cultural environment. The combination of religious routines and cultural participation was presented as a way of maintaining religious commitment while acknowledging local cultural identity.

A central example was the connection between cooperation in begawé and the Islamic principle of ta'awun (mutual assistance). The teacher used this conceptual link to explain that local practices may be understood in relation to Islamic ethical values rather than automatically positioned as contradictory to them. Observational evidence reported

in the study was consistent with this account, indicating continued student participation in religious practices while remaining involved in cultural activities. Taken together, the interview and observational evidence indicate a mediating pedagogical practice within this case; however, they do not establish that the approach produced the same attitudinal outcomes for the wider student population.

3. Theme 3. The Student Participant's Experiential Interpretation of PAI and Local Culture

The student participant described PAI lessons as practical guidance for daily life and viewed the connection between religious learning and local cultural practices as meaningful. Her participation in activities such as Maulid Adat provided an experiential context for understanding togetherness and tolerance. In her account, inherited cultural practices were not perceived as separate from religious learning; rather, participation in these activities helped her relate local values to Islamic teachings. Given that this perspective was provided by a single student participant, it is presented as an individual experiential account rather than as a representation of all students.

The student's account also indicated that linking classroom teachings to social practices, including collective work associated with ta'awun, broadened her understanding of religion beyond ritual observance toward social conduct, openness, and respect for cultural traditions. When read together with the principal's and teacher's accounts, as well as the documented school activities, this perspective supports a case-specific pattern in which experiential participation serves as a bridge between religious concepts and local cultural meaning. The evidence therefore suggests a potential contribution of this approach to moderate religious character within the studied setting, while the limited participant structure does not permit claims about prevalence, magnitude of change, or causal effectiveness.

Cross-Source Synthesis of the Findings

Across the three role-specific accounts and the supporting observational and documentary evidence, three convergent patterns were identified: (1) religion and local culture were positioned as complementary but not fully merged in formal PAI instruction; (2) the teacher functioned as a mediator by linking local practices such as begawé with Islamic concepts such as ta'awun; and (3) experiential school and cultural activities provided a context in which religious and cultural meanings could be connected. The evidence is strongest for describing how integration was practiced and interpreted within the school, rather than for demonstrating measurable changes in tolerance, confidence, critical thinking, or other student outcomes. Accordingly, the indications summarized in Table 1 are interpreted as context-bound patterns within this case, not as independently measured effects.

DISCUSSION

1. Religious Moderation as a Whole-School, Context-Bound Educational Process

The findings suggest that religious moderation in this case is better understood as a whole-school, context-bound educational process than as an outcome attributable to formal PAI instruction alone. Local wisdom was most visible through P5 activities, religious routines, peer-supported practices, and participation in cultural events, while the principal explicitly distinguished these activities from direct integration into the formal PAI curriculum. This pattern is consistent with the whole-school perspective proposed for tolerance education in Indonesia, in which curriculum, leadership, school culture, student activities, and community relations operate together rather than independently (Raihani 2011). Indonesian studies of multicultural citizenship likewise show that school-level practices and institutional culture are important sites where tolerance and plural citizenship are negotiated (Hoon 2013; Raihani 2018). From this perspective, the present case contributes evidence about how religious and cultural meanings may be coordinated across the wider school environment, but it does not establish population-level effects on students' attitudes.

Within that broader ecology, formal PAI retained a normative role centered on faith, worship, morality, and ethical conduct, while local cultural activities provided social contexts in which those values could be interpreted and enacted. This distinction is important because culturally grounded religious education need not imply the dilution of religious commitment. Rather, pluralistic Islamic religious education can maintain principled religious commitments while cultivating openness, cooperation, and constructive engagement with difference (Mu'ti 2023). This interpretation also resonates with Banks's (2008) argument that education for citizenship in diverse societies must connect common civic commitments with recognition of learners' cultural identities. In the present study, however, these relationships should be read as interpretive patterns within a single school rather than as demonstrated changes in students' religious moderation.

The theological links used in the school also provide an internal rationale for the relationship between religious commitment and social responsibility. In this regard, QS. Luqman: 17 is used as a normative reference linking worship, moral action, and perseverance:

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

Meaning: "O my son, establish prayer, command what is good and forbid what is wrong, and be patient with what befalls you. Indeed, that is among the matters requiring determination." (QS. Luqman: 17)

Within this discussion, the verse is treated as a theological and normative resource for interpreting educational practice rather than as empirical evidence that the observed activities produced particular student outcomes. This distinction between theological justification and empirical inference maintains the analytical consistency of the case interpretation.

2. Local Cultural Wisdom as Contextual and Culturally Responsive Mediation

A central mechanism emerging from the case is teacher-mediated contextualization. The PAI teacher connected cooperation in *begawé* with the Islamic concept of *ta'awun*, thereby translating a familiar community practice into an ethical-religious frame. This type of pedagogical mediation is compatible with culturally relevant and culturally responsive approaches, which treat learners' cultural knowledge and community practices as resources for making academic and moral content meaningful (Ladson-Billings 1995; Morrison, Robbins, and Rose 2008; Gay 2015; Aronson and Laughter 2016). The significance of the practice in this case lies not in equating every local tradition with Islamic teaching, but in creating an interpretive bridge through which selected cultural practices can be examined in relation to religious principles. The teacher's use of *ta'awun* is also grounded in QS. Al-Ma'idah: 2, which provides a scriptural reference for cooperation in righteousness:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

Meaning: "...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..." (QS. Al-Ma'idah: 2)

In the present case, this verse functions as a theological frame for the teacher's interpretation of cooperative local practices such as *begawé* through the ethical concept of *ta'awun*. Its role is normative and interpretive; it should not be taken as evidence that participation in these practices caused measurable changes in students' attitudes.

At the same time, the findings indicate that the integration remained partial: local wisdom was more evident in school-based and experiential activities than as a systematically embedded component of formal PAI instruction. This qualification is theoretically important. Culturally sustaining pedagogy emphasizes not merely using culture as an illustrative device but sustaining meaningful cultural practices within educational processes (Paris 2012). Accordingly, the evidence here is better described as context-responsive mediation than as comprehensive curriculum integration. Recent research on Islamic education in a plural Indonesian setting similarly highlights teacher pedagogical agency and context-sensitive curriculum enactment as key mediating processes, while also noting tensions between transformative aims and established instructional habits (Ahmad and Soeparwati 2026).

3. Experiential Participation, Tolerance, and Cultural Identity: Interpretive Rather Than Causal Evidence

The student participant's account suggests that participation in Maulid Adat and collective activities offered an experiential context for relating Islamic learning to togetherness, social conduct, and respect for cultural traditions. This interpretation is broadly consistent with research showing that school environments which acknowledge cultural plurality and promote inclusion can support more positive adjustment and intergroup orientations (Schachner et al. 2016), and that multicultural education may contribute to more positive inter-ethnic attitudes by increasing cultural understanding and establishing inclusive social norms (Verkuyten and Thijs 2013). These external studies provide plausible interpretive lenses, but they do not convert the present qualitative evidence into proof of attitude change.

Similarly, intergroup-contact research indicates that cooperative interaction can reduce prejudice under appropriate conditions (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Yet the present study neither measured intergroup contact conditions nor assessed pre-post changes in tolerance. The student's account and the observed school activities therefore support only a cautious proposition: experiential and cooperative activities may provide opportunities for practicing values associated with moderation, rather than evidence that they caused increases in tolerance, confidence, motivation, or critical thinking. This distinction is especially important because reviews of prejudice-reduction interventions show that educational effects vary by design, context, implementation, and the quality of evidence (Paluck and Green 2009).

4. Institutional and Pedagogical Boundary Conditions

The reported constraints, including standardized curriculum requirements, limited teaching resources, and scheduling tensions between school and cultural activities, should not be treated as peripheral implementation problems. They help explain why local wisdom in this case was more visible in P5 and school-based activities than in formal PAI instruction. Raihani (2018) similarly identifies gaps between multicultural education policy and school-level practice in Indonesia, while Gay (2015) emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching must be adapted to local institutional, demographic, and pedagogical conditions. The present findings therefore point to the need for coordination among

curriculum planning, teacher decision-making, school leadership, and community-linked activities if cultural contextualization is to become more coherent rather than episodic.

A second boundary condition concerns the need for critical selection rather than romanticization of local culture. Local wisdom can be pedagogically valuable because it offers socially recognizable examples, but its educational use still requires reflection on theological compatibility, ethical implications, and inclusiveness. The task of the PAI teacher is therefore not simply to preserve cultural practices, but to mediate them critically in relation to Islamic principles and the educational goals of tolerance and responsible citizenship. This position is consistent with culturally relevant education, which combines cultural recognition with academic, ethical, and critical purposes rather than treating culture as a decorative addition to instruction (Ladson-Billings 1995; Aronson and Laughter 2016).

5. Broader Relevance and the Limits of Claims About Extremism

The broader relevance of these findings lies in the possibility that contextually grounded religious education can create educational spaces for discussing commitment, difference, cooperation, and social responsibility. However, this study did not examine radicalization, extremist beliefs, or behavioral resilience to extremism. Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as demonstrating that local-wisdom-based PAI prevents extremism. Scholarship on education and extremism argues that schools may contribute to resilience through critical engagement, dialogue, citizenship, and the capacity to interrogate political or religious messages, but such contributions are complex and cannot be inferred from religious or cultural participation alone (Davies 2009).

Within the Indonesian context, the present case is more defensibly connected to the literature on pluralistic religious education, multicultural citizenship, and whole-school tolerance than to direct claims of counter-extremism (Raihani 2011; Hoon 2013; Mu'ti 2023). Overall, the evidence supports a case-specific interpretive model comprising three interacting processes: a whole-school environment that provides religious and cultural experiences, teacher mediation that links selected local practices to Islamic ethical concepts, and experiential participation through which religious and cultural meanings may be connected. Figure 1 should therefore be read as a conceptual synthesis of the mechanisms identified in this case, not as a tested causal model or a validated prediction of student outcomes. Its elements concerning tolerance, identity, and resilience represent analytically plausible educational orientations that require further investigation with broader participant groups and designs capable of examining change over time.

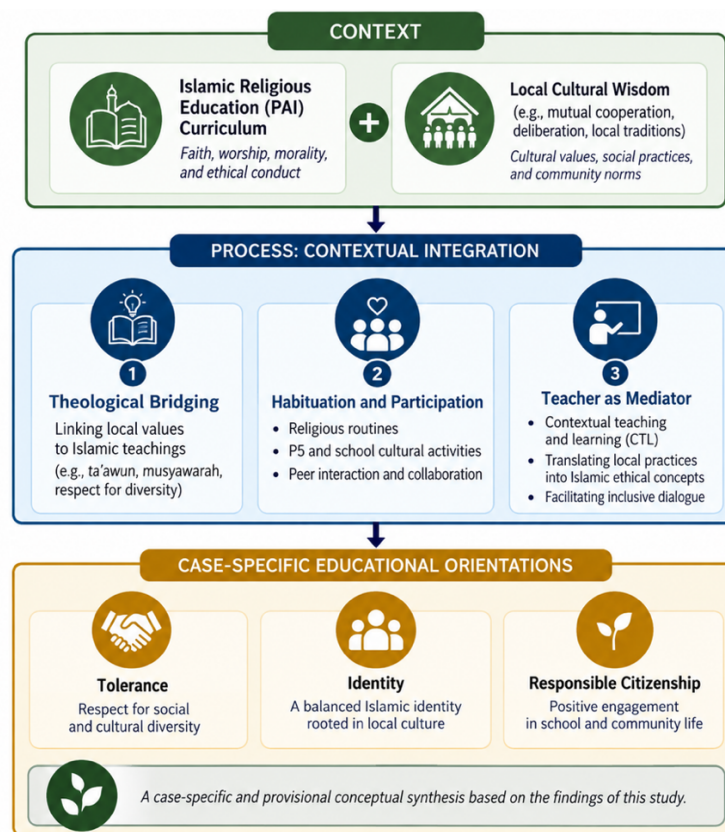


Figure 1. Provisional Conceptual Synthesis of Local Cultural Wisdom in Islamic Religious Education and Religious Moderation in the Studied Case.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study suggests that, within the bounded setting of UPT SMP Negeri 1 Mattiro Bulu, local cultural wisdom is incorporated into Islamic Religious Education primarily through a broader school-based educational ecology rather than through a fully embedded formal PAI curriculum. The evidence indicates three interrelated processes: institutional positioning of religion and local culture as complementary domains, teacher mediation that connects selected local practices with Islamic ethical concepts, and experiential participation in religious and cultural activities. These findings describe how integration was practiced and interpreted in this case; they do not demonstrate population-level changes in students' religious moderation.

The main conceptual contribution of the study is therefore best understood as a context-derived synthesis rather than a validated causal model. In this case, local wisdom functioned as a contextual bridge through which religious concepts could be related to familiar social practices, while formal PAI retained its normative emphasis on faith, worship, morality, and ethical conduct. The principal's, teacher's, and student participant's accounts, considered together with observational and documentary evidence, suggest that moderation-related meanings were negotiated across formal learning, P5 activities, religious routines, peer-supported practices, and cultural participation. Figure 1 should consequently be interpreted as a provisional conceptual representation of these case-specific relationships, not as a tested model of student outcomes.

Practically, the findings point to the importance of coordination among PAI instruction, school leadership, P5 activities, religious routines, and community-linked cultural practices when schools seek to contextualize religious education. The teacher's mediating role is particularly important because local traditions require critical interpretation in relation to Islamic principles, educational aims, and inclusiveness rather than automatic acceptance as religiously equivalent practices. In this sense, the case illustrates the potential value of culturally responsive mediation while also showing that cultural contextualization may remain episodic when curriculum space, teaching resources, and scheduling are limited.

Several limitations define the scope of these conclusions. The study involved only three role-specific participants: one principal, one Islamic Religious Education teacher, and one student within a single school and therefore does not claim representativeness or data saturation. The evidence was designed to provide an in-depth account of practices and meanings rather than to measure the prevalence or magnitude of attitudinal change. No quantitative, pre-post, or longitudinal measures were used to assess changes in tolerance, confidence, motivation, critical thinking, or other student outcomes, and the design does not support causal claims about effectiveness. In addition, the study did not examine radicalization, extremist beliefs, or resilience to extremism; broader claims in those areas would require different data and research designs.

Future research should extend this inquiry through multi-site case studies involving a broader range of students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and community actors in culturally diverse settings. Longitudinal and mixed-methods designs could examine whether and how the processes identified here are associated with changes in religious moderation over time, while comparative studies could test the transferability of the provisional framework across schools and regions. Within its stated boundaries, this study offers a context-sensitive account of how Islamic Religious Education, teacher mediation, and local cultural participation may be brought into constructive relationship, providing a basis for further investigation rather than a generalizable claim of effectiveness.

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