

The Nature of Culture as the Strength and Stability of Society: The Perspective of Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract. Culture is the main foundation that becomes strength and stability for society, because it contains values, norms, and traditions that form a collective identity. From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), culture is seen as a strategic means to internalize Islamic values that support the creation of social and spiritual harmony. PAI plays a role in combining religious values with local cultural elements to build a society with character, ethics, and justice. In this context, culture is not only a heritage, but also a learning medium to strengthen solidarity, increase awareness of the importance of diversity, and maintain social stability. Thus, the synergy between culture and Islamic Religious Education is able to create a society that is based on noble values and resistant to the challenges of the times.

Keywords Culture, Community Stability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is one of the fundamental aspects of human life that reflects the way of thinking, acting, and living together in a society. In this context, culture has two sides: as a social identity and as a driving force to build social stability. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014) Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strong relevance in understanding culture because Islam recognizes the importance of culture as a medium for conveying divine values. Islam as a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin does not separate spiritual life from social life, including culture. (Taufiqurrahman, 2021) As part of Islamic teachings, PAI values provide direction for culture to become a da'wah medium that prioritizes the principles of humanity, justice, and tolerance. This shows that culture has the potential to become an integration force in society.

However, in social reality, it is not uncommon for culture to be used as a tool to create social segregation and conflict. This challenge shows the need for an in-depth study of how culture can be directed to create harmony. PAI's perspective offers an educational approach based on universal Islamic values to make culture a pillar of community stability. (Yahya, 2021) In the Indonesian context, local culture and religion often interact with each other. Many local traditions have been Islamized, such as the Maulid and tahlilan traditions, which reflect the adaptation of Islamic values in the local culture. This harmony shows that Islam and culture can go hand in hand, enrich each other, and strengthen the stability of society. (Arifin, 2021).

Islamic Religious Education, as a formal learning instrument, has the responsibility to integrate cultural understanding in the learning process. (Fauzi, 2021). Thus, students can understand the essence of culture as a moral and spiritual asset that supports the creation of a stable and peaceful society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture is the result of human creation, taste, and karsa that reflect the identity and way of life of a society. Koentjaraningrat defines culture as the entire system of ideas, actions, and human works in people's lives that are inherited from generation to generation. In the Islamic perspective, culture is seen as an expression of human beings in processing religious values into norms of daily life, so that culture not only reflects traditions, but also spiritual values. (Ismail, 2021).

Islam sees culture as a means to realize the values of monotheism, noble morals, and social justice. The Qur'an and hadith provide a foundation on the importance of respecting local culture as long as it does not contradict the sharia. Local traditions that are in harmony with Islamic values can be a medium for practicing religion that strengthens faith, such as the tradition of feasts or tahlilan that foster a sense of brotherhood. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has an important role in internalizing Islamic values into the culture of the community. (Mujib, 2015) PAI is a strategic instrument to integrate religious teachings with local traditions, so as to create a religious and civilized society. The Islamic values taught in PAI, such as honesty, compassion, and responsibility, can be applied in local culture as a tangible manifestation of the implementation of Islamic teachings.

Culture has a strategic function in education, especially in shaping the character and personality of the community. In Islam, education is not only limited to formal learning, but also includes cultural experiences that involve moral and spiritual values. Cultural traditions, such as gotong royong or the Prophet's Birthday, are an effective means of character education because their values are easy to understand and apply in daily life. (Abdullah, 2017) Islamic values provide direction for cultural development. In local traditions, values such as justice, honesty, and compassion are often reflected through social practices that strengthen community solidarity. The Islamic perspective directs that culture is not only a social identity, but also a religious identity that fosters social harmony. (Arifin, 2018).

Islamic culture based on religious values can be a strong social glue. Traditions that prioritize togetherness, such as mutual cooperation, have proven to be effective in preventing conflicts and creating social stability. The Islamic perspective views culture as a tool that is able to unite society within the framework of universal values, such as justice and brotherhood. Culture also functions as a means of da'wah that introduces universal Islamic values. (Azra, 2019) In Islam, culture does not contradict religious teachings as long as it remains based on monotheism. History records how local culture is often adapted to be part of Islamic traditions, such as in art, music, and architecture. This shows the flexibility of Islam in embracing cultural diversity. As a support for social life, culture provides identity and structure for society. From an Islamic perspective, culture based on religious values is able to create a harmonious, stable, and just society. Islamic traditions, such as feasts or grave pilgrimages, not only strengthen relationships between individuals, but also build a collective awareness of the importance of practicing religious teachings in daily life. However, culture faces great challenges in the modern era. (Majid, 2020) Globalization has brought a significant influence on local culture, so many traditions have begun to be abandoned because they are considered irrelevant. In this context, the PAI perspective offers an approach to preserving culture by providing an understanding that culture is an asset that can reinforce Islamic values, not something that should be ignored.

Local traditions are also an effective medium for da'wah. Religious values that are internalized in local culture are often easier for people to accept because they have a deep emotional meaning. (Hendra, 2023) For example, the tradition of earth alms or certain traditional ceremonies that are aligned with Islamic teachings can be a means to convey religious messages in a more inclusive way. Islamic Religious Education places culture as an important means of character formation. Through the introduction of local traditions that align with Islamic values, students are taught to appreciate cultural heritage as part of their religious identity. (Huda, 2021) This also helps to create a young generation who not only understand religious teachings theoretically, but are also able to apply them in social life.

Culture plays an important role in building social solidarity. Traditions such as mutual cooperation, kenduri, or other religious activities reflect how Islamic values are applied in the context of togetherness and mutual assistance. This tradition not only strengthens relationships between individuals, but also creates a sense of collective responsibility in society. (Dianto, 2022) In the context of globalization, local culture must be able to adapt to modernity without losing its basic values. PAI's perspective teaches the importance of maintaining a balance between adaptation to modernity and the preservation

of cultural values that are in harmony with Islamic teachings. This ensures that culture remains relevant as well as strengthening the Islamic identity of the community.

Islamic-based multicultural education makes a great contribution in creating a society that respects cultural diversity. (Zulhimma, 2023) With this approach, students are taught to understand that respecting other cultures does not mean abandoning Islamic identity, but rather being part of the implementation of Islamic teachings on tolerance and rahmatan lil 'alamin. In Islam, culture is seen as an asset that connects spiritual and social aspects. Islamic traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation not only strengthen faith, but also foster a sense of togetherness in society. Culture is an effective tool to maintain social harmony while strengthening the practice of religion in daily life.

Islam views culture as something dynamic and constantly evolving. As long as the basic principles of Islam, such as monotheism and noble morals, are maintained, culture can be a force to build a stable and harmonious society. This perspective ensures that culture remains relevant as part of the identity of Islamic society in the midst of the challenges of the times.

3. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analytical method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies on communities that practice cultural traditions with Islamic values. Respondents consisted of religious leaders, community leaders, and individuals who are active in Islamic cultural activities. The data obtained were analyzed inductively to understand the role of culture as the strength and stability of society from the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time so that the research results can describe relevant and representative empirical conditions.

4. RESULTS

A. Culture as a Media of Moral Education

Traditions such as the Prophet's Birthday and earth alms have proven to be effective in instilling moral values in society. This study finds that culture has a strategic role as a moral education medium in society. Cultural traditions based on noble values such as gotong royong, kenduri, or traditional ceremonies reflect moral practices that can be instilled in the younger generation. Values such as honesty, a sense of responsibility,

and mutual help are at the core of various cultural activities that are still preserved. This shows that culture is not just a symbol, but also a means to build the character of individuals and society. From an Islamic perspective, local culture that does not contradict sharia can be an effective instrument of da'wah. Traditions such as the Prophet's Birthday or the commemoration of Islamic holidays are often used to convey moral messages to the community in an inclusive manner. This study found that cultural activities involving religious values are more acceptable because they provide a deep emotional experience, so that moral messages can be absorbed naturally.

The results of observations show that children who are involved in Islamic cultural activities tend to have a better moral understanding. For example, the tradition of mutual cooperation teaches the value of cooperation, while the tradition of tahlilan fosters a sense of empathy and social solidarity. Parents and community leaders play an important role in introducing this tradition to children, so that culture becomes an effective medium of moral education from an early age. Culture also functions as a reinforcement of people's moral identity. This study found that people who are active in preserving Islamic cultural traditions have a higher level of solidarity. This tradition not only strengthens social relationships, but also forms a common moral framework that guides daily life. Values such as mutual respect, justice, and compassion are often reflected in various local traditions.

However, the challenges of globalization have begun to shift the role of culture as a medium of moral education. Some local traditions began to be abandoned because they were considered outdated. This research notes that the younger generation is more interested in modern culture which tends to be individualistic. This raises concerns about the loss of moral values that have been inherited through tradition. In this context, religious education plays a role as a bridge to revitalize culture as a means of moral learning.

Through interviews with community leaders and educators, it was found that collaboration between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and local cultural traditions can be a solution to overcome these challenges. For example, integrating cultural values into the PAI curriculum can help students understand the importance of morality in everyday life. In addition, the use of culture-based methods, such as drama or traditional arts, is considered effective in conveying moral messages that are relevant to the social conditions of the community.

This study also shows that moral education through culture is more effective if it involves active participation of the community. Traditions such as feasts or other religious activities become a means of social interaction that strengthens moral values. This activity also creates a space for individuals to learn directly about the applicable social norms. Thus, culture becomes a tool of moral education that is collective and sustainable.

This research reveals that culture has great potential as a medium of moral education, especially in the context of a religious society. Local traditions that are in harmony with Islamic values can be a learning medium that connects spiritual and social aspects. To maximize this potential, synergistic efforts are needed between religious leaders, educators, and the community to preserve culture and ensure that moral values remain relevant and applied in daily life.

B. Social Stability through Islamic Culture

Traditional activities that breathe Islam are able to create social harmony and prevent conflicts. The results of the study show that Islamic culture has a significant contribution in creating social stability in society. Islamic traditions based on religious values, such as mutual cooperation, maulid traditions, or tahlilan, act as social glue that strengthens solidarity and cohesion among members of society. These activities create a space of interaction that supports communication, understanding, and cooperation between individuals and groups. In the context of daily life, Islamic traditions are often a vehicle for building social harmony. For example, the kenduri tradition not only functions as a symbol of togetherness but also as a medium for resolving conflicts peacefully. This research finds that through Islamic culture, it is easier for people to build relationships based on the values of mutual respect and affection, so that potential conflicts can be suppressed.

Islamic culture also has an important role in building collective awareness of the importance of norms and values that support social stability. Traditions such as grave pilgrimages or routine recitation instill moral and ethical values that serve as guidelines for the community. These values create a more orderly social system and prevent actions that damage the social order. In addition, this study found that Islamic culture is a means to create a sense of collective responsibility. Traditions such as mutual cooperation in building public facilities or helping neighbors in need reflect how Islamic culture encourages community members to contribute to creating common prosperity. This

activity not only strengthens social relationships but also increases a sense of belonging to the community.

However, challenges to social stability through Islamic culture also arise along with modernization and globalization. This study found that some local Islamic traditions are beginning to be abandoned by the younger generation because they are considered irrelevant or too traditional. This raises concerns about the fading of the values of togetherness that have been the foundation of social stability. In response to these challenges, religious leaders and the community use Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a medium to maintain the existence of Islamic culture. This study shows that teaching that integrates Islamic local cultural values with religious teachings is able to build a new awareness among the younger generation about the importance of culture in creating social harmony. The PAI curriculum based on local wisdom is a strategic step to overcome the gap between generations. In further discussion, it was found that Islamic culture is also able to reduce social inequality by creating a sense of justice in society. Traditions such as zakat, alms, and waqf not only have a spiritual dimension but also a social dimension that is able to overcome economic disparities. This activity builds solidarity between more privileged groups and those in need, so that social stability can be realized.

This research also highlights the importance of the involvement of all parties in maintaining Islamic culture as a pillar of social stability. Collaboration between religious leaders, educators, the government, and the community is the key to ensuring that Islamic culture remains relevant and makes a positive contribution to social life. Islamic cultural activities that are integrated with community development programs create synergies that strengthen social harmony. Thus, the results of this study underline that Islamic culture is not just a symbol or tradition, but also a real force in creating social stability. The values contained in it, such as justice, togetherness, and compassion, are the foundation for building a harmonious society. Efforts to preserve and develop Islamic culture through education and social programs are a strategic step to answer the challenges of the times without leaving the religious and social identity of the community.

C. Challenges in the Integration of Culture and Islam

Despite its many benefits, there is resistance from some groups who consider local culture to be contrary to the teachings of Islam. The results of this study show that the integration between culture and Islam faces a number of challenges stemming from social dynamics, globalization, and differences in the interpretation of religious

teachings. One of the main challenges is the emergence of views that consider local culture to be contrary to the teachings of Islam. Some traditions, such as certain traditional ceremonies or rituals, are often viewed as heresy by some groups, thus creating resistance to their preservation. In a pluralistic society, the integration between culture and Islam often faces challenges in the form of value conflicts. The study found that long-running cultural traditions, such as traditional dance or music, are sometimes considered less Islamic because they contain elements that are not explicitly mentioned in religious teachings. This creates a dilemma between preserving culture and maintaining the purity of Islamic law.

Globalization is also a major challenge in this integration. The increasingly massive flow of information and foreign culture causes the younger generation to tend to abandon local cultures that have Islamic values. This study notes that modernization often makes local traditions look outdated, resulting in a shift in values that threatens the sustainability of cultural and Islamic integration. In addition, differences in the interpretation of Islamic teachings between schools are also a challenge. In some cases, local cultural practices that are not actually at odds with Islam are rejected in favor of more conservative interpretations of the religion. The study found that these differences in views often create tension in society, especially between the older generation who maintain the tradition and the younger generation who have a more critical view of the tradition.

Another challenge is the lack of public understanding of the importance of cultural integration and Islam. Many individuals see the two as separate entities, thus not realizing that local traditions can be a medium to reinforce Islamic values. This study shows that religious education that underemphasizes the relationship between culture and Islam is one of the main causes of this lack of awareness. The context of urbanization also affects the sustainability of cultural and Islamic integration. This study notes that in urban areas, communities tend to be more individualistic and less involved in cultural traditions that are collective. This has an impact on the decline in participation in Islamic traditions which have been a medium for the spread of religious values in society. In the context of education, it was found that the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum has not fully accommodated local values. Many schools focus more on theoretical teachings without linking them to cultural practices in society. This causes students not to understand how local traditions can be part of the implementation of Islamic values in daily life.

The study also found that government policies related to cultural preservation are often not in line with Islamic values. For example, some cultural preservation programs tend to prioritize commercial aspects over educational or religious values. This creates a gap between the goal of cultural preservation and the strengthening of religious values in society.

Another challenge is the lack of religious leaders who understand local culture in depth. This research shows that some religious leaders focus more on the doctrinal aspect without paying attention to the cultural context of the local community. As a result, many local traditions that have the potential to become da'wah media are abandoned due to a lack of support from religious leaders.

To address these challenges, an integrative and inclusive approach is needed. This study recommends strengthening the role of religious leaders and cultural experts in aligning local cultural values with Islamic teachings. This collaboration can lead to a broader understanding of how local traditions can be an effective medium for spreading Islamic values. In addition, religious education needs to be designed to integrate local cultural values. The study notes that students who are taught about Islamic cultural traditions tend to have a better understanding of how religious values can be applied in daily life. This approach also helps preserve local traditions while strengthening the Islamic identity of the younger generation.

Overall, this study reveals that although the challenges in the integration of culture and Islam are quite complex, solutions can be found through collaboration between various parties, including religious leaders, educators, governments, and communities. With the right approach, local culture can continue to function as an effective medium to strengthen Islamic values while maintaining the social and cultural integrity of the community.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Culture as a Tool of Moral Education

The results of the study confirm that Islamic culture has a strategic role in educating the younger generation about moral values. Traditions such as the Prophet's Birthday and tahlilan are not only a means of moral education, but also build the religious identity of the community. These findings support the theory of Taufiqurrahman (2021) which emphasizes the importance of adapting Islamic values in local culture. However,

globalization is the main challenge that requires collaboration between PAI and community leaders to revitalize tradition as a means of learning.

B. Islamic Culture and Social Stability

Islamic culture functions as a social glue that strengthens relationships between individuals and creates harmony. Traditions such as feasts are a concrete example of how the values of affection and mutual respect can be applied. This is in line with Azra's (2019) view that Islamic culture is able to prevent social conflicts. In this context, it is important to involve the younger generation in Islamic cultural activities through the PAI curriculum that is relevant to modern needs.

C. Overcoming the Challenges of Cultural and Islamic Integration

The challenges of cultural and Islamic integration, such as resistance to local traditions and the influence of globalization, demand a more inclusive approach. This research emphasizes the importance of the role of religious leaders in supporting local traditions that are in line with Islamic values. These findings support Hendra's (2023) view that local culture can be an effective da'wah medium. In addition, local culture-based education can help the younger generation understand the relevance of tradition in building morality and social stability.

6. CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the results of the research and discussion shows that Islamic culture has a strategic role in creating social stability, strengthening moral values, and becoming an effective medium in educating the public about Islamic values. However, the integration between culture and Islam faces various challenges, such as differences in religious interpretation, the influence of globalization, and a lack of support from education and comprehensive policies. To answer this challenge, an inclusive approach is needed through collaboration between religious leaders, cultural experts, educators, and the government in preserving Islamic traditions that are relevant to the needs of modern society. Thus, Islamic culture not only functions as a social identity but also as a force to create harmony and sustainability of religious values in people's lives.

7. LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that can affect the scope and generalization of the results:

a) Limitations of Respondents and Research Locations

This research is focused on communities that practice Islamic cultural traditions in certain regions, so the results may not fully describe the variations of Islamic culture in other regions.

b) Limitations of Qualitative Data

A qualitative approach with in-depth interviews and participatory observations results in context-rich findings, but the results depend on the researcher's interpretation and cannot always be generalized to a broader population.

c) Limitations on Cultural Perspectives

This research focuses on Islamic traditions that are relevant to the values of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), so aspects of local culture that are not directly related to PAI may be less explored.

d) The Influence of Modernization and Globalization

The challenges of the influence of globalization and modernization mentioned in the study cannot be analyzed in depth due to the limitations of time and scope of the research. This makes the research results not fully reflect the broader socio-cultural dynamics.

e) Limitations in Educational Approach

This study has not directly integrated the influence of formal education policies related to the preservation of Islamic cultural traditions. This is an obstacle in providing more comprehensive recommendations for Islamic-based multicultural education.

f) Impact of Limitations

These limitations affect the generalization of research results, especially in the context of the application of Islamic traditions in modern societies that are increasingly complex. Nevertheless, these findings still provide important insights into the synergy between culture and PAI in creating social harmony and moral education.

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