



Islam and Local Wisdom: A Literature Review on the Relationship Between Culture and Religion in Indonesia

Heru Purwoyuliyanto¹, Kasori Mujahid²

Institut Islam Maba'ul Ulum Surakarta ^{1,2}

e-mail: herupurwo4@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between Islam and local wisdom, focusing on their interaction and mutual influence in the context of Indonesia. Islam, as a universal religion, demonstrates an extraordinary ability to adapt to various local cultures, making it an integral part of the social and cultural life of society. Local wisdom, which encompasses traditional values and practices, often serves as a medium to introduce and reinforce Islamic teachings. However, there is ongoing debate regarding the balance between preserving local wisdom and upholding pure Islamic law. This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze relevant literature on this relationship. The findings indicate that Islam can adapt to local cultures without compromising the essence of its teachings, creating harmony in various traditions and social practices. Challenges arise in maintaining the balance between cultural acculturation and the application of Islamic teachings. This study also highlights the strategic role of Islam and local wisdom in preserving cultural identity amid globalization, as well as the importance of deeper studies to address future social, cultural, and spiritual challenges.

Keywords: Islam, Local Wisdom, Cultural Adaptation, Cultural Harmony.

INTRODUCTION

Islam, as a universal religion, has an extraordinary ability to adapt to various local cultures worldwide (Luthfi, 2016). From the very beginning of its spread, Islam has not only been a system of faith but also a force capable of integrating with various traditions, customs, and local wisdom. This phenomenon can be observed in many regions, such as Indonesia, which is known for its cultural diversity and peaceful acceptance of Islam. This process of adaptation has made Islam not just a religion but an integral part of the social and cultural life of local communities.

According to (Faiz & Soleh, 2021), local wisdom is part of the cultural identity of a community, passed down from generation to generation. This wisdom encompasses values, norms, and practices that have developed based on the collective experience of a society in facing life's challenges. In the context of Islam, local wisdom is often seen as a medium for strengthening religious values through a more contextual and relevant approach for the community. The dynamic relationship between Islam and local wisdom does not always proceed smoothly. In some cases, there is a debate between efforts to preserve

local wisdom and the enforcement of pure Islamic law. Some view the implementation of Islam within local wisdom as something that can be done, while others see these two as conflicting (Rajafi, 2016). This raises profound questions about how Islam views local wisdom and how local wisdom can contribute to the strengthening of Islamic values.

A literature study on the relationship between culture and religion in Islam becomes essential to understand how these two elements can mutually support each other. This approach not only provides a historical overview of the interaction between Islam and local cultures but also offers a new perspective on how harmony between religion and culture can be achieved in the modern era. This research aims to explore relevant literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Islam and local wisdom, as well as its implications in the life of society.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze the relationship between Islam and local wisdom. This method was chosen due to its ability to systematically identify, filter, and analyze relevant literature from trusted sources, such as academic journals, books, research reports, and other related documents (Marwantika, 2021). The process begins with a literature search using related keywords such as "Islam and local wisdom," "local culture in Islam," and "interaction between Islam and local culture," conducted across various academic databases like Google Scholar and JSTOR.

Next, the found literature is selected using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, where relevant and up-to-date literature is chosen, while irrelevant or outdated sources are excluded. A critical analysis is conducted to identify key themes related to the interaction between Islam and local culture. This analysis aims to find consistent patterns or relationships, as well as evaluate the quality and credibility of each source. A thematic approach is employed to group the data based on emerging themes such as tolerance, cultural adaptation, and the integration of local values with Islamic principles. Source triangulation is performed to ensure the validity and relevance of the findings by comparing results from different literature sources. From the analysis results, a synthesis of findings is conducted to provide an in-depth understanding of the research topic, as well as identify research gaps and provide recommendations for further studies. The SLR method allows this research to offer a structured insight into the relationship between Islam and local wisdom in society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The relationship between Islam and local wisdom has been dynamic and mutually influential throughout the history of Islamic civilization. This

relationship reflects how Islam not only serves as a religion that governs faith and worship but also as a social and cultural force capable of interacting with and adapting to various traditions and local wisdom across the world, particularly in Indonesia (Ariza & Tamrin, 2021). In Indonesia, known for its rich cultural diversity and local traditions, this phenomenon is especially evident. Islam did not come to replace or destroy these traditions but played a role in renewing and strengthening them while maintaining the universal core values of Islam.

Islamic Acculturation with Local Wisdom in Indonesia

The acculturation of Islam with local wisdom in Indonesia demonstrates a dynamic process where Islamic teachings interact with the traditional cultures already present in society (Junaid, 2013). Islam, which arrived in Indonesia in the 13th century, did not force the local population to abandon their long-established traditions. Instead, Islam adapted to the local customs and wisdom, creating new forms of culture that combine religious values with local cultural elements. This acculturation can be observed in various aspects of life, such as ceremonial rituals, arts, language, and social systems. According to (Hendra et al., 2023), one of the most visible manifestations of this acculturation is the adaptation of local ceremonies and traditions with Islamic values.

Adaptation of Islamic Teachings in Local Ceremonies and Traditions

Islam arrived in Indonesia in a harmonious manner, not by replacing or eradicating existing traditions, but by adjusting Islamic values within local customs. One such example is the slametan ceremony in Java. Originally a ritual to honor ancestral spirits and seek blessings from supernatural forces, the slametan was an animistic religious practice before Islam's arrival. However, with the arrival of Islam, the slametan was not abolished but transformed to reflect Islamic values. The ceremony, which was initially about invoking safety from ancestral spirits, now focuses more on communal prayers for well-being, health, and prosperity, incorporating Islamic prayers in Arabic, such as those for the deceased and prayers for safety, aligning them with Islamic teachings.

Another example is the celebration of the Maulid Nabi (Prophet Muhammad's Birthday), which has become a tradition in many parts of Indonesia. The Maulid Nabi is not only a commemoration of the Prophet's birth but also serves as a means to spread Islamic teachings in a manner easily accepted by Indonesians. In regions such as Aceh, Sumatra, and Java, Maulid Nabi is often celebrated with a blend of Islamic and local cultural practices, including traditional music, dance, and food, representing gratitude for the Prophet's birth. The Maulid Nabi celebration, though initially a religious observance, has been integrated into local culture as a time for socializing, sharing, and strengthening communal bonds. This transformation of local traditions in alignment with Islamic teachings demonstrates how acculturation is not simply

the adoption of foreign culture but the transformation of values to align with Islam's basic principles.

Flexibility of Islam in Adapting to Local Cultures

According to (Prasetyo et al., 2024), one of the aspects that distinguishes Islam in its interaction with diverse cultures around the world is its flexibility in adapting to local traditions. Since its arrival in different parts of the world, Islam has never required people to abandon their local customs and beliefs but has instead shown flexibility, allowing its teachings to be accepted in a manner suited to the local social and cultural context. This adaptability has allowed Islam to not only guide faith and worship but also to serve as a framework for social, cultural, and even political life (Nasrullah, 2019). Several key points regarding the relationship between Islam's flexibility and local culture include:

Islam Does Not Impose Its Teachings Rigidly

One characteristic of Islam's flexibility is that its teachings are not rigidly imposed on societies that embrace it. For example, when Islam spread to Indonesia, with its diverse cultures and local beliefs, it did not seek to replace existing belief systems but adapted to local cultures. Islam did not demand that Indonesians abandon their long-standing traditions but encouraged changes that did not conflict with the fundamental principles of the faith. This is seen in the integration of traditional practices such as slametan, Maulid Nabi, and wedding ceremonies with Islamic values.

Islamic Teachings Understood in Context

Islam's flexibility in adapting to local cultures allows its teachings to be understood in context and made relevant to the lives of local communities. This is especially important because each culture has its own value systems that influence how its people view religion, morality, and social relations. In many cases, Islam allows for contextual adaptation without compromising its essential teachings. For example, the principle of mutual cooperation, which is central to Islam, easily aligns with the Indonesian value of gotong royong (mutual aid). Islam reinforces this local value by teaching the importance of helping one another, sharing, and maintaining solidarity.

Islam's Influence on Arts, Culture, and Social Structure

Since its arrival in Indonesia, Islam has profoundly influenced various aspects of life, especially in arts, culture, and social structures (Sahlan & Mulyono, 2012). This influence goes beyond religious teachings and includes transformations in traditional arts, cultural expressions, and the formation of social norms that harmonize with Islamic values. According to (Sutrisno, 2011), Islam does not function as a barrier to local cultural expression but as a driving force that enriches and renews the arts and culture while maintaining alignment with Islamic teachings.

Islamic Influence on Local Arts and Culture

One of the most tangible examples of Islam's influence in Indonesia is in the arts and local culture. Traditional dance, music, literature, and other art forms have undergone a process of integration with Islamic values, creating harmony between local traditions and religious teachings. For instance, traditional dances like tari saman in Aceh and tari topeng in Java, although part of local traditions, often incorporate Islamic teachings such as moral values and piety. Similarly, Javanese gamelan music, though originally Hindu-Buddhist, adapted to include Islamic songs that praise Allah and the Prophet Muhammad, turning it into an effective tool for conveying Islamic moral messages.

Islam also significantly contributed to Indonesian literature, producing works containing religious values. Since the 14th century, Islamic literary works such as hikayat and syair have flourished, telling stories of Sufi journeys, the struggles of Muslims, and moral lessons. For example, classical literary works like Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah and Syair Perjalanan Haji merged Islamic values with local literary traditions, giving Indonesian literature a new dimension.

Challenges and Harmony in the Relationship between Islam and Local Wisdom in the Globalization Era

According to (Arif, 2015), globalization brings changes that affect many aspects of life, including the relationship between religion (Islam) and local wisdom. The rapid pace of globalization, driven by technological advances, media, and increased human mobility, introduces foreign cultures that may influence traditional values and local ways of life. In Indonesia, with its rich cultural and traditional diversity, there is a significant challenge in maintaining a balance between preserving pure Islamic teachings and preserving long-developed local wisdom. At the same time, Islam plays a strategic role in preserving and strengthening local wisdom amid the powerful influences of globalization (Rosyid, 2019).

One of the greatest challenges in the relationship between Islam and local wisdom is maintaining a balance between what is considered pure Islamic teaching and the traditional practices that have been developed for centuries. Some groups may hold more conservative views and question the legitimacy of local traditions that they see as incompatible with strict Islamic principles. However, Islam encourages the preservation of beneficial local wisdom that does not contradict its fundamental teachings, promoting a harmonious coexistence between religion and culture. In conclusion, the relationship between Islam and local wisdom in Indonesia illustrates how the religion, rather than replacing local traditions, enriches and strengthens them. The dynamic process of acculturation between Islam and local wisdom fosters a unique cultural identity that integrates Islamic teachings with Indonesia's rich

cultural heritage. While globalization poses challenges, Islam's flexibility can help maintain the harmony between religion and local culture, ensuring that both continue to thrive in a modern, interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that Islam and local wisdom have a complementary and dynamic relationship. As a universal religion, Islam is capable of adapting to various local cultures without losing the essence of its teachings. On the other hand, local wisdom often serves as a medium for introducing and practicing Islamic values in a context that is relevant to the local community. The harmonization between Islam and local culture has led to the creation of traditions that not only strengthen religious identity but also reinforce social solidarity and community cohesion. However, this relationship also faces challenges, particularly in maintaining the balance between cultural acculturation and the application of Islamic teachings in accordance with sharia. In the face of globalization, Islam and local wisdom play a strategic role as a stronghold in preserving unique cultural identities while also serving as a means of dialogue with the modern world. The relationship between Islam and local wisdom needs to be continuously studied holistically in order to provide relevant solutions to social, cultural, and spiritual challenges in the future.

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