Integration of Malay Cultural Values in Islamic Education: An Analysis of Local Values-Based Contextual Approach

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the integration of Malay cultural values in Islamic education through a contextual approach based on local culture (Contextual Teaching and Learning/CTL). Malay culture possesses its own noble values, such as politeness, respect for social hierarchy, mutual cooperation, and the principle of adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah. All of which are aligned with the teachings of Islam. Although many studies have discussed Islamic education and local culture, research that specifically examines the integration of Malay cultural values within the CTL learning framework remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap through the conceptual and theoretical analysis. This is a library research using a qualitative descriptive approach by analyzing various relevant scholarly sources on Malay culture, Islamic education, and CTL theory. The findings indicates that Malay cultural values can be conceptually structured as a foundation for integration within the curriculum and instructional strategies of Islamic education. This integration had the potential to strengthen the development of students' religious and social character while also contributing to the preservation of Malay cultural identity in the educational context. This study was theoretical in nature. It is expected to enrich the body of knowledge in Islamic education and serve as a foundation for future empirical research.
Keywords: Islamic Education; Malay Cultural Values; Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)

INTRODUCTION

In this era of increasingly advanced globalization, it has had a significant impact on the sustainability of local cultural values and the moral development of students. The dominance of global culture, particularly through social media, has contributed to the weakening of the internalization of religious and cultural values among students. A study in Padang revealed the emergence of behaviors such as disrespecting teachers, using rude language, and disrupting the learning process. The impact of globalization, including social media, is also significant, with its intense use contributing 34.9% to the decline in morality among Generation Z (Saputra et al., 2023). This situation demonstrates that the challenges in today's education extend beyond academics to encompass the moral and cultural aspects of students. Therefore, an educational approach that bridges cultural values with the learning needs of the modern era is necessary.

In fact, the integration of local cultural values into Islamic education is considered crucial because it has the potential to make religious learning more contextual and meaningful for students. Conveying religious values through a cultural framework familiar to everyday life makes the internalization process more natural and profound. Religious education that adopts a critical approach and culturally responsive learning can enhance engagement and understanding of values contextually, without losing their relevance in a global context (Abdul-jabbar & Makki, 2024) Thus, students not only understand religious teachings theoretically but also can practice them in their daily lives, in accordance with their cultural values.

Beyond the conceptual relevance, the integration of Malay culture into Islamic education also has the potential to address various social challenges, such as intolerance, violence, and moral disorientation. Instilling the values of politeness, deliberation, *gotong royong*, and the principles of *adat-syarak* aligns with the mission of Islamic education to build morality, tolerance, and social harmony. Islamic education incorporating local cultural values is also considered capable of strengthening social harmony and enhancing students' understanding of societal diversity (Lestari & Putra, 2025)**.** Given the dynamic and adaptive nature of Malay culture, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum needs to be designed reflectively to remain contextual to the needs of students and society. In this way, students not only understand Islamic values theoretically, but also in broader practical and socio-cultural dimensions.

Although numerous studies have discussed Malay cultural values and their relevance in strengthening students' character, most of this research remains descriptive in nature and has not yet produced an operational learning model. Previous studies have not systematically explained how the values of politeness, deliberation, *gotong royong*, and the principles of adat-syarakah (customary and social) are integrated into components of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach, such as modeling, inquiry, learning community, and reflection. This lack of an applicable pedagogical framework indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed.

To address this gap, this study proposed a Contextual Approach Model Based on Local Malay Values. This model combined CTL principles, such as

modeling, inquiry learning, learning community, and reflection, with Malay cultural values rooted in Islamic teachings, such as politeness, *adat-syarak* (customary and social) principles, respect for hierarchy, and *gotong royong*. This approach not only connects the teaching material to students' social experiences but also strengthens Malay identity, aligned with Islamic values. Thus, this model makes both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of local culture-based educational curriculum and pedagogy.

Based on this background, this study aims to formulate a model for integrating Malay cultural values into Islamic education through the CTL approach, identify relevant Malay cultural values, and explain the mechanisms for integrating them into learning activities. This research is expected to serve as a reference for teachers, madrasas, and curriculum developers in implementing Islamic education systematically and sustainably based on local culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used library research with a qualitative-descriptive approach to conceptually analyze the integration of Malay cultural values into Islamic education through a Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach. This method was chosen because it is appropriate for examining ideas, concepts, and theoretical frameworks developing in Malay cultural studies, Islamic education, and CTL theory without involving empirical data collection. The data sources were obtained from academic literature, selectively selected based on the criteria of thematic relevance, academic credibility, and publication recency. This consisted of reputable journal articles, scholarly books, and related documents. The international literature was prioritized to strengthen the theoretical foundation, while the local sources were utilized to enrich the cultural context of the Malay community.

Moreover, the data analysis was conducted critically and analytically through three main stages: *data reduction, data presentation*, and *conclusion*. During the data reduction stage, the literature was selected and focused on the core concepts related to Malay cultural values, Islamic educational principles, and the characteristics of the CTL approach. The data presentation stage was carried out by organizing the findings into conceptual themes, such as the suitability of Malay cultural values with Islamic teachings and the opportunities for their integration in contextual learning components.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DICUSSION
Concept of Integration of Malay Cultural Values in Islamic Education

The integration of Malay culture and Islamic education demonstrates its role through a learning approach that connects teaching materials with students' daily experiences. This connection between learning materials and cultural realities familiar to students makes the learning process more meaningful. When local cultural elements, whether objects, ideas, or everyday practices, are used in learning, students tend to understand the material more easily because they are directly linked to their social experiences. This also increases engagement and motivation to learn, as the teachings presented are no longer abstract. Thus, local

culture plays a crucial role as a learning context that bridges educational materials with students' social realities.

In the context of Islamic education, Malay culture possesses a harmony of values that allows for natural and harmonious integration. Malay cultural values not only enrich learning materials and methods but also strengthen the connection between Islamic teachings and the social environment in which students grow. Through this integration, learning becomes more adaptive and inclusive, contributing to character formation through values already familiar to the community. The integration of Islamic values and local culture plays a crucial role in providing contextual character education that is relevant to students' social realities (Asrori et al 2025). Thus, Malay local wisdom does not function as a separate element from religious teachings, but rather as a foundation that helps ground Islamic understanding and facilitates internalization.

The values of local wisdom that have developed in Malay society, such as *gotong royong*, deliberation, respect for parents and teachers, hard work, and social solidarity, reflect a strong alignment with Islamic principles. When these values are incorporated into Islamic learning, the learning process becomes more relevant and effective, particularly in supporting student character development. Furthermore, Malay culture also plays a role in shaping teachers' professional competence, particularly in implementing Islamic values through ingrained social behaviors, such as mutual respect, cooperation, and brotherhood (Tambak et al., 2024). The delivery of religious values through a cultural approach familiar to the community facilitates the internalization process, so that students' understanding is not merely conceptual but also reflected in their actual behavior.

The integration of Malay cultural elements into learning allows students to connect Islamic educational materials with cultural practices they encounter directly, such as advice poems, traditional proverbs, and community social activities. This connection is crucial because it is relevant in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, which thrives on cultural diversity and places the preservation of local culture as a key element of national identity.

Learning that integrates Islamic teachings with local culture plays a role in shaping students who not only possess strong religiosity but also possess a deep attachment to the cultural values of their community. Local cultural values, fostered through traditions and social practices at the community level, can strengthen character education through the integration of social and religious values in the teaching and learning process (Muhammad et al., 2022). The integration of Malay cultural values into learning demonstrates that understanding material can become more meaningful when linked to traditions that play a role in shaping students' social character.

Conceptually, the integration of Malay cultural values into learning aligns with the social constructivist perspective, which views learning as a process influenced by social and cultural contexts. Knowledge is constructed through students' interactions with their surroundings, including the cultural values prevalent in society (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of Islamic education, Malay culture plays a role as a bridge between abstract religious concepts and students'

social experiences, making learning easier to understand and relevant to real life. Through this approach, Malay cultural values will serve as a bridge connecting Islamic teachings with students' social realities, thus making the learning process more contextual and meaningful.

The integration of Malay cultural values can be realized through the curriculum and teaching methods of Islamic education. Local cultural values can be utilized as sources of teaching materials, such as Malay proverbs, folktales, or customs that convey Islamic moral messages. Furthermore, cultural elements can be integrated into learning strategies by utilizing students' local experiences. This approach demonstrates that integrating Malay culture not only enriches teaching methods but also strengthens students' understanding through examples relevant to their daily lives.

The integration of Malay cultural values can also be realized through authentic learning that directly involves students in cultural activities in their surroundings. Involvement in traditional activities, *gotong royong*, and community-based social activities helps the internalization of values take place in a real and sustainable manner. Through these direct experiences, character formation does not stop at conceptual understanding but also develops into habits that are ingrained in students' daily lives (Sa'diah et al., 2025). This integration of local Malay culture can strengthen effective habits because the values learned are directly practiced in the students' social environment.

Characteristics of Malay Cultural Values Relevant to Islamic Education

The values of Malay culture show a close connection with the principles of Islamic education, especially in the formation of morals, manners and social character. Several main values such as politeness, traditional principles based on *syarak*, respect for social hierarchy, and the spirit of *gotong royong* occupy an important position in the life of Malay society and have direct relevance to the goals of Islamic education.

Politeness

Politeness plays a crucial role in Malay culture and serves as a benchmark for an individual's social behavior. Within the context of Islamic teachings, politeness in communication is a moral obligation aimed at maintaining peace and harmony in social relationships, including through the use of appropriate language and the avoidance of harsh language (Solihin, 2017). This value aligns with Malay culture, which upholds good manners as a foundation of cultural identity and social ethics.

In everyday life, Malays view politeness as a reflection of the quality of an individual's character and moral maturity. Polite, friendly, and orderly interactions not only maintain social harmony but also foster personal character grounded in faith and piety. Therefore, Malay society is known not only for its natural wealth but also for its friendliness, politeness, and openness in social relationships. The value of politeness is instilled from an early age so that individuals grow into individuals with commendable morals, both physically and mentally (Marlina, 2020).

Principles of *Adat Bersendi Syarak, Syarak Bersendi Kitabullah*

Malay cultural values are also strongly reflected in the principle of "*adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah*" which is the guideline for community life. This principle shows a combination of Islamic customs and teachings, where all cultural practices are always directed to be in harmony with sharia values. This can be seen in various traditions, such as kenduri or plain flour, which is always accompanied by religious elements in the form of joint prayer, expressions of gratitude, and a spirit of togetherness. This integration of religious values with local cultural structures shows that acculturation between religious practices and social culture can also produce social harmony and strong cultural identity in society, as long as the two are seen as complementary elements (Tahir et al., 2023). Based on this philosophy, Malay cultural values can work in harmony with Islamic education without causing any conflict with sharia principles.

Respect for Social Hierarchy

Respect for social hierarchy is an important value that must be upheld in Malay society. Respect for parents, teachers, traditional leaders, and community figures is part of everyday social interactions. This value is expressed not only through verbal language but also through nonverbal expressions such as gait, body position, eye contact, and smiles, which are imbued with social meaning. In Malay culture, a smile is seen not only as a sign of friendliness but also as a symbol of respect and social acceptance. Similarly, the habit of bowing the head when greeting elders reflects an awareness of social position and customary hierarchy. These expressions are understood as a reflection of a person's character and honor within society (Artis, 2025). This value of respect for hierarchy is closely linked to Islamic education, particularly in shaping the character of students who are civilized, polite, and respectful of others.

Mutual Cooperation (*Gotong Royong*)

The value of togetherness in Malay culture is clearly evident in the practice of cooperation (*gotong royong*), which emphasizes social solidarity. This tradition fosters a sense of *gotong royong*, working together, and strengthening relationships among community members. *Gotong royong* serves not only as a social mechanism but also as a means to build harmonious relationships and strengthen social bonds in daily life. The practice of *gotong royong*, which is continuously maintained by the Malay community, contributes to strengthening a sense of togetherness and collective responsibility within the community (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025). This communal value also aligns with the concept of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) in Islam, which emphasizes brotherhood and *gotong royong* in good deeds. Thus, *gotong royong* can be understood as a concrete form of practicing Islamic teachings within the context of local culture.

Overall, the values of politeness, traditional principles based on *syarak*, respect for social hierarchy, and the spirit of *gotong royong* form a rich and complementary moral fabric of Malay culture. These values have strong relevance to Islamic education because they can connect religious teachings with

cultural realities that are close to students' daily lives. In the educational context, these values have the potential to become a source of learning that can strengthen character formation and internalize Islamic teachings contextually.

Local Values-Based Contextual Approach Model

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) presents a learning approach in which material is directly linked to students' real-life situations, so that the knowledge gained in class is directly connected to students' roles in their families and communities. In Malay-based Islamic education, this approach makes it easier for teachers to connect learning materials with local cultural values, such as the use of Malay proverbs, advice rhymes, and traditional practices containing moral and religious values. Learning linked to students' real-life contexts has been shown to increase the meaningfulness of learning, student engagement, and learning outcomes by helping students build connections between theoretical concepts and practical experiences (Basuki, Sholeh Hidayat, 2025). In this way, religious learning is not abstract but rather presented in a more concrete, relevant form, and more aligned with Malay-Islamic identity.

CTL learning emphasizes the direct learning experience of students, not just the achievement of final results. Teachers have a role to integrate learning materials with students' daily experiences and also provide space for students to try, experience, and reflect on the values learned. The use of this contextual approach will broaden the learning experience and increase student engagement and understanding of Islamic education materials (Perales & Ulla, 2025). This active engagement will deepen students' understanding because Islamic teachings are studied directly in the realities of their daily lives, making learning more meaningful and relevant to the development of thinking skills and character building.

The harmony between CTL and Malay culture is also evident in the learning character, which emphasizes togetherness and cooperation. This learning style provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills while strengthening the social values inherent in Malay society. In this context, Islamic education serves not only as a means of preserving local cultural wisdom but also as a medium for developing students' academic competencies. Contextual learning, which links learning materials to students' real-life experiences, can contribute to increased learning engagement and critical thinking skills, as students are able to connect academic concepts to their own life situations (Sabiteka et al., 2025). The integration of CTL and Malay culture demonstrates that traditional values and modern learning strategies can work harmoniously to improve the quality of learning.

The implementation of CTL based on Malay cultural values can also create an active and creative learning environment and boost students' self-confidence. In addition to enriching their understanding of the importance of preserving local culture as a form of identity, this approach also fosters students' independence in building knowledge and skills through experiential learning. Learning connected to students' real-life contexts will enhance student engagement, conceptual understanding, and thinking skills, as students actively

connect knowledge to their real-life experiences (Roelle & Richter, 2025). Thus, learning goes beyond simply introducing cultural values but also contributes to character development through contextual learning experiences.

The alignment between CTL components and Malay cultural values is evident in the implementation of elements such as modeling, inquiry, learning community, and reflection. Teachers' exemplary behavior through polite and respectful behavior reflects Malay values of politeness, while inquiry activities provide opportunities for students to explore the meaning of local traditions such as adat proverbs, prohibitions, and traditional ceremonies in relation to Islamic teachings. The learning community element aligns with the spirit *gotong royong* that characterizes Malay society, while reflection helps students deepen their understanding of the values of dignity, etiquette, and morality in everyday life (Apriyani et al., 2022). All of these components contribute to a natural and character-based learning experience. Meaningful learning occurs when students are truly engaged reflectively in a contextual and authentic learning process, strengthening their understanding of the material and the connection between theory and the realities of their (Kostiainen & Johanna, 2025).

This Islamic education approach, based on Malay cultural values, prioritizes direct experience as a crucial tool in shaping student behavior. In Malay culture, good behavior is viewed as part of efforts to maintain personal and family dignity, while deviant behavior can undermine social honor. Through student involvement in social activities and cultural practices, an understanding of the moral consequences of every action is fostered. However, the role of teachers remains essential in providing guidance so that students can distinguish between cultural values that align with Islamic teachings and those that have the potential to have negative impacts, both on the individual and on society at large. Thus, Islamic education based on cultural values will not only enrich knowledge but also serve as a means of shaping behavior and character consistent with moral values in social life.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that Malay cultural values have significant relevance for integration into Islamic education because they align with Islamic morals and etiquette. The values of politeness, respect for social hierarchy, *gotong royong*, and the principles of *Adat Bersendi Syarak, Syarak Bersendi Kitabullah* play a crucial role in shaping a religious and civilized Malay cultural identity. The primary contribution of this study lies in the formulation of a Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach (CTL) based on local Malay cultural values as a learning framework that enables the meaningful internalization of values through learning experiences closely related to students' social realities. This model has implications for curriculum development, learning strategies, and character education in Islamic education, making them more contextual and responsive to local culture. Furthermore, it is also expected to open up opportunities for further research to empirically test the application of this model in various Islamic educational institutions' learning practices.

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