

Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Integrating Ngasa Local Traditional Values into Elementary School Learning

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Received: 08/02/2026

Revised: 18/07/2026

Accepted: 21/07/2026

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the integration of Ngasa traditional values into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning at SDN 2 Cisereuh, Brebes Regency, and to identify the strategies, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors involved in the process. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving IRE teachers, the school principal, and Jalawastu traditional leaders. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that IRE teachers integrate Ngasa traditional values, particularly togetherness, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and deliberation (musyawarah), into learning materials, learning processes, teaching materials, and instructional media. These values are contextualized with Islamic teachings, enabling students to understand religious concepts through their socio-cultural experiences. The integration process is supported by students' enthusiasm, parental support, community participation, and teachers' understanding of local cultural values. However, several challenges remain, including the limited availability of local culture-based learning resources, the absence of local cultural content in the curriculum, and insufficient professional development related to local wisdom-based learning. This study concludes that the Ngasa tradition serves as a relevant and meaningful source of values for strengthening Islamic Religious Education while contributing to the preservation of local cultural heritage.

Keywords

Value Integration; Ngasa Tradition; Islamic Religious Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

The growing wave of globalization has brought various changes to people's lives, including in the cultural sphere. On one hand, globalization facilitates access to information and cross-cultural interaction; on the other hand, it can displace local cultures, which are increasingly eroded and marginalized by the dominance of foreign cultures (Hidayati, Waluyo, Winarni, & Suyitno, 2020; Mudrik, 2023). This situation demands systematic efforts to introduce and preserve local culture for the younger generation, so they do not lose the cultural identity that forms part of their selfhood (Gunawan, Saryono, Sulistyorini, & Wisman, 2026; Istiyanto & Novianti, 2018). In this context, education plays a strategic role in passing down values and culture across generations. Education functions not only as a process of knowledge transfer but also as a channel for internalizing cultural values within society



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(Alfiyanto, 2020).

Education and culture are essentially two interconnected and inseparable elements. The educational process serves as a vehicle for the development and preservation of culture, while culture acts as a source of values that enriches educational practices (Adela & Al-Akmam, 2024). From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, this relationship becomes even more significant because shaping culturally grounded individuals requires a strong foundation of religious values (Yusri, Ananta, Handayani, & Haura, 2024). Therefore, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is not only oriented toward mastering cognitive aspects but also directed at molding students' behavior in accordance with Islamic values. IRE instruction is expected to connect religious teachings to the social and cultural realities students face, so that Islamic values can be understood in context and applied in daily life.

A number of studies have shown that local cultures contain various values aligned with Islamic teachings, such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, gratitude, social care, respect for others, and responsibility toward the environment (Fauzan & Nashar, 2017; Widiani, 2016). These values are part of local culture, tested over time and passed down through generations as community traditions (Palahudin, Hadiana, & Basri, 2020). Accordingly, integrating traditional values into IRE is a relevant alternative for strengthening students' understanding of religious values while fostering appreciation for their own culture (Musyarrofah, 2024). Through such integration, students not only gain a theoretical understanding of religion but also observe the manifestation of Islamic values in the social and cultural life of their community.

Nevertheless, the implementation of IRE in schools still tends to focus on delivering material in a textual and normative manner (Patriasya & Fakhrudin, 2026). Instruction emphasizes concept mastery and rote memorization, leaving little room for students to connect the subject matter to their own cultural experiences (Dewi Rahma, 2025). As a result, the religious values learned are not yet fully internalized in depth, because students do not find a direct link between the learning material and their daily lives. Furthermore, various studies indicate that the teaching methods and curricula used have not fully succeeded in integrating the local cultural values that develop within society (Nendissa, Farneyanan, Sampepadang, Rares, & Senduk, 2025; Walad, Nasri, Hakim, & Zulkifli, 2025).

This problem is compounded by the limited use of local traditions as learning resources in IRE instruction. Many teachers have not yet applied models, strategies, or teaching materials that systematically integrate local traditions into the learning process (Satriarno, Irawan, Guspani, Rini Merliana, & Rizka, 2025). In fact, local traditions can serve as an effective means to introduce Islamic values in a more concrete, contextual, and meaningful way for students.

However, the situation differs at one elementary school in Brebes Regency, where efforts have been made to integrate IRE with local culture, even if still limited to the learning process. As the school principal stated, "I always convey and advise teachers to relate lessons to the Jalawastu culture during teaching. Besides making it easier for students to grasp the material, they are also taught about their own culture." (Informant R.A., School Principal, 2026)

Even so, several previous studies have examined the Ngasa Tradition (Mulyana, n.d.; Turyati & Sari, n.d.; Turyati, Vianda Sari, & Yustika Widyaningrum, 2026). However, studies that specifically examine the Ngasa tradition as a source of values in school-based IRE remain scarce (Ardi, Santoso, Nizar, & Tulab, 2024). This leaves an important gap, because the Ngasa tradition holds social, cultural, and religious values with strong potential to be developed as a contextual learning resource. Against this background, this study aims to address the gap in research on integrating values from the Ngasa Tradition into Islamic Religious Education, particularly within the educational context of the Jalawastu indigenous community (Akhiroh & Alimi, 2025; Khusna, Jumari, & Prihastanti, 2022).

This research gap highlights the need for further study into integrating values from the Ngasa Tradition into IRE. It is expected that the findings of this study will make a theoretical contribution for

teachers, schools, and education policymakers, while also serving as a medium for cultural preservation.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design (Giyono, Sulisworo, & Suyitno, 2026; Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023). This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers to integrate the values of the local Ngasa tradition into learning activities at the elementary school level. The case study design was selected because the research focuses on the practice of integrating Ngasa tradition values into Islamic Religious Education at SDN 2 Cisereuh, located within the indigenous community of Jalawastu, Brebes Regency. The unit of analysis in this research is the process of integrating the values of the local Ngasa tradition into Islamic Religious Education. The research subjects include Islamic Religious Education teachers as key informants, while the school principal and Jalawastu traditional leaders serve as supporting informants. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in and knowledge of the Ngasa tradition and the school's teaching and learning process.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the study applied source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking with all informants (Amalia, Juliani, Suriani Lase, Vikri, & Asiska, 2025).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Integration of Ngasa Tradition Values in Islamic Religious Education at SDN 2 Cisereuh

The research findings show that teachers of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at SDN 2 Cisereuh consciously integrate the values contained in the Ngasa tradition into the learning process. This integration is carried out as a follow-up to the school principal's directive to link learning materials with the local culture of the Jalawastu indigenous community.

This finding is derived from an interview with an IRE teacher, who stated:

"Whenever I teach IRE, I connect the material with traditional values around the students."
(Interview with DA, IRE teacher).

This statement aligns with the school principal's account:

"I always convey and advise teachers to relate lessons to Jalawastu culture during teaching. Besides making it easier for students to grasp the material, they are also taught about their own culture." (Informant R.A., School Principal, 2026)

This finding indicates that the school leadership encourages all teachers to integrate local culture into the learning process. Guided by this direction, IRE teachers strive to embed local cultural elements into their teaching. Furthermore, the practice of integrating Ngasa tradition values into IRE reflects the principle of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) (Lestari, Ningsih, C, Sugianto, & Lestari, 2023). CTL is a learning approach that connects academic material to real-life situations students experience, making the knowledge gained more meaningful (Samsudin, Raharjo, & Wideasih, 2023). For students at SDN 2 Cisereuh, who grow up within the Jalawastu indigenous community, the Ngasa tradition is part of their social experience—they witness and participate in it directly. Therefore, using the Ngasa tradition as a learning resource helps students understand abstract religious concepts through concrete examples that are close to their daily lives.

This finding is also in line with Vygotsky's constructivist theory (1978)(Amahorseya & Mardliyah, 2023). Local culture does not merely serve as a subject of study, but also functions as a medium that enables students to actively construct their religious understanding (Arifin, 2023). Beyond enhancing comprehension of learning materials, integrating local culture also acts as a means of passing down cultural values to the younger generation, amid the strong wave of globalization that threatens to erode local cultural identity (Mulyani et al., 2024).

Based on observation results, the following values from the Ngasa local tradition are integrated into Islamic Religious Education:

a. Value of Togetherness

This finding is based on an interview with an IRE teacher, who explained:

"...The value of togetherness is also evident when community members gather in groups to bring offerings that will be used as special refreshments during the tradition... I then integrate this value into IRE lessons..."(Interview with DA, IRE teacher)

It is also supported by an interview with the head of traditional leaders:

"Yes... The Ngasa tradition is usually held on Tuesday morning, Kliwon (a Javanese calendar day), at 06:00 AM. Women come together carrying food consisting of corn rice and fruits to the Pesarean Gedong (heritage site), while men lay out tarpaulins. Later, the corn rice is distributed and eaten together with guests and community members present, after prayers are recited by the custodian of the site." (Mr. Singgih, personal communication, 2026)

Theoretically, the value of togetherness within the Ngasa tradition aligns with the Islamic concept of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). In the context of IRE learning, this value can be used to explain the importance of maintaining unity and strengthening social relationships as a practical application of Islamic teachings in daily life (Syahrial, Kurniawan, Alirmansyah, & Alazi, 2019). This finding shows that local traditions can serve as an effective medium for internalizing social and religious values in students.

b. Value of Mutual Cooperation (Gotong Royong)

This finding comes from an interview with an IRE teacher, who stated:

"...The value of mutual cooperation is also clearly seen when people from various groups come together to help ensure the tradition runs smoothly, from preparing the path leading to the sacred site and cleaning the Pancuran Lima area to setting up the entrance area. All of this is carried out through mutual cooperation by the entire Jalawastu indigenous community... and it is this value of cooperation that I integrate into IRE learning..." (Interview with DA, IRE teacher)

It is further confirmed by the head of Jalawastu traditional leaders:

"...One day before the Ngasa tradition is held, the community works together to clean the surrounding environment: preparing the path to the sacred site, cleaning the Pancuran Lima area, and organizing the entrance zone. All of this is done through mutual cooperation by all members of the Jalawastu community." (Mr. Singgih, personal communication, 2026)

This value of cooperation aligns with Islamic teachings on *ta'awun* — helping one another in acts of goodness — as stated in the Quran, Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 2 (M. Suud et al., 2025).

c. Value of Deliberation (Musyawarah)

This finding is based on an interview with an IRE teacher, who said:

"...Third, deliberation. In my view, this value is reflected in all activities, which begin with

discussion or deliberation involving village officials, traditional leaders, community figures, and residents themselves. This process covers everything from determining the date to forming the organizing committee, ensuring that all activity sequences follow the rules and norms of the Ngasa tradition. This value of deliberation is what I integrate into IRE lessons..." (Interview with DA, IRE teacher)

It is supported by the head of Jalawastu traditional leaders:

"...Before carrying out the Ngasa tradition, activities begin with deliberation attended by village officials, traditional leaders, community figures, and residents. This ranges from deciding the date to establishing the committee, so that every part of the event adheres to the customary rules and standards of the Ngasa tradition..." (Mr. Singgih, personal communication, 2026)

This aligns with the Islamic principle of shura (consultation). In IRE learning, this value can be used to instill democratic attitudes, respect for others' opinions, and the ability to solve problems collectively (Nia Erviana, Marlina, & Muhamad Ikhsanudin, 2024).

From a critical perspective, these findings show that the Ngasa tradition functions not only as cultural heritage but also as a source of educational values relevant to the goals of Islamic Religious Education. The values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and deliberation embedded in the tradition share common ground with Islamic teachings, making them suitable to be used as contextual learning resources.

Strategies of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) Teachers at SDN 2 Cisereuh in Integrating the Values of the Ngasa Tradition

The strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in integrating the values of the Ngasa tradition are as follows:

a. Integration into Learning Materials

The integration of Ngasa traditional values into learning materials is one of the efforts undertaken by PAI teachers. This is reflected in the statement of a PAI teacher:

"First, I integrate learning materials that are relevant to the values found in the tradition. For example, when teaching the topic 'helping one another in goodness,' I connect it with values embedded in the Ngasa tradition, such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong)." (Interview with DA, IRE teacher)

According to the theory of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), learning becomes more meaningful when students can connect what they learn to real-life experiences (Parhan & Sutedja, 2019). Therefore, the values contained in the Ngasa tradition serve as concrete examples of the Islamic concept of ta'awun (mutual assistance in goodness). As a result, students not only understand the concept theoretically but also observe its implementation in community life.

b. Integration into the Learning Process

The integration of Ngasa traditional values is also carried out through the learning process itself, as illustrated by the following statement:

"I also make sure to integrate these values into the learning process because it is important. For example, when discussing the topic 'Peace through Togetherness,' I divide students into groups and assign them the task of identifying collective activities within the Ngasa tradition. Afterward, the students present their findings to their classmates." (Interview with DA, IRE teacher)

The integration of Ngasa values into the learning process helps students understand Islamic values

such as togetherness, deliberation (musyawarah), and mutual cooperation (Inayati, Kurahman, & Rusmana, 2024). Consequently, learning is not solely oriented toward mastering subject matter but also toward developing students' ability to apply these values in their social lives.

c. Integration into Teaching Materials

The selection of teaching materials for integration is also a concern of PAI teachers at SDN 2 Cisereuh. One teacher stated:

"When selecting teaching materials, I provide students with reading materials about the importance of preserving traditions, for example, Qur'an Surah Ar-Rum verse 22. Afterward, I explain the meaning and content of the verse." (Interview with DA, IRE teacher)

In this context, teachers do not position local culture as something separate from Islamic teachings. Instead, local culture is viewed as part of social reality that can be explained through a religious perspective (Luthfi, 2016). This approach emphasizes that Islamic Religious Education should connect divine revelation with the realities of human life.

d. Integration into Instructional Media

Instructional media also receive considerable attention from PAI teachers at SDN 2 Cisereuh in

"When teaching the topic 'Halal and Haram Food,' I brought a tumpeng rice cone to the classroom. I explained not only its relevance to the lesson but also its symbolic meaning as a representation of togetherness and harmony. Afterward, we shared and ate the tumpeng together in class. By using tumpeng, which is also present in the Ngasa tradition, students were able to understand the values embedded in the tradition." (Interview with DA, IRE teacher)

The use of instructional media derived from local culture aligns with Dale's Cone of Experience theory. Students are more likely to understand concepts when they gain direct experience rather than merely listening to verbal explanations (Hendriyanto, Martadiputra, Suryadi, Sahara, & Siswanto, 2023).

Overall, the strategies implemented by PAI teachers demonstrate that the integration of Ngasa traditional values is carried out comprehensively through learning materials, learning processes, teaching materials, and instructional media. These strategies not only enhance students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education but also contribute to the preservation of local cultural heritage. By contextualizing Islamic teachings within students' sociocultural environment, the integration of Ngasa values strengthens both religious learning and cultural awareness, fostering students who are rooted in their local identity while embracing Islamic values in everyday life.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Integration of Ngasa Traditional Values into Islamic Religious Education at SDN 2 Cisereuh

The findings reveal that the integration of Ngasa traditional values into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SDN 2 Cisereuh is influenced by both supporting and inhibiting factors. The supporting factors can be categorized into internal and external dimensions. Internally, students demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm toward learning activities that incorporate local cultural values. Externally, the integration process is supported by parents and the local community, who continue to maintain a strong attachment to the Ngasa tradition. This condition was reflected in the statement of a PAI teacher:

"whenever I integrate the values of the Ngasa tradition into my lessons, the students become more enthusiastic. Parents are also very supportive. For example, when I brought tumpeng rice to the classroom and explained its meaning within the Ngasa tradition, the parents were pleased and appreciated the activity"

One of the primary supporting factors is the teacher's understanding of the Ngasa tradition and its underlying values. The PAI teacher recognizes that values embedded in the tradition, such as togetherness, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and deliberation (musyawarah), are closely aligned with Islamic teachings. Such understanding enables the teacher to connect religious concepts with students' lived experiences, thereby creating a more contextual and meaningful learning process. This finding is consistent with Koentjaraningrat's perspective that culture constitutes a system of values and norms that guides social behavior within a community. Consequently, the utilization of local culture as a learning resource can strengthen the contextual internalization of Islamic values among students.

Despite these supporting factors, the study also identified several obstacles encountered by PAI teachers in integrating Ngasa traditional values into learning activities. A teacher explained:

"One of the challenges is that the curriculum and textbooks do not yet contain themes related to local culture. In addition, teachers here have rarely participated in training programs on integrating local traditional values into classroom learning. Sometimes, I am unsure whether the integration model I have implemented is appropriate or not".

The findings indicate that the major barriers to integrating Ngasa traditional values in PAI learning include limited learning resources and the lack of sustained professional development for teachers. The scarcity of instructional media and the absence of systematically documented sources on local culture constitute significant constraints. Information about the cultural traditions of the Jalawastu community is still largely transmitted orally and remains insufficiently available in textbooks, learning modules, or other instructional materials that teachers can readily use. As a result, the integration of local cultural values depends heavily on individual teachers' initiatives and creativity, making its implementation less systematic and sustainable.

From a theoretical perspective, Tilaar argues that culturally based education requires curricular support, adequate learning resources, and educational environments that can transform cultural values into systematic learning experiences (Saleh et al., 2025). Therefore, the limited availability of local cultural learning resources contributes to the suboptimal internalization of cultural values within PAI learning.

Furthermore, the professional development programs attended by teachers have generally been broad in scope and have not provided practical guidance on strategies for integrating local traditions into classroom instruction. According to Guskey's theory of teacher professional development, improvements in teacher competence require continuous, contextual, and practice-oriented training (UlHaq, Syam, Sahabuddin, & Irfan, 2024). Consequently, teachers' understanding of local cultural values has not yet been fully translated into systematic, innovative, and sustainable instructional designs.

These findings suggest that the successful integration of local cultural values into Islamic Religious Education requires more than individual teacher commitment. It also necessitates institutional support through adequate learning resources, curriculum reinforcement, and professional development programs designed to facilitate the implementation of local wisdom-based learning. Such support is essential to ensure that cultural values are integrated systematically and sustainably into educational practice.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to strengthen the integration of Ngasa traditional values into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning at SDN 2 Cisereuh. First, the school should develop a more systematic local wisdom-based learning program by compiling and documenting the values of the Ngasa tradition into teaching modules, student

worksheets, learning media, and digital learning resources. Such efforts are necessary because the current implementation still relies heavily on teachers' individual initiatives and the oral transmission of cultural knowledge within the Jalawastu community.

Second, teachers need to enhance collaboration in designing learning activities that integrate local cultural values into IRE instruction. This can be achieved through teacher working groups, lesson study activities, or collaborative curriculum development that focuses on contextualizing Islamic teachings through local cultural practices. Through collaborative efforts, the integration process can become more structured, consistent, and sustainable across different grade levels.

Third, school leaders should provide continuous academic support through supervision, mentoring, and partnerships with traditional leaders and community members. Such collaboration would enable teachers to access authentic information about the Ngasa tradition while ensuring that cultural values are accurately represented in classroom learning.

Fourth, local education authorities should provide professional development programs specifically focused on local wisdom-based education. The training should not only discuss theoretical concepts but also provide practical guidance on curriculum development, lesson planning, learning strategies, assessment techniques, and the utilization of local culture as a learning resource.

Finally, the Jalawastu indigenous community should be actively involved in preserving and documenting the Ngasa tradition through written, visual, and digital media. The availability of documented cultural resources would support teachers in integrating local values into learning and contribute to the long-term preservation of cultural heritage. Through the synergy of schools, teachers, communities, and policymakers, the integration of Ngasa traditional values into Islamic Religious Education can be implemented more effectively and sustainably while strengthening students' religious understanding and cultural identity.

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