

Preserving Local Wisdom and Cultivating Global Values: An Etnopedagogical Approach to Islamic Religious Education in Jambi's Public Higher Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how Jambi's local wisdom values are instilled in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning at higher education through an ethnopedagogical approach. Using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, this study examines the experiences of eight IRE lecturers in instilling local values at each stage of the lecture. The results show that each lecturer brings a unique nuance to their learning practices: L1 instills the value of religious togetherness through communal prayer, group work, and tition; L1 makes the value of customary deliberation as both a method and material; L3 emphasizes the value of cooperation through collaborative projects; L4 instills the value of politeness and etiquette through Jambi Malay pantun; L5 prioritizes the value of honesty and justice through moral contracts; L6 instills ecological values with Islamic ecotheology; L7 instills the value of hard work through academic challenges; and L8 instills the value of tolerance through the practice of cross-perspective dialogue. These findings demonstrate that ethnopedagogy can provide a learning space that not only transfers knowledge but also fosters local identity as well as universal values. The implication of this research is the importance of developing an IRE learning model based on local wisdom values that are in line with global values, so that higher education is not uprooted from the cultural roots of society and can answer the challenges of globalization

Keywords: Ethnopedagogy; Global Values; Islamic Religious Education; Jambi; Local Wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in higher education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, identity, and global competency. In the context of globalization, education is not only required to instill universal values but also to maintain the sustainability of local wisdom, which is the hallmark of a nation (Ernawati et al., 2024; Harianto et al., 2023). Several studies have shown that integrating local culture into education can strengthen students' moral and ethical values while increasing the relevance

of learning to their social realities (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025; Rohman, 2024). Therefore, an approach that bridges locality and globality is needed, one of which is through the framework of ethnopedagogy.

The concept of ethnopedagogy refers to educational practices that draw on a community's local wisdom to enrich the learning process. Ethnopedagogy aims not only to preserve traditions but also to foster students' critical awareness of the relevance of their culture in facing global challenges (Gumartifa et al., 2025; Selasih & Sudarsana, 2018). In Indonesia, several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of ethnopedagogy in strengthening character, for example, in Sundanese culture-based education in West Java (Cahyaningsih et al., 2025; Sakti et al., 2025). However, research related to ethnopedagogy in IRE in higher education, particularly in Jambi Province, remains limited.

Jambi Province is known for its rich traditions and local wisdom, such as the values of *beselang* (silaturahmi), *tepung tawar* (customary deliberation), *gotong royong* (cooperation), and Jambi Malay *pantun* (pantun) rich with moral messages. This local wisdom aligns with universal Islamic values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *syura* (community), and social ethics, making it relevant for integration into learning (Rahima & Zahar, 2023; Warni & Afria, 2023). Unfortunately, in practice, many IRE lecturers still rely on textual and normative approaches, without deeply connecting them to students' local cultures (Dewi et al., 2025). This statement creates a gap between teaching materials and students' social realities.

Globally, education is oriented toward developing 21st-century competencies, including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity (Sopian et al., 2024; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In a multicultural context, education is also required to instill the values of tolerance, integrity, and social responsibility (Afianti & Andreastuti, 2024). Therefore, integrating local wisdom with global values in higher education is an urgent need, ensuring that graduates are not only rooted in tradition but also prepared to contribute to the worldwide arena.

This research confirms that although ethnopedagogy studies exist in general education, research specifically examining IRE in higher education is still rare. Several studies emphasize the importance of local wisdom-based education for national character (Fauzan et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024), but few examine how IRE lecturers instill cultural values into formal learning. This statement indicates a vast open research space. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus: exploring the integration of Jambi local wisdom into IRE learning at public universities. This research not only highlights conceptual aspects but also explores the actual practices of IRE lecturers in instilling local customary values and traditions into learning activities, both in the opening, primary, and closing stages. Thus, this research offers a culturally responsive pedagogical model that has not been widely studied before.

The urgency of this research is increasingly relevant amidst the challenges of cultural homogenization due to globalization. If religious education is not sensitive to the local context, it will alienate students from their cultural roots. Conversely, if it overemphasizes locality without connecting with global values, students risk being unprepared for international competition. Therefore, this research aims to offer a compromise through an ethnopedagogical framework.

Based on this description, this study aims to explore the practices of IRE lecturers at the University of Jambi in instilling Jambi Malay local wisdom values that align with global values in the learning process. The research focuses on the teaching strategies lecturers use to contextualize IRE material, as well as their implications for character development and students' global competencies.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, aiming to deeply understand the subjective experiences of Islamic Religious Education lecturers in instilling Jambi's local wisdom values into their learning. Phenomenology was chosen because it is relevant to exploring the hidden meanings behind the lecturers' pedagogical practices, particularly how local cultural values are interpreted and realized in the teaching and learning process (Creswell, 2018).

The study participants were eight Islamic Religious Education lecturers from the University of Jambi, native Jambi residents. The participant selection technique used purposive sampling, with the following criteria: (1) lecturers had been actively teaching for at least two years, (2) they had an understanding of Jambi's local wisdom values, and (3) they had instilled these values into their Islamic Religious Education learning, and the diversity of these lecturers varied.

Table 1. Demographics of research participants

Lecturer Codes	Gender	Age	Length of teaching
L1	Male	33	3
L2	Female	42	9
L3	Male	29	3
L4	Female	45	17
L5	Male	37	8
L6	Female	41	10
L7	Male	32	7
L8	Male	31	7

The data for this study were collected through three main techniques. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore in-depth the lecturers' perceptions,

understandings, and practices in instilling Jambi's local wisdom values into their learning. These interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to ask primary questions and develop follow-up questions based on the context of the participants' responses.

Second, classroom observations were conducted to obtain empirical data on how local wisdom values are applied in the learning process, from the initial, core, and closing activities. These observations helped the researcher verify the consistency between the lecturers' statements in the interviews and their actual classroom practices.

Third, the researcher conducted document analysis, including Semester Lesson Plans, teaching materials, and learning media. This analysis aimed to explore the extent to which the integration of local wisdom values was also reflected in formal learning documents, thus providing a more comprehensive and triangulated picture of the lecturers' ethnopedagogical practices. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involved the following stages: transcription, coding, categorization, and theme extraction. Data validity was maintained through method triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study indicate that instilling Jambi's local wisdom values in IRE learning at universities not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also fosters global awareness through the common values embodied within it. IRE lecturers at the University of Jambi consistently adapt local wisdom values into learning activities, including the initial, core, and closing stages. The local wisdom values in Jambi are summarized as follows.

Table 2. Local wisdom values of Jambi

Local wisdom values	Pictures	Explanations	Practical Examples in Jambi
Deliberation and Consensus	 (Source: Internet)	The tradition of resolving problems through joint discussion until an agreement is reached.	It is carried out at marriage proposal events, traditional leader elections, or land dispute resolution.
Cooperation	 (Source: Internet)	The spirit of togetherness in doing something selflessly.	Residents work together to build houses, repair village roads, or help prepare for wedding parties.

Politeness



(Source: Internet)

Uphold good manners in speech, dress, and behavior.

In welcoming guests, Jambi people use polite language and respectful attitudes.

Tolerance



(Source: Internet)

Respecting ethnic and religious differences in community life.

Malay, Kerinci, Javanese, and Minang people live in harmony side by side in villages and cities.

Love for the Environment and Nature



(Source: Internet)

Protect rivers, forests, and land as sources of life.

The Kerinci traditional ritual that respects nature

Honesty and Justice



(Source: Internet)

Uphold honesty and balance between rights and obligations.

In buying and selling in traditional markets, prices are agreed upon fairly without cheating.

Work Hard and Never Give Up



(Source: Internet)

The value of persistently trying to get a better life.

The philosophy of "rafting upstream, swimming to the shore" is practiced by farmers and traders.

Religious
(Gratitude
Trust)

and



Life is always
associated with Islamic
teachings and faith.

A thanksgiving tradition after
the rice harvest or before
starting a long journey.

(Source: Internet)

Table 2 shows how several local wisdom values deeply rooted in Jambi society can be maintained and contextualized to meet the challenges of 21st-century education. More clearly, the local wisdom values internalized by lecturers in classroom learning activities are summarized as follows.

Table 3. Findings of Internalization of Local Wisdom Values in IRE Learning

Lecturers	Local Wisdom Values	Initial activity	Core activities	Closing Activities
L1	Religious	Taking turns praying together (similar to a village prayer feast)	Collaborative discussions and practices (cleaning the prayer room, group fiqh)	Group reflection with contributions from each student
L2	Deliberation and Consensus	Determine class rules by consensus	Simulation of customary deliberation for social ethics	Agreement on shared wisdom
L3	Cooperation	Inspirational story (building a house together)	Collaborative project (presentation of <i>maqasid syariah</i>)	Appreciation of group members' contributions
L4	Politeness	Emphasis on class etiquette (greetings, permission, speech)	Study of Jambi Malay moral hadith + rhymes	Individual reflections on the experience of maintaining adab
L5	Honesty & Justice	Local story of customary land dispute resolution	Academic debate with rules without data manipulation	The moral contract maintains honesty
L6	The moral contract maintains honesty	Prayer for nature + story of rice planting tradition	Observation of campus cleanliness, linked to verses of the Qur'an	Ecotheological reflection: humans as caliphs

L7	Work Hard & Never Give Up	The story of the hard work of the Jambi people in the fields	Challenging task (reading the traditional book)	Sharing success in overcoming learning difficulties
L8	Tolerance	Beselang tradition (cross-religious/ethnic visits)	Cross-perspective group discussion (Quran and customs)	Agreement to maintain campus harmony

Table 3 explains that in their teaching practices, lecturers in Jambi appear to instill local wisdom values into each stage of the lecture in diverse and distinctive ways. L1, for example, always opens the class with a communal prayer led by students in turns, resembling the village tradition of prayer gatherings that involve the participation of all parties. In the core phase, he often directs students to work in groups, especially when discussing Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Students are asked to explore evidence and then present their findings collectively. A communal cleaning exercise, such as the campus prayer room, has also been implemented, ensuring the classroom atmosphere becomes not only an academic space but also an arena for experiencing the value of religious togetherness. At the end of the lecture, a collective reflection is conducted, allowing each student to contribute their perspectives, emphasizing that knowledge and virtue must be shared.

Meanwhile, L2 emphasizes the importance of deliberation from the beginning of the lecture by inviting students to create class rules by consensus. In the core phase, he frequently conducts simulations of Jambi traditional deliberations, particularly when discussing social ethics in Islam. Students sit in a circle, as in a conventional meeting, and make decisions collectively regarding the case being discussed. Lectures always conclude with a consensus on the key points learned. As he acknowledges, "knowledge is not merely the result of the lecturer's authority, but the result of consensus in seeking the truth." Thus, deliberation becomes not just the material, but the learning method itself.

L3 also showcases practices rich with nuances of local wisdom. He often opens lectures with stories of Jambi residents building houses through cooperation. He then internalizes these values through collaborative projects, such as a presentation on the maqasid sharia (obligatory principles of sharia) carried out in groups with clearly defined roles. At the end of the lecture, he gives special recognition to students who have contributed significantly to the group, ensuring that cooperation becomes a real-life experience in the classroom. One student even shared this sentiment.

Similar values are evident in L4 practices, although they place greater emphasis on politeness as part of classroom etiquette. He always reminds students to enter with a



greeting, ask permission when late, and speak politely. In the core lesson, he linked hadiths about morality to Jambi Malay pantuns, for example, "Take a boat to the other side of the island, the manners are Malay customs." At the end of the lecture, students were asked to write about personal experiences related to maintaining good manners over the past week. One student emphasized that in the L4 class, careless talking was prohibited, so they learned to watch their words.

Furthermore, L5 emphasized the values of honesty and justice from the beginning by telling the story of a land dispute resolution in Jambi that was carried out fairly and peacefully. In the core of the lecture, he developed an academic debate format, but always emphasized that the data used should not be manipulated. Students who lied were immediately reprimanded in front of the class as a lesson. In the conclusion, he guided students in creating a moral contract to maintain honesty in their studies. This practice reminded students that knowledge is only meaningful when founded on justice and honesty.

L6, meanwhile, focused on the value of environmentalism and nature. He began the class with a prayer for the safety of nature, while recounting the tradition of rice planting in Jambi, which is imbued with ecological significance. At the core of the lecture, students were invited to observe campus cleanliness and then relate the results to Quranic verses regarding humanity's role as caliphs on earth. The lecture concluded with an ecotheological reflection that taught students to define their responsibilities to the environment. For him, "the environment is part of faith, and damage to nature means we are negligent as caliphs."

L7 emphasizes the values of hard work and perseverance. He opens the class with stories of the struggles of Jambi people who work in the fields and rivers. In the main lecture, he often assigns challenging assignments, such as reading classical Arabic texts, while guiding students not to give up. The closing session always includes a success-sharing session, where students share their experiences in overcoming challenges that were initially considered difficult. This condition fosters the belief that hard work is the path to success, as is the Jambi philosophy. The value of tolerance is dominant in L8's practices. He begins the class with a story about the *beselang* tradition, which involves visiting each other despite differences in religion or ethnicity. In the main lesson, students are divided into groups with different perspectives: one group discusses the interpretation of the Quran, another group relates it to customs, and then the groups combine their findings. At the end of the lecture, students form a collective agreement to maintain harmony on campus. For L8, "tolerance is not a theory, but a practice that must be cultivated through dialogue without putting each other down."

DISCUSSION

Research findings demonstrate how IRE lecturers at the University of Jambi instill local wisdom values into their teaching practices, ensuring that the classroom is not merely an academic space but also an arena for preserving cultural values imbued with moral significance. As emphasized by Sauri et al. (2021), education grounded in one's own culture will be more vibrant in shaping students' character. Within this framework, L1 begins classes with a congregational prayer resembling the tradition of a prayer feast. This simple practice reflects the connection between spirituality and togetherness. Durkheim (1912) explained that communal rituals can strengthen social solidarity, while Nurbayan & Sanusi (2025) places religiosity as one of the pillars of character education. Research by Sauri & Sanusi (2025) also supports that habituating prayer in learning enhances students' spiritual discipline. Thus, what L1 does is not merely a routine, but rather a way to strengthen religious and collective character.

L2 emphasizes deliberation in almost every classroom process, both in formulating rules and during discussions. This situation closely aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) where social interaction is key to knowledge formation. Sauri et al. (2022) also found that local culture-based deliberation not only trains critical thinking skills but also fosters democratic attitudes. The practice of L2 demonstrates that deliberation in the classroom can serve a dual purpose: as a learning method and as a passed-down value.

The value of cooperation emerges clearly in L3 through concrete group work, not just discourse. Muukkonen & Kajamaa (2024) emphasizes that collaboration enables students to construct meaning collectively. Khatijah et al. (2025) research supports this, showing that cooperation in learning fosters empathy and a sense of responsibility. From this, it can be understood that L3 uses cooperation as a direct experience that shapes students' social character.

L4 emphasizes etiquette by familiarizing students with greetings, permission, and polite speech, and connecting these with Jambi Malay pantun. Sholikah et al. (2025) explained that morality is formed through habituation and role models. This statement aligns Uri et al. (2025) findings that integrating local pantun into religious instruction effectively instills politeness. The L4 practice demonstrates that adab (civility) is not only a religious norm but also part of the oral tradition alive in Jambi society.

L5 chooses the path of honesty and justice by presenting case studies, debates, and moral contracts. Kohlberg's (1981) that discussing ethical dilemmas helps improve students' moral reasoning. Labib et al. (2024) findings also demonstrate that debates based on local cases can foster integrity. Thus, the L5 strategy demonstrates how honesty and justice can serve as ethical foundations in the process of seeking knowledge.

Ecological concern emerged in the L6 class through direct observation and ecotheological reflection. This statement aligns with Intsiful (2025) ecopedagogy, which places the environment as a vital part of critical education. Research Korsant (2024) shows that ecology-based learning fosters students' awareness of nature conservation.



Thus, L6 practices make ecological concern an integral part of faith and character formation.

L7 emphasizes hard work by providing challenging assignments and reflecting on students' personal experiences. Halilsoy (2024) states that self-confidence is born from the experience of overcoming difficulties. Makhlof & Rabahi (2025) also demonstrated that challenge-based learning increases student persistence. This statement indicates that the L7 strategy fosters awareness that hard work is key to success, both academically and in everyday life.

Meanwhile, L8 teaches tolerance by fostering cross-perspective dialogue and linking it to local traditions. Hastuty (2025) emphasized that dialogue is a key tool for promoting inclusive attitudes in multicultural education. This theory is supported by Ahmar & Azzajjad's (2021) findings, which show that local culture-based dialogue strengthens students' social cohesion. L8 practices demonstrate that tolerance is not merely knowledge but also a tangible social skill.

Overall, the integration of local wisdom implemented by L1 through L8 demonstrates that religious values, deliberation, cooperation, courtesy, honesty, environmental stewardship, hard work, and tolerance are not taught merely verbally but are embodied in contextual learning practices. This finding also confirms that ethnopedagogy can be a strategic approach in Islamic Religious Education in higher education to shape student character that is firmly rooted in national culture, yet remains relevant to global needs.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that IRE learning at the University of Jambi focuses not only on the transfer of religious knowledge but also on instilling local wisdom values such as communal prayer, deliberation, cooperation (gotong royong), Malay pantun (pantun), ecological reflection, and the tradition of dialogue. These values are practiced by eight lecturers in their classrooms as an ethnopedagogical approach to instill religiosity, morality, social responsibility, environmental awareness, resilience, and tolerance, thus shaping students as individuals rooted in local culture while also open to global values. However, this study has limitations because it only involved one region in Jambi Province and eight lecturers, focusing on IRE learning practices. Therefore, the long-term impact on student character has not been comprehensively explored. Thus, future research is recommended to expand the scope to other regions and subjects, use mixed approaches and longitudinal designs to measure long-term impacts, and explore the adaptation of ethnopedagogy in digital learning to maintain local wisdom amidst the globalization of education.

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Warni, W., & Afria, R. (2023). The Content of Local Wisdom in Traditional Expressions: Revealing the Characteristics of Jambi Malay Community. *Sosial Budaya*, 20(2), 159-169. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/sb.v20i2.19356>