



Cultural Heritage as a Driver of Educational Choices: Evaluating the Role of Bugis Values in the Selection of Islamic Private Schools in Indonesia

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Abstract

The decision of parents in Bone, South Sulawesi, to send their children to private Islamic schools is significantly influenced by the integration of religious education and Bugis cultural values, particularly the concept of *siri' na pacce*. This study aims to examine how Bugis cultural heritage impacts school selection and how private Islamic schools cater to these needs by incorporating programs that reinforce both religious and local values. Using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, the research involved in-depth interviews with 15 parents. The results indicate that private Islamic schools are more responsive to parental expectations than public schools, offering a curriculum that blends Bugis religious and cultural education. The study identifies five main factors influencing parents' decisions: preservation of cultural identity, strengthening religious values, harmonizing modern and traditional education, promoting culture-based character formation, and preparing students for globalization while maintaining cultural roots. Private Islamic schools in Bone have developed educational models that integrate Islamic teachings with local norms (*pangngadereng*) in response to community needs. This research highlights the importance of cultural heritage in educational decision-making and the role of private institutions in adapting to cultural expectations. The findings offer valuable insights for developing education policies that embrace local wisdom and for creating school management models that respect cultural diversity within Indonesia's education system.

Keywords: Private Islamic Education, Bugis Culture, *Siri' na Pacce*, Cultural Identity, Curriculum Based on Local Values.

Abstrak

Keputusan orang tua di Bone, Sulawesi Selatan, untuk menyekolahkan anak mereka di sekolah Islam swasta sangat dipengaruhi oleh integrasi pendidikan agama dan nilai-nilai budaya Bugis, khususnya konsep siri' na pacce. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana warisan budaya Bugis mempengaruhi pemilihan sekolah dan bagaimana sekolah-sekolah Islam swasta memenuhi kebutuhan tersebut dengan memasukkan program-program yang memperkuat nilai-nilai agama dan lokal. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain fenomenologi,

penelitian ini melibatkan wawancara mendalam dengan 15 orang tua murid. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sekolah-sekolah Islam swasta lebih responsif terhadap harapan orang tua daripada sekolah negeri, dengan menawarkan kurikulum yang memadukan pendidikan agama dan budaya Bugis. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi lima faktor utama yang mempengaruhi keputusan orang tua: pelestarian identitas budaya, memperkuat nilai-nilai agama, menyelaraskan pendidikan modern dan tradisional, mendorong pembentukan karakter berbasis budaya, dan mempersiapkan siswa untuk menghadapi globalisasi dengan tetap mempertahankan akar budaya. Sekolah-sekolah Islam swasta di Bone telah mengembangkan model pendidikan yang mengintegrasikan ajaran Islam dengan norma-norma lokal (pangngadereng) sebagai respons terhadap kebutuhan masyarakat. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya warisan budaya dalam pengambilan keputusan pendidikan dan peran lembaga swasta dalam beradaptasi dengan ekspektasi budaya. Temuan-temuan ini menawarkan wawasan yang berharga untuk mengembangkan kebijakan pendidikan yang merangkul kearifan lokal dan untuk menciptakan model manajemen sekolah yang menghargai keanekaragaman budaya dalam sistem pendidikan Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Islam Privat, Budaya Bugis, Siri' na Pacce, Identitas Budaya, Kurikulum. Berbasis Nilai Lokal.

INTRODUCTION

The choice of parents to send their children to Islamic private elementary schools, albeit at a higher cost, has become a significant phenomenon in various regions of Indonesia (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2019). In 2019, out of a total of all Indonesian students, there were around 21% of students enrolled in private Islamic elementary schools, the figure increased to 24.2% in 2023 (Mulyani et al., 2022). The selection of private schools is experiencing steady growth (Gupta, 2023) (Boterman et al., 2019) mainly because of the interest in education that not only teaches academic knowledge, but also strengthens character education and religious values (Giesenbauer & Müller-Christ, 2020). In Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, which is known for its local cultural values, such as siri' na pacce and Bugis norms (Arisal et al., 2024; Azizah & Mardiana, 2024; Lahmar, 2020; Rugaiyah & Ma'arif, 2025; Syamsuar et al., 2023), the decision of parents to choose an Islamic private school is very relevant.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, cultural capital is the assets owned by a person or group that affect social position and access to education (Pitzalis & Porcu, 2024). Bugis parents see education in Islamic private schools as a means to acquire higher cultural capital (Jamaluddin et al., 2022) (Gulson & Webb, 2012) especially in religious aspects and social norms that are in line with Bugis values (Sidin et al., 2020). This picture shows how important cultural values are in Education (Chwialkowska et al., 2020a). However, studies on this have not received enough attention. Several research trends have discussed the selection of private schools in urban (Asadullah & Maliki, 2018) and semi-urban communities (Ambreen & Hussain, 2020) most of the studies still focus on economic aspects (Ajayi, 2024; Kapor et al., 2020; Kingdon, 2020) and academic performance (Akmalia et al., 2023; Alwi & Mumtahana, 2023; Ferine et al., 2021; Page et al., 2022). Studies that highlight the integration of local cultural perspectives, especially in areas that hold strong cultural values, are still very limited (Brondizio et al., 2021). Another tendency ignores the unique aspects of rural areas with culturally homogeneous communities (Villa & Knutas, 2020).

This study aims to complement the shortcomings in the previous study by focusing on the decision of parents in Bone Regency in choosing private Islamic elementary schools. The main focus of the research is to explore the local Bugis culture (Limpo et al., 2022) and Islamic religious values towards this decision, as well as how Islamic private schools in Bone accommodate these needs better than public schools. The study will also evaluate how the integration of religious education and local culture is carried out in the curriculum of these schools. The aim is to provide deeper insights into the role of private schools in culturally and religiously strong societies and their implications for the development of more inclusive education policies.

The hypothesis raised is that parents in Bone Regency prefer Islamic private elementary schools because public schools are considered to be less responsive to the religious education needs of their children. In addition, this study will also test the assumption that private Islamic schools offer added value in integrating religious education with local Bugis values. By comparing parents' perceptions of public and private schools, this study is expected to find significant differences in quality, public trust, and parental satisfaction.

The findings of this study are expected to have significant implications for the development of education policies in areas with strong cultural and religious characteristics such as Bone Regency. One of the implications is the need to design more inclusive policies, which accommodate religious education in greater depth and sensitivity to local wisdom. This research can be the basis for strengthening the synergy between public and private schools in the preparation of curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the local community. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the formulation of more relevant education policies, both at the local and national levels.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study design (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This approach was chosen because the focus of the research was to understand the experience and perspective of Bugis parents in Bone Regency in choosing Islamic private schools for their children. Phenomenology allows researchers to delve into the meaning behind informants' actions and decisions based on their cultural and religious values. This research lasted for three months, starting from January to June 2024, with the stages of data collection and analysis taking place simultaneously (Moustakas, 1994).

This research was conducted in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, which has a Bugis community with strong *siri' na pacce* cultural values. Data were collected through *in-depth interview* techniques with 15 informants who were parents of Islamic private elementary school students. Interview questions are semi-structured, giving informants the freedom to share their experiences and views regarding school selection (Seidman, 2006). In addition, participatory observation is also carried out to further understand the interaction in the school environment and how cultural and religious values are applied in students' daily (Patton, 2014). Additional documentation such as school profiles and local education policy notes are used to support the research results.

The informants in this study were selected purposively, with the main criteria being parents who are actively involved in their child's education and have a strong Bugis background.

(Creswell & Poth, 2016) The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) interviews were encoded into themes such as the role of cultural values in education, religious motivations, and views on public versus private schools. Data triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure consistency and validity of the findings (Lincoln et al., 1985) The researcher will also conduct *member checking* with several informants to ensure that the interpretation carried out is in accordance with their views.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Role of Local Culture in Educational Preferences: Affirming the Relationship Between Local Values and Islamic Education in the Bugis Community

The results of this study reveal that the motivation of parents in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, in choosing a private Islamic elementary school is greatly influenced by Bugis cultural values, especially the concept of *siri' na pacce*, which is a basic principle in Bugis society that prioritizes honor, dignity, and social balance. Based on data obtained from in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that parents view religious education as very important in the formation of children's character, which is in accordance with the norms of the local community.

Most of the parents interviewed revealed that they chose Islamic private schools because they thought that the school could help their children to become more religious and maintain family honor in accordance with the religious teachings and cultural values of Bugis. For example, one of the mothers of a student at SD Hafiz Al-Qurbah Bone said: *"We chose this school because in addition to teaching religion, my child is also taught about Bugis customs and culture, which is very important to maintain the good name of the family."* A similar sentiment was expressed by the father of another student, who stated: *"Private Islamic schools understand better that we want our children to grow up with strong religious teachings, and to be able to respect and preserve our culture."*

From the results of observations in the field, it can be seen that private Islamic schools in Bone Regency consistently integrate Bugis religious and cultural values in their curriculum. At the school, students not only get teaching about religious science, but also are introduced to Bugis traditions and customs through extracurricular activities, such as training in traditional ceremonies and introduction to Bugis history and language. This is proof that private Islamic schools are more responsive to the needs of parents who want an education that combines religion with local culture.

The documentation obtained also shows that these schools have a curriculum designed to accommodate more in-depth religious teaching, with materials that include morality, worship, and teaching about morality based on Bugis values. Several school curriculum documents obtained during the study show that teaching about *siri' na pacce* is included in the students' character education materials, which are implemented through activities in the classroom and outside the classroom.

In comparison, some parents also expressed dissatisfaction with public schools, which they considered to pay less attention to the religious aspect. One parent said: *"Public schools only focus on general subjects, while our children need a stronger education in religious and cultural aspects."* These

findings show that private Islamic schools in Bone Regency can meet parents' expectations regarding the strengthening of local religion and cultural values, making them a top choice for families who want their children to grow up with a strong understanding of Bugis religion and culture. These findings are expected to contribute to the development of education policies that are more inclusive and relevant to the needs of local communities that have strong cultural strengths such as Bugis.

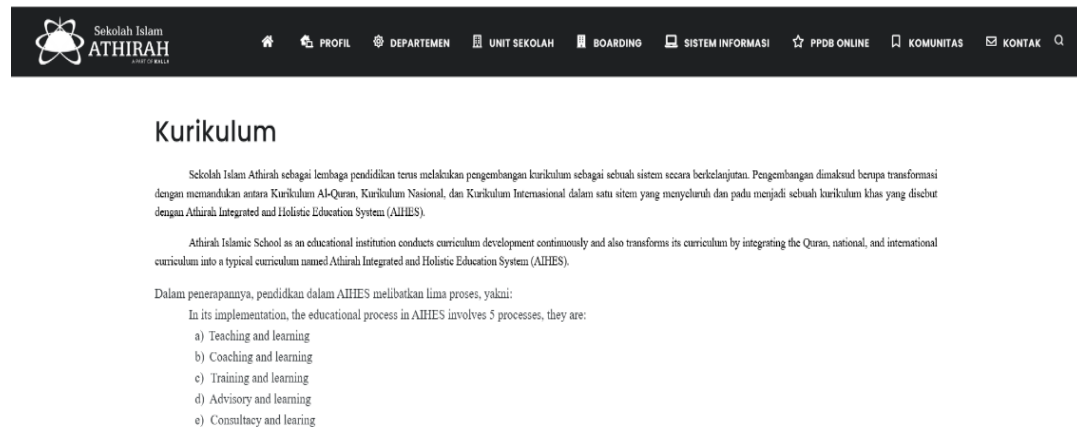


Figure 1 Curriculum at Athirah Islamic Elementary School, Bone Regency

Curriculum that Integrates Religious Education and Local Wisdom

One of the main findings in this study is the success of Islamic private schools in Bone Regency in accommodating parents' expectations to integrate religious curriculum with local wisdom, especially Bugis culture. Based on data collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and school documentation, it can be seen that Islamic private schools in this area have designed a curriculum that not only emphasizes religion, but also instills Bugis cultural values, such as *siri' na pacce'* (honor and dignity).

Most of the parents interviewed stated that the tahfidz (memorization of the Qur'an) program was one of the main reasons they chose Islamic private schools. This was evident in an interview with Mr. M (45 years old), one of the parents of students at SD Hafizh Al-Qurbah Bone, who stated: *"We chose this school because my child can learn religion better, especially in tahfidz Al-Qur'an, which is very important to us. In addition, they also teach Bugis cultural values, such as honor and maintaining family honor."* A similar statement was also expressed by Mrs. A (38 years old), who said: *"The religious education provided in this school is in line with our desire, not only memorizing the Qur'an, but also understanding how Bugis religious and cultural values should be applied in daily life."*

Observations conducted in several schools show that this tahfidz program is not only teaching memorization of the Qur'an, but also equipped with activities that integrate local Bugis values, such as respecting personal dignity (*siri'*) and maintaining harmonious social relationships. At SD Islam Atirah Bone, for example, students are not only taught about the importance of worship, but also given learning about how to respect their parents and be in line with religious teachings and Bugis cultural values. In one of the teaching sessions, it was seen that the teacher associated tahfidz material with traditional Bugis stories that teach the importance of maintaining self-respect, which is highly appreciated in Bugis culture.

Documentation obtained from the schools that are the subjects of this study shows that the existing curriculum not only focuses on the formal Islamic religious curriculum, but also inserts very strong local cultural values. The curriculum documents obtained from SD Islam Athirah and SD Hafizh Al-Qurbah include material on social ethics based on the concept of *siri'*, which is taught to students from an early age. In addition, extracurricular programs such as training in Bugis traditional ceremonies and planting Bugis character are part of strengthening students' character.

With this curriculum that integrates the Bugis religious and cultural curriculum, Islamic private schools in Bone Regency show an excellent response to the expectations of parents who want an education that not only teaches religious knowledge, but also strengthens children's cultural identity. These findings provide evidence that education that combines local religious and cultural values can play an important role in shaping children's character in accordance with local educational values.



Figure 2 Integration of Bugis Culture in Activities

Alignment of School Vision with Parents' Expectations

One of the main findings in this study is the importance of alignment between the school's vision and parents' expectations in influencing them to choose a private Islamic primary school in Bone Regency. Based on in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation conducted, it was found that parents tended to choose schools whose vision was in line with their expectations to develop the spiritual aspects of their children, with the main capital in the teaching of the Qur'an and the application of Islamic values in daily life.

Based on the results of interviews with several parents, they revealed that the school's vision of prioritizing religious education as a top priority is one of the main keys in choosing a school. For example, Mrs. R (42 years old), one of the parents of students at SD Islam Rabbani, said: *"We chose this school because of its clear vision, which is to produce a generation that has character and respects the teachings of Islam. We want our children to grow up with a strong understanding of religion and be able to apply it in their daily lives."* The same thing was also conveyed by Mr. H (47 years old), who

said: *"This school puts religious education as the most important thing, this is in accordance with our expectations so that our children are not only good academically, but also good in character and morals."*

Observations made in several schools show that a vision that supports children's spiritual development is reflected in various activities organized in schools. At SD Islam Rabbani, for example, students are taught to memorize the Qur'an as part of the main curriculum, and each class begins with daily prayers, which emphasizes the importance of making religion a part of the daily routine. In addition, this school also organizes activities such as weekly recitation and in-depth moral training, which leads to strengthening the character of students in accordance with religious teachings and Bugis cultural values.

The documentation obtained from the curriculum and school programs shows that religious education is not only taught theoretically, but also applied practically in everyday life. For example, in the curriculum document of SD Islam Athirah, it can be seen that each subject has elements that integrate religious and cultural values, such as learning about Islamic morals and *siri'* (honor) taught in the context of Bugis people's life. These programs not only aim to teach religious knowledge, but also to shape children's character in accordance with local social and cultural norms.

These findings show that Islamic private schools in Bone Regency are very much in line with the expectations of parents who want an education that is not only based on academics, but also on strengthening local religious and cultural values. The alignment of the school's vision with parents' expectations is very important in creating an educational atmosphere that supports the development of children's character and spirituality, as well as strengthening the relationship between the school, parents, and education in the context of a strong Bugis culture. Thus, the results of this study provide an important basis for the development of more relevant and sustainable education policies in regions with local cultural strengths such as Bugis.

Policy Implications

The results of this study provide important insights related to the influence of local Bugis wisdom in influencing parents' decision to choose a private Islamic elementary school in Bone Regency. Based on interviews with parents of students, most of them expressed a preference for schools that integrate religious education and local culture. For example, Mr. S (50 years old) from SD Islam Athirah stated: *"We chose this school because they teach religion while maintaining Bugis cultural values, which are important for the character of our children."* Observations have shown that Islamic private schools are more responsive to these needs by providing a curriculum that includes materials on Bugis religion and culture, such as in *tahfidz* programs and teaching *siri'* values.

Documentation of the curriculum and programs in schools shows that local religious and cultural education is a top priority, with the aim of forming a generation that is not only religious, but also respects local social and cultural norms. This is inversely proportional to public schools which, according to some parents, do not emphasize religious education and morality enough in their curriculum.

These findings confirm the need for a more inclusive and responsive education policy to local needs, given the importance of integrating religious and cultural values in education in

areas with strong cultural characteristics, such as Bone Regency. Thus, education policies that encourage synergy between private and public schools will be more relevant and beneficial for the development of an education system that is in accordance with the needs of the community.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Local Culture in Educational Preferences: Affirming the Relationship Between Local Values and Islamic Education in the Bugis Community

In a study on the role of local culture in school selection, this study reveals that Bugis cultural values have a significant influence on parents' decisions in choosing education for their children, especially in choosing Islamic private schools. These findings show that parents' decisions are not only based on academic considerations or the quality of education alone, but are also influenced by cultural values that have long been rooted in the life of the Bugis community.

The value of *siri' na pacce*, which is a concept of honor and social solidarity in Bugis culture (Djawas et al., 2023) is one of the main factors influencing parents' choices in children's education. *Siri' na pacce* reflects the importance of personal integrity (Syatar et al., 2023) and harmonious relationships between individuals in society, which in the context of education, translates as the need to choose an educational institution that not only provides knowledge but also teaches moral and social values (Avita et al., 2022; Azkiya et al., 2024; Khasanah et al., 2024; Rohmah et al., 2023) that are in accordance with the local culture (Pabbajah et al., 2021). By choosing an Islamic private school, parents feel that the religious education offered in the institution is in line with the preservation and strengthening of their cultural values.

The development communication theory put forward by Kramsch (Kramsch, 2014) also provides a strong foundation for understanding this phenomenon (Kramsch, 2014). According to Kramsch, in a society rich in local culture, educational decision-making is often influenced by cultural values that have long been accepted and respected by society. In the context of the Bugis community, these cultural values not only serve to maintain social harmony, but also serve as the basis for choosing a form of education that can strengthen their cultural identity (Arisal et al., 2024; Maisyaroh et al., 2023).

In addition, in the theory of modernity adapted in this study, it was found that even though the Bugis people live in an increasingly modern era, they still try to maintain and preserve their traditional values (Sidin et al., 2020). This is reflected in the selection of religious education institutions as a means to transform cultural values into a more formal form (Ratten, 2023). Religion-based education, especially Islamic education, is not only seen as a place to acquire religious knowledge (Alazmi & Bush, 2024) but also as a vehicle to strengthen existing local cultural identities. Chwialkowska (Chwialkowska et al., 2020a) explains that in a culturally strong society, religious education institutions serve as an important tool for preserving and transmitting local cultural values to the younger generation.

The implications of these findings show that education not only functions as a tool to convey knowledge, but also as a medium to maintain and pass on local cultural values. Therefore, parents in the Bugis community tend to choose Islamic private schools that can meet both aspects, namely providing quality religious education while supporting the preservation of local culture that they have embraced for a long time. This is important considering the challenges of globalization and modernity which often threaten the preservation of traditional

culture (Sidin et al., 2020) In this case, Islamic private schools play the role of guardians of cultural identities that are highly valued by the Bugis community.

Thus the relationship between local culture and education not only functions as a normative aspect, but also as a form of collective effort in maintaining cultural heritage in the midst of the changing currents of the times (Pabbajah et al., 2021) This explains why parents in the Bugis community are more likely to choose schools that are able to integrate local cultural values with an educational curriculum that is relevant to the times.

Integration of Religious and Cultural Curriculum: Challenges and Opportunities in Islamic Education

Education that integrates local religion and culture is an increasingly relevant topic in the Indonesian education system. In the context of the Bugis community, which has very distinctive cultural values, such as *siri' na pacce*, the importance of integration between the religious curriculum and local culture becomes increasingly clear. Research conducted by Pitzalis and Porcu confirms that a faith-based curriculum can play a crucial role in strengthening students' cultural identities, especially in areas that have a strong cultural heritage (Pitzalis & Porcu, 2024) The implementation of a curriculum that combines Islamic religious education with local cultural values can shape the character of students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also connected to their cultural roots. This has become very important in Bone Regency, where the tahfidz program has become a symbol of Islamic values-based education that not only deepens religious understanding, but also strengthens local cultural identity (Karim et al., 2022; Ma'arif et al., 2025)

However, the integration between the national curriculum based on national education standards and the curriculum based on local religion and culture still presents challenges (Parker, 2017) These challenges are often related to the need to maintain a balance between the demands of modern education and the preservation of traditional values. Gupta (2023) emphasized that many schools in rural areas face this dilemma, where education that is too oriented towards the national curriculum can lead to the marginalization of local and religious values (Gupta, 2023; Hasanah & Maarif, 2021; Ma'arif et al., 2024) On the other hand, a curriculum that focuses too much on religious education and local culture can also limit students' ability to compete at the global level (Sjøen, 2023) Therefore, a more flexible approach is needed that is able to accommodate both of these aspects without sacrificing one or the other.

As a solution to this challenge, a contextual-based or community-based curriculum approach can be a more effective option. This approach emphasizes the importance of local cultural context in designing educational curricula. Chwialkowska argues that education that integrates local cultural values in religious learning will enrich students' learning experience, while strengthening their relationship with their cultural identity (Chwialkowska et al., 2020a) This approach also accommodates the need to provide education that is relevant to the social and cultural context in which students grow and develop. For example, in the Bugis community, values such as mutual cooperation and loyalty to customs play a very important role in shaping the character of students who are not only religious, but also maintain the preservation of their culture.

In practice, education that integrates local religion and culture can provide many opportunities for students (Masturin, 2024) develop intellectual abilities while forming a more

mature character based on traditional values. Schools that implement a curriculum that combines religious education with local culture tend to produce students who value their cultural heritage more, while still opening up opportunities for success in the wider world. In this case, the curriculum based on local religion and culture is not only about preservation, but also the development of future-oriented characters.

Alignment of School Vision and Parents' Expectations in School Selection in the Bugis Community

The choice of school by parents does not only depend on the academic aspect alone, but is also greatly influenced by the alignment between the school's vision and parents' expectations. This study found that parents in Bone Regency, especially from the Bugis community, want schools that not only provide quality education, but also be able to produce a religious and virtuous generation. This reflects the importance of religious and cultural values in the process of children's education. Rahman (Ilham & Rahman, 2024) in their research on social development, linked parental motivation with a school vision that is in line with building children's character. In the context of Bugis society, where cultural and religious values are highly valued, parents tend to choose schools that are able to educate their children with an approach that strengthens their moral and spiritual character.

In addition, the theory of modernity communication put forward by Chwialkowska explains that alignment of vision between parents and schools can only be achieved if there is effective two-way communication (Chwialkowska et al., 2020b) Parents in Bone County not only hope that the school teaches science, but also integrates traditional and religious values that are part of their cultural identity. Religious education and local culture, such as *siri' na pacce* in Bugis society, are the main key in the development of students' character. Therefore, good communication between parents and the school is very important to ensure that the desired educational vision can be realized in the daily life of students, both in the school environment and at home.

This research also confirms the view that value-based education, especially those involving religious and cultural values, has a significant contribution to the development of social character. Experts point out that in societies with strong cultural roots, such as the Bugis people, education not only serves to provide knowledge, but also to preserve and strengthen cultural identity (Berlian & Huda, 2022; Chen et al., 2020; Suhra, 2023) This is in line with the view that education that integrates local values and religion can create a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also has a character that is in line with the expectations of parents. Thus, education based on these values can play an important role in building a cultured and religious society, in accordance with the vision of parents in Bone Regency.

Therefore, it is important for schools to understand the expectations of parents who want a balanced education between science and local religious and cultural values. The implementation of a curriculum that combines these two aspects will not only strengthen the character of students, but also maintain the preservation of local culture that is the pride of the Bugis people. This research provides insight that the alignment between the school vision and parents' expectations in choosing a school is a key factor in forming a generation that can keep pace with the demands of globalization without forgetting their cultural roots.

Implications for Education Policy and Recommendations for Further Research

The implications of this study are not only relevant for Bone Regency, but can also provide important insights for the development of education policies in other areas that have strong cultural characteristics. This research shows that education that integrates religious values and local culture plays an important role in shaping students' character and identity. Therefore, education policies that are more inclusive and sensitive to the local cultural context need to be prioritized. Policies that are able to accommodate cultural and religious differences in the education system will be more effective in facilitating the formation of a young generation who not only excel in academics, but also have sensitivity to local values that have been inherited.

This is in line with the recommendation delivered by Ilham, who emphasized that education policies that are responsive to local needs will have a positive impact on the development of students' character (Ilham & Rahman, 2024). They revealed that policies that recognize the importance of local culture in education will produce students who not only have global competence, but also a sense of pride in their cultural heritage. Therefore, education policies in regions with strong cultural characteristics should be designed to create a flexible curriculum, which can integrate local religious and cultural values in a balanced manner without sacrificing the quality of national education (Habsah et al., 2024).

Furthermore, this research also opens up opportunities for further research on the adaptation of public schools in facing the needs of communities that have strong local cultural characteristics. Such research can explore the challenges faced by public schools in integrating local values, as well as strategies that can be implemented to create an educational atmosphere that is inclusive and relevant to the local cultural context. In addition, further research is needed to assess the long-term impact of religious and cultural values-based education on the formation of students' identities and their contribution to future social progress. This research can provide deeper insights into how value-based education can strengthen social cohesion and enrich cultural diversity at the global level.

CONCLUSION

This study found a very effective integration between religious education, especially the tahfidz Al-Qur'an program, and local Bugis cultural values, especially the concept *of siri' na pacce* (honor and dignity), in the curriculum of private Islamic elementary schools in Bone Regency. Prior to this study, there was no evidence to suggest that private Islamic schools could bring these two elements together in a cohesive curriculum. These findings suggest that the incorporation of religious teachings with respect for local culture has been a major factor in parental choice for private Islamic schools in Bone. This provides a new understanding of parents' motivation in choosing a school, especially in the context of the Bugis community which is rich in cultural values.

This research makes an important contribution to the study of Islamic education, especially in areas with strong local wisdom, such as the Bugis community. In contrast to previous studies that tended to separate religious education and local culture, this study presents empirical evidence on how these two elements can be effectively integrated in one education system. This research introduces a new conceptual model called "religious-cultural-based education," which incorporates elements of local religion and culture as a foundation in

curriculum development. This model is expected to be an important reference in the development of educational curricula in regions with strong cultural characteristics, as well as contribute to the formulation of more inclusive and contextual education policies.

Although it provides significant findings, this study has some limitations that need to be considered in future studies. The main limitation lies in the limited sample of private Islamic primary schools in Bone Regency, so the results cannot be generalized to other areas in South Sulawesi or Indonesia as a whole. This research also only focuses on the level of primary education, while the level of secondary education may have different dynamics. In terms of methodology, the qualitative approach (interviews and observations) used has not made it possible to directly measure the impact of the integration of religious and cultural values on students' academic achievement.

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