Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh: Building Transformative Islamic Education Based on Aceh's Local Wisdom

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Abstract

Transformative Islamic Education goes beyond the delivery of the national curriculum to include social concerns that foster personal and communal growth. This study aims to explore and analyze the role of local Acehnese values, framed in the concepts of '*Adat Geunareh*, *Syariat Geunaseh*', in developing a local wisdom-based transformative Islamic education model. This research is qualitative, with an ethnographic design, conducted through in-depth interviews and participant observation in formal and non-formal Islamic educational institutions in Aceh, alongside pertinent documentation. Crucial discoveries have demonstrated an Islamic transformative education model in Acehnese society, integrating Adat and Sharia as a single interdependent value system that fortifies life in the community and in Education. Through Islamic Education, local value folklore, traditional *dhikr*, and *khanduri*, are not only sustained but also integrated into the curriculum and culture. In this model, the study identified the following features: integrated, participatory, emancipatory, and contextual-culture. The originality of this study lies in demonstrating how both formal and informal Islamic educational institutions in Aceh can effectively incorporate customary and Sharia-based local values into the national curriculum within a pluralistic society. The results highlight the importance of revising education policies to reflect local cultural characteristics and religious values better.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Local Wisdom, Geunareh Customs, Geunaseh Sharia, Social Transformation.

Abstrak

Pendidikan Islam transformatif tidak hanya berfokus pada transfer kurikulum nasional, tetapi juga memiliki kepekaan sosial yang mengarah pada perbaikan diri dan masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali dan menganalisis peran nilai lokal Aceh yang terformulasi dalam konsep "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" dalam membentuk model pendidikan Islam transformatif berbasis kearifan lokal. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografis, yang dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif di beberapa lembaga pendidikan Islam formal dan nonformal di Aceh dan dokumentasi yang relevan.. Temuan penting telah

menunjukkan suatu model pendidikan Islam transpormatif dalam masyarakat Aceh dalam mengimplementasikan adat dan syariat sebagai satu kesatuan nilai yang saling menguatkan dalam kehidupan sosial dan pendidikan. Nilai-nilai lokal seperti hikayat, zikir adat, dan tradisi kenduri tidak hanya dilestarikan, tetapi juga diintegrasikan ke dalam proses pendidikan Islam baik secara kurikuler maupun kultural. Penelitian ini juga menemukan empat karakter utama dari model pendidikan Islam transformatif berbasis lokal, yaitu: integratif, partisipatif, emansipatoris, dan dimensi kontekstual-kultural. Lembaga Pendidikan Islam formal dan nonformal di Aceh telah menerapkan model pendidikan yang transformatif antara kurikulum nasional dengan adat dan syariat dalam konsep "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" sebagai respons terhadap kebutuhan Masyarakat. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada kemampuan lembaga pendidikan Islam formal dan nonformal di Aceh dalam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai adat dan syariat yang relevan dengan kurikulum nasional dan masyarakat yang pluralistik. Oleh karena itu, penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk diperlukan rekonstruksi kebijakan pendidikan yang lebih responsif terhadap kekhasan budaya dan religiusitas masyarakat setempat.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Islam, Kearifan Lokal, Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh, Transformasi Sosial*

INTRODUCTION

In a world that is becoming more culturally similar, Aceh shows that Islamic education can be more meaningful and impactful when it is based on its own local knowledge. *Adat Geunareh and Syariat Geunaseh* highlight that balancing tradition with Islamic law can serve as a model for Islamic education worldwide (Eko et al., 2020); (Lyesmaya et al., 2020);(Lestari et al., 2024); (Yumnah et al., 2021). This approach helps maintain cultural identity while also adjusting to new times. In Indonesia, education that is connected to local wisdom is believed to teach cultural, ethical, and moral values that match the real-life situations and communities where students grow up and engage with others (Kosim et al., 2021)(Saihu et al., 2020). However, in Aceh, a region long governed by Islamic law and deeply rooted in traditional customs, Islamic education is encountering new challenges as a result of globalization, increasing technological influence, and the spread of popular culture, all of which are gradually undermining traditional values. Many Islamic educational institutions continue to follow a standardized, nationally based curriculum, which makes them less responsive to the unique socio-cultural characteristics of Aceh (Abubakar, 2022; Hasan et al., 2024; Muhlis et al., 2025).

This causes a mismatch between the Islamic knowledge that students learn in school and their everyday lives in a community that follows the idea of "*Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh*." This belief has been the main way of living for Acehnese people for a long time, mixing Islamic teachings with traditions that have been passed down through generations (Hadiati & Setianingrum, 2025); (Lahmar, 2020). In this context, the current research centers on a mainly qualitative and conceptual issue, specifically exploring how the philosophy of adat and sharia can be effectively integrated into the structures and practices of Islamic education, rather than focusing solely on statistical measurements (Mujiburrahman et al., 2024; Syamsuar et al., 2023; Zainudin et al., 2025).

In the literature, various studies have highlighted the significance of local wisdom as a foundation for developing humanistic, contextually relevant, and character-oriented education (Wildan et al., 2023). Several studies explore how local traditions can serve as an effective medium for shaping character, promoting religious moderation, and reinforcing national identity (Hidayah et al., 2019; Syarif et al., 2024); (Ibrahim & Kholis, 2024); (Nursetialloh,

2017). These studies include analyses of cultural transformation in education, the design of Islamic education rooted in local traditions, and investigations into the integration of traditional values into learning environments within schools and Islamic boarding schools education (Encung, 2023); (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Through this body of work, local wisdom-based education has been positioned as a vital component of contemporary Islamic educational discourse, aiming to move beyond abstract and text-centered pedagogical approaches that lack connection to social reality (Musslifah et al., 2025; Rugaiyah & Ma`arif, 2025; Syamsuar et al., 2023; Umar et al., 2025). Yet, this literature has not sufficiently addressed how such local philosophies are operationalized at the level of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Most studies remain at a normative level, recognizing the importance of custom and sharia, but without systematically explaining how these principles can guide concrete educational design, especially in the specific context of Aceh.

Despite the growing body of research examining the relationship between Islamic education and local culture in various regions, including Bali, Java, and others, there remains a significant gap in studies that explicitly explore the philosophy of "Adat" in the context of Islamic education in Aceh (Taufik, 2024). Existing studies often focus on normative recognition of the importance of custom and sharia, without exploring how these philosophies are operationalized in curriculum design, learning strategies, and evaluation systems in Islamic educational institutions. The current article is therefore necessary to build upon and expand these previous studies by shifting from broad remarks on the significance of adat and sharia to a more specific, organized, and practical approach. In other words, current research has not thoroughly explored the structural and practical aspects of integrating custom Sharia into both formal and informal education settings in Aceh.

This study is based on certain social facts and areas where more research is needed. Its main purpose is to create and explain in detail how the philosophy of "*Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh*" can be embraced and applied within the Islamic education system in Aceh. This goes beyond just highlighting the value of local wisdom. The study also aims to build a clear theory and a practical plan that connects the values of adat and syariat with how the curriculum is designed, how teaching is done, and the overall culture of the educational institutions. This research is meant to fill in the gaps left by earlier studies, which often overlook important parts like how the curriculum is planned clearly, the methods used to teach effectively, and ways to check if traditional and sharia values are really being lived out in education. It also aims to find out what works best in combining local customs and sharia in different Islamic schools, figure out the obstacles they face because of their structure or culture, and look at how these obstacles affect students' behavior, beliefs, and how they relate to others. With this focus, the main goal of the research is not just to describe the situation, but also to give a clear idea and real-life plans that Islamic schools in Aceh can use and improve upon.

Following this, the main point of this article is that "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" philosophy should be seen not only as a sign of Acehnese cultural identity, but also as a way to teach Islamic law that creatively combines traditional values with sharia teachings in a way that changes things. This argument is grounded in the fact that, although many studies discuss the importance of local wisdom and the relationship between adat and

syariah, there is still no empirical research that examines in depth how these two value systems are systematically integrated into the Islamic education curriculum and institutional culture in Aceh. To address this gap, the present study aims (1) to analyze how actors in formal and non-formal Islamic educational institutions understand and interpret This argument is grounded in the fact that, although many studies discuss the importance of local wisdom and the relationship between adat and syariah, there is still no empirical research that examines in depth how these two value systems are systematically integrated into the Islamic education curriculum and institutional culture in Aceh. On this foundation, the primary argument of this article is that the philosophy of "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" should be interpreted not only as a symbol of Acehnese cultural identity, but as a normative–practical framework for Islamic education that creatively integrates customary values with sharia teachings in a transformative way. This argument is grounded in the fact that, although many studies discuss the importance of local wisdom and the relationship between adat and syariah, there is still no empirical research that examines in depth how these two value systems are systematically integrated into the Islamic education curriculum and institutional culture in Aceh.

METHOD

This study applies a qualitative ethnographic approach to explore the practices and meanings of integrating Adat Geunareh and Syari'at Geunaseh into Islamic education in Aceh. Ethnography was chosen because it allows researchers to understand patterns of action, symbols, and cultural values as they are practiced naturally by the community within its social context (Creswell, 2016). The research was conducted over four months (February–May 2025) in Aceh Besar, Pidie, and Bireuen, three regions purposively selected because they still maintain customary and sharia traditions in Islamic education practices. Subjects consisted of 18 key informants, including traditional leaders, religious leaders (teungku dayah), madrasah teachers, TPA managers, and local communities. The selection of informants combined purposive and snowball techniques, adapting to the needs of exploring cultural meanings.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore informants' understanding of the relationship between custom and sharia and educational practices (Patton, 2014).
To provide a clearer overview of the diversity and distribution of informants, Table 1 summarizes the pseudonyms, roles, locations, and length of experience of the 18 key informants involved in this study.

Table 1. Summary of Key Informants

No	Pseudonym	Role	District	Years of Experience
1	Tgk. Ml	Religious leader (teungku dayah)	Aceh Besar	25
2	Tgk. Rhm	Religious leader (teungku dayah)	Aceh Besar	18
3	Tgk. Sl	Religious leader (teungku dayah)	Pidie	20
4	Tgk. Jfr	Religious leader (teungku dayah)	Bireuen	15
5	Pak Hsn	Traditional leader (adat figure)	Aceh Besar	30
6	Pak Jl	Traditional leader (adat figure)	Pidie	22
7	Pak Umr	Traditional leader (adat figure)	Bireuen	19

8	Ibu Syrf	Madrasah teacher	Aceh Besar	12
9	Ibu Rn	Madrasah teacher	Aceh Besar	8
10	Pak Zlkf	Madrasah teacher	Pidie	10
11	Ibu Mrm	Madrasah teacher	Pidie	14
12	Pak Rdw	Madrasah teacher	Bireuen	9
13	Ibu Hlh	TPA manager	Aceh Besar	11
14	Pak Ysf	TPA manager	Pidie	7
15	Ibu Nr	TPA manager	Bireuen	6
16	Pak Fdl	Community member (custom–sharia activist)	Aceh Besar	10
17	Ibu Ltf	Community member (parent–community representative)	Pidie	5
18	Pak Iskr	Community member (youth leader)	Bireuen	7

Participant observation was conducted at meunasah (Islamic boarding schools), dayah (Islamic boarding schools), madrasah (Islamic school), peusijuek (Islamic remembrance gatherings), kenduri (celebratory gatherings), traditional dhikr (remembrance of God), and other socio-religious activities to capture cultural expressions and interaction patterns. Documentation included curricula, institutional archives, traditional manuscripts, and customary records that demonstrate the construction of values in local education.

The analysis was conducted following Spradley's ethnographic model, through four systematic stages: first, domain analysis, to identify initial categories of meaning; second, taxonomic analysis, to map the structure of the categories; third, component analysis, to identify distinguishing dimensions between cultural practices; and fourth, cultural theme analysis, to identify major themes that explain the relationship between custom and sharia in education. This process is accompanied by interactive analysis (reduction, display, and verification) to maintain consistent interpretation. Validity testing is conducted through triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking, and prolonged engagement, allowing for in-depth understanding and verification of the sociocultural context. Field notes, analytical memos, and documentation support an audit trail that ensures transparency in the analysis process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Community Understanding of the Concept of *"Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh"*

The phrase "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" philosophically describes the functional relationship between custom and religion: custom as the body, sharia as the soul. In social practice, custom serves as a value system that regulates relationships between people and communities, while sharia serves as the divine principle that inspires and guides custom to remain in line with Islamic values. This understanding is recognized not only by traditional elders and religious figures, but also by the general public. This is evident in customary practices such as *peusijuek*, *khanduri blang* (Ramadhan et al., 2024), and customary deliberations, which are always based on Islamic values. *"In our village, custom is a way of life. But it cannot be*

separated from Islamic law. If a custom is not in accordance with Islamic law, we abandon it and change it..”(Tgk. Mi, Aceh Besar, 2025)

Most people acquire this understanding through cultural, rather than formal, education. Customary and sharia values are instilled from an early age through stories and tales of traditional and Islamic figures (Rustan Effendi et al., 2020), proverbs in Acehnese such as "we talk about customs, we associate them with syariat” (*ta peugah ngon adat, ta keu nyan ngon syariat*), the active role of religious and traditional figures in socio-religious activities. In the meunasah, children learn to recite the Koran while absorbing social values such as good manners, respect for parents, and helping each other, all of which are framed in tradition.*“Children used to learn manners and religion together. If you make a mistake, not only will you be punished by the teacher, but you will also be advised according to custom” (*Pak Ysf, 2025*)*

Therefore, the harmony between custom and sharia is clearly evident in religious and social activities. Practices such as peusijuek are performed before the Hajj pilgrimage, as an expression of prayer and blessing. Celebratory feasts (*khanduri*) is held to express gratitude for blessings, such as a bumper harvest or to commemorate the Prophet's birthday. Customary deliberations are held to resolve community problems in a family-like manner and in accordance with Islamic principles of justice (Taufik, 2024). If a customary practice conflicts with Islamic teachings, the community seeks to correct or replace it. This demonstrates a critical, transformative approach to maintaining harmony between custom and Islamic law (Qian, 2022).

In the Islamic anthropological approach, as proposed by Clifford Geertz (Riady, 2021) and further developed by Talal Asad, religion is not seen as an entity separate from culture, but rather internalized in the social and symbolic practices of society (Wendry, 2016). In the context of Aceh, Islam is not only present in the form of sacred texts, but also in traditional rites and cultural symbols.

Transformative Islamic education according to Jack Mezirow (Fleming, 2020) and then contextualized by Muslim figures such as Azyumardi Azra (Ninla Elmawati Falabiba, 2019); (Nuryanti et al., 2025) dan M. Amin Abdullah (Nusi, 2021);(Arcanita, 2023); (Anshori & Abidin, 2014) emphasis on the importance of integration between local values and Islamic teachings in the educational process. The primary goal is to produce perfect human beings who are able to think critically, act ethically, and respect the values of local wisdom. Therefore, the community's understanding of the concept of "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" is a crucial foundation for establishing a transformative, contextual, and down-to-earth Islamic education model.

So that "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" has implications for Islamic education which can be implemented through, firstly, a contextual curriculum (Bradfield & Exley, 2020) by incorporating local content such as traditional proverbs, folk tales, and Islamic traditional practices into religious learning materials. Second, a cultural approach (Huang & Ng, 2021) by prioritizing culture-based learning methods such as traditional dhikr, traditional educational games, and visits to Acehnese Islamic historical sites (Ansya et al., 2024) namely involving village imams, traditional elders, and women figures as part of the educational community that transfers Islamic and traditional values.

Thus, the concept of "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" not only reflects harmony between culture and religion, but also becomes an important foundation in building Islamic education that is transformative, rooted in local values, and socio-culturally relevant.

Transformation of Local Values in the Islamic Education System

The research results show that local Acehnese values have undergone a transformation process in the Islamic education system, both in formal institutions (madrasas, Islamic schools) and non-formal ones (dayah, TPA, *meunasah*)(Asmanto et al., 2023). This transformation is evident in the integration of local culture into the curriculum, methods, and even socio-religious interactions.

The practice of Islamic education in Aceh makes extensive use of local cultural values as learning instruments, including the use of the Acehnese language in explaining moral and monotheistic material, conveying local Islamic tales (such as the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*) to build spiritual enthusiasm and love for the homeland, and cultivating Acehnese manners as part of Islamic character education.

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The transformation of local values also functions as a medium for cultural preservation (Rochayanti et al., 2019); (Shufa & Tito Pangesti Adji, 2024);(Eko et al., 2020). Islamic educational institutions not only transfer religious knowledge, but also revive Islamic customary practices through the rituals of *kenduri maulid, zikir saman*, and *marhaban* used to strengthen social ties and spirituality, and mutual cooperation (*meuseuraya*) carried out in school and Islamic boarding school activities as a form of Islamic social education based on customary values (Sahin, 2018); (Lahmar, 2020). *"If it is not taught through school or Dayah, today's children will no longer know traditional dhikr or kenduri customs. This is where we maintain tradition"* (Ibu Mrm, 2025)

Theoretically, this transformation can be understood through an Islamic anthropological approach, particularly in the thinking of Talal Asad, who emphasizes that Islam is not only present as a universal doctrine, but is also manifested in local cultural practices through symbols, rituals, and systems of meaning (Wendry, 2016). In this framework, Islamic education that adopts local values is not a form of deviation from normative Islam, but rather part of the process of "cultural Islamization" which actually strengthens the depth of Islamic meaning in certain social contexts (Sahin, 2018); (Rangkuti et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the theory of cultural-transformative education (Fleming, 2020) which was later contextualized by M. Amin Abdullah (Arcanita, 2023), supports this approach as an effort to epistemologically liberate education that is alienated from local realities. In this way, Islamic education does not merely transfer knowledge, but also forms a down-to-earth cultural and religious awareness.

Table 2. Thematic Connection between Transformative Islamic Education and Local Knowledge in Aceh

No	Thematic Category	Key Local Wisdom Elements	Associated Dimension of Transformative Islamic Education	Illustration from Field Data / References
1	'Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh' as understood by the community	Syariah as "soul" and custom as "body"; proverb; critical approach toward customs that conflict with Islam	Integrative and normative (adat and syariah harmonization)	Interview examples; peusijuek, khanduri blang
2	Informal dissemination of adat-syariah principles	Proverbs, meunasah learning, and hikayat	Contextual–cultural	Meunasah teaches kids religion and manners.
3	Transformation of local values	Hikayat Prang Sabi, Acehnese, Kenduri, and Zikir	Identity-building and emancipatory	Preservation of traditional dhikr and rituals
4	Islamic education that upholds regional knowledge	Dhikr Friday night; hikayat; meuseuraya	Community-based and participatory	Collective religion and cultural customs
5	Curriculum implications	Subjects that incorporate local material	Contextualization of the curriculum	Pupils are more engaged

Islamic Education as a Medium for Preserving Local Wisdom

Islamic education in Aceh plays a strategic role not only as a vehicle for transmitting religious knowledge, but also as a medium for preserving local wisdom (Idris & Suroto, 2023). Aceh's local wisdom, embedded in customs, language, rituals, and social values, has not simply disappeared amidst the tides of modernization and globalization, as it finds space within a vibrant and contextual education system. Islamic education provides a space for the revitalization of various traditional practices and values in accordance with Islamic law (Abdullah, 2017). Aceh's local wisdom, embedded in customs, language, rituals, and social values, has not simply disappeared amidst the tides of modernization and globalization, as it finds space within a vibrant and contextual education system. Islamic education provides a space for the revitalization of various traditional practices and values in accordance with Islamic law. *"At our Islamic boarding school, every Friday night there's a traditional dhikr (recitation of God). The children not only recite dhikr, but also learn about its history and values. This is part of our moral education.." (*Tgk. Sl, 2025*)*

Activities such as performing hikayat (fairy tales) or exchanging Islamic pantun (reciprocal poetry) also serve as educational tools that enrich the learning experience, while simultaneously preserving the Acehnese language and local narrative style among the younger generation. Non-formal institutions such as traditional Islamic study groups (*meunasah*), TPA (Islamic kindergartens), and village religious study groups play a vital role in preserving traditions. In the *meunasah*, children not only learn to read and write the qur'an, but also local manners such as how to speak politely, respect elders, and ethics in social interactions. *"We*

instill in our children: if you want to speak to your parents, you must use the traditional language. You must not be rude. That's part of the Islamic law, too." (Ibu Nr, 2025)

Traditions that are still strong in Acehnese society include mutual cooperation (*meuseuraya*), delivering food between neighbors, and ta'ziyah and tahlilan for the deceased, taught through direct examples in the educational environment and at home, and connected with Islamic teachings about brotherhood and empathy.

Several madrasas in the Aceh region have begun designing locally based teaching materials, such as inserting local tales in Indonesian and Islamic Religious Education lessons, or including Acehnese traditional values in PPKn and Akidah Akhlak lessons. *"We taught the Hikayat Prang Sabi while discussing the spirit of jihad and patriotism in Islam. Students were more interested because it was a story from their ancestors."* (Cut Halimah, 2025)

Through this approach, students not only understand Islamic teachings normatively, but also contextually and historically as part of the local heritage of values and civilization. Within the framework of cultural transmission theory (Ye & Shih, 2021), as explained by John Dewey and later developed in an Islamic context by M. Amin Abdullah (Arcanita, 2023), Education serves as a medium for the inheritance and formation of a society's collective identity. More than simply a tool for transferring values, Islamic education in Aceh serves as a space for reshaping traditions to maintain their relevance, eliminating elements that conflict with Islamic law, and reviving those that align with Qur'anic values. This shows that Islamic education in Aceh has become an instrument for profound and sustainable cultural recontextualization.

Models and Challenges of Islamic Education in Transforming Local Wisdom

The transformative model of Acehnese local wisdom in education has been designed to be an educational approach that not only transmits religious knowledge but also fosters strong cultural and social awareness. This model consists of four main components that complement each other in a dynamic cycle.
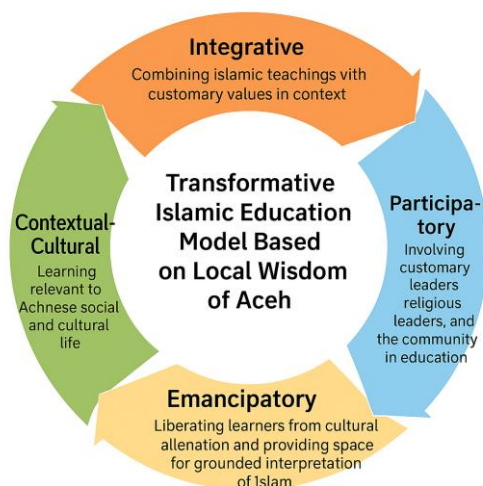

Figure 1: Transformation model of Geunareh Adat, Geunaseh Syariat in Islamic education

The picture depicts the interconnectedness of Islamic law (syariat), custom (adat), and the process of Islamic education that leads to personal transformation. Adat and syariat function as interconnected value sources that feed into curriculum design, learning practices, and school culture. Through an iterative cycle, these elements shape four core components of the transformative model integrative, participatory, emancipatory, and contextual-cultural demonstrating how local wisdom and Islamic principles mutually reinforce one another in the Acehnese educational context.

First, the integrative aspect (Li & Lajoie, 2021) This approach integrates Islamic teachings with Acehnese traditional values in a contextual manner. Traditional values that have been present in society, such as social ethics, respect for elders, and traditional rituals, are incorporated into religious instruction, enabling students to understand Islam within the framework of their local lives.

Second, the participatory approach (de Sousa, 2021) which emphasizes the importance of involving all elements of society, especially traditional leaders, religious leaders, and village residents, in the educational process. By involving them as actors in education, the learning process becomes more inclusive and socially nuanced, and strengthens a sense of ownership of the Islamic education system. Third, the emancipatory principle (Thompson, 2000) which aims to free students from cultural alienation and distance them from rigid perspectives on religion. Through this approach, students are encouraged to understand Islam as a down-to-earth religion with transformative power for social reality.

The fourth is the contextual-cultural dimension (Risager, 2011) This emphasizes the importance of learning that is relevant to the social and cultural life of the Acehnese people. The learning process is directly connected to daily life, including local traditions such as kenduri (feast feasts), traditional dhikr (remembrance of God), hikayat (fairy tales), and village deliberations, so that education becomes alive and meaningful. With these four components, this model not only brings Islamic values to life, but also maintains the continuity of local culture, and creates an education system that is deeply rooted and responsive to the challenges of the times.

Table 3. 'Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh' Values Transformation Model in the Islamic Educational System

No.	Educational Institution	Model	Description	Approach Aspects
1	Madrasah	Integrative curriculum	Fiqh, ethics, and SKI courses that incorporate traditional Acehnese values	Contextual-cultural and integrative
2	TPA	Islamic customs and habits	Greetings, civility, and *meudulang* habits	Emancipatory and participatory
3	Meunasah	Council for Intergenerational Study	Islamic and cultural values are conveyed by clerics and traditional leaders.	Participatory; contextual and cultural

| 4 | Madrasah & Meunasah | Forum Musyawarah Adat-Syariat Education | Designing educational activities together | Emancipatory, participatory, and integrative |
| 5 | TPA & Meunasah | Program for education during Ramadan | Tadarus, breaking fast, and youth da'wah training | Contextual and emancipatory |

Although the values of Aceh's local wisdom have great potential in supporting transformative Islamic education, the implementation of the traditional and sharia-based education model faces structural and ideological challenges, especially in relation to the current of secularization of education and the dominance of the national curriculum which does not provide enough space for local uniqueness.

Secularization in the Formal Education System

One of the main challenges is the increasing distance of the formal education system from local cultural roots and values (Arroisi & Sa'adah, 2020). The national curriculum tends to prioritize a rational, technocratic, and uniform approach throughout Indonesia, which ultimately weakens the position of local customs and wisdom values in the learning process. *"Books from the central government rarely touch on Acehnese customs or our unique Islamic values. Yet our students need to learn from their own environment and cultural history."* (Pak Zlkf, 2025)

As a consequence, teachers often only become technical implementers who are fixated on national standards, so that creativity in developing contextual approaches based on customary law is limited.

The Marginalization of the Role of Meunasah and Dayah

Indirectly, the modernization of education has also reduced the position of local educational institutions such as meunasah and dayah, which were previously centers of spiritual, traditional and social learning (Qodir, 2020);(Refaeli et al., 2023). Nowadays, meunasah functions more as a place of worship, not as an educational center as before. *"Nowadays, children learn more at school, but matters of tradition and morality are sometimes overlooked. In the past, everything was taught at the meunasah.."* (Ibu Ltf, 2025)

The lack of synergy between formal schools and traditional institutions causes fragmentation in children's character and spiritual education.

The Absence of Curricular Space for Local Wisdom

In the national curriculum structure (Independent Curriculum and previously), the allocation of space for local content is still limited and not mandatory (Shufa & Tito Pangesti Adji, 2024). This makes it difficult for schools to systemically integrate local values, except through the institution's internal initiatives and policies.

"We want to incorporate local customs and history lessons into the local curriculum, but not all districts support it. Ultimately, it depends on the teachers' wishes." (Ibu Mrm, 2025)

Without the support of local policies and the courage of teachers, local values remain marginalized from the classroom.

Theoretical Analysis: Curriculum Hegemony and Postcolonial Education

This challenge can be analyzed through a critical educational theory approach (Asrin, 2024), especially in the context of postcolonial education (Gyamera & Burke, 2018) developed by Paulo Freire (Saefudin & Rokhmah, 2022) and Edward Said (Badri et al., 2023). Education

that does not provide space for local culture is called a form of epistemological hegemony (Razack et al., 2022), where local knowledge is considered inferior to national or global standards.

In the context of Aceh, the dominance of the national curriculum without contextual flexibility can be seen as a form of epistemic marginalization of the customary and sharia values that exist in society (Jackson & Fellow, 2019). This is actually contrary to the spirit of transformative Islamic education which emphasizes contextualization, social justice, and cultural empowerment

Table 4. Transformation Model of the "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh" values in the Islamic Education System

Educational Institutions	Model	Description	Approach Aspects
Madrasah	Integrative Curriculum Based on Local Wisdom	Integration of traditional values such as 'peumulia jamee' (honoring guests) and 'meutaloe wareh' (mutual cooperation) into Islamic jurisprudence, morals, and SKI (Islamic Cultural History) lessons.	➢ Integrative: integrating customs and Islamic law into learning materials. ➢ Contextual-cultural: adapting to local values.
The Al-Quran Education Park (TPA)	Habituation of Islamic Customary Practices in Daily Activities	The habit of greeting, politeness, kissing the teacher's hand, as well as training in Islamic customary practices such as 'meudulang' (sharing food) as part of the values of brotherhood.	➢ Participatory: involving parents and the community. ➢ Emancipatory: developing children's independence and social values.
Meunasah	Intergenerational Study Council and Customary-Sharia Consultation	A recitation program that combines traditional leaders and clerics in conveying Islamic values and local culture, such as historical stories of Aceh and customary laws and sharia.	➢ Contextual-cultural: based on local culture. ➢ Participatory: the community acts as the subject of education.
Madrasah & Meunasah	Forum Musyawarah Pendidikan Adat-Syariat (FMPAS)	Collaboration between teachers, teungku, imum meunasah, and traditional figures in designing educational activities based on customs and sharia, such as traditional and fiqh speech competitions.	➢ Integrative & Participatory: Building synergy between institutions. ➢ Emancipatory: Empowering all levels of society.
TPA & Meunasah	Ramadan Education Program Based on Islamic Customs	Activities during Ramadan include communal tadarus (recitation of the Quran), collective breaking of the fast (meuripee), and da'wah training for young students using local language and traditional symbols.	Emancipatory & Contextual: forming da'wah cadres who understand local culture.

Discussion

This study demonstrates how the idea of "*Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh*" forms a transformative Islamic education paradigm in Aceh by providing a solid relational foundation between local culture and Islamic education. Empirically, adat and syariat are seen as an epistemic and practical unity that governs social interactions, religious ceremonies, and the educational process rather than as two distinct spheres (Jamaluddin, 2023). There is a clear relationship between the idea of customary law and the structure of Islamic education because practices like *peusijuek*, *khanduri blang*, customary discussions, and educational activities in *meunasah*, TPA, and dayah occur within the framework of Islamic values that are internalized through custom (Abidin et al., 2025; Mustikamah et al., 2025; Pambayun et al., 2025). Instead of just providing doctrinal instruction, these practices can be viewed from the standpoint of transformative learning as learning environments where students and community members continuously reinterpret their religious and cultural presumptions through participation, reflection, and dialogue.

These results demonstrate that understanding Islamic education in the sociocultural context of Aceh requires placing it within its surrounding cultural ecology. For instance, the *meunasah* integrates religious principles, practices, and everyday life in addition to being a place of prayer and an intergenerational educational institution (Nurhayati et al., 2022; Widiana et al., 2023). Islamic education is a means of reproducing and recontextualizing the collective memory of society, as demonstrated by the custom of *meuseuraya* (mutual cooperation), the use of the Acehnese language in teaching morals and monotheism, and the participation of traditional figures and religious scholars in educational activities (Arizona et al., 2025). According to Mezirow, these environments foster transformative learning by encouraging students to critically reevaluate ingrained customs, contrast them with Islamic values, and create more inclusive and thoughtful frames of reference regarding what it means to be Acehnese and Muslim in the modern day. Because Islamic education in this area functions as a cultural mechanism to preserve identity continuity and modernize customs without breaking their historical foundations, the findings are therefore relevant to the sociocultural context of Aceh (Muslihun et al., 2025; Suyanta et al., 2024).

These results are theoretically consistent with the viewpoints of transformative education theory and Islamic anthropology. In the Acehnese context, Islam exists not only as a normative text but also as a cultural practice articulated through folk tales, remembrance of God (*zikir*), celebratory feasts (*khanduri*), and social etiquette. Geertz and Asad's approach highlights that religion is always mediated by local practices, symbols, and meaning structures. This aligns with the concept of education that transforms culture (Asrin, 2024) created by Mezirow, which holds that real learning entails a process of critical reflection on presumptions that are taken for granted, followed by dialogical meaning-making and behavioral adjustments. The discovery that Acehnese educational institutions incorporate ethnic languages, traditional rituals, and local narratives into their curricula and teaching strategies demonstrates that the learning process is not restricted to the cognitive transmission of Islamic doctrines but rather encourages students to reinterpret local customs in light of Islamic teachings and current issues. Thus, the Acehnese experience of adat-syariat integration serves as an example of a

tangible type of transformative learning, wherein educational procedures that are dialogical, reflective, and grounded in daily life reorient identity, values, and social practices.

One key finding from the data is that local values are incorporated into the educational system through critical and selective methods rather than being passive or decorative (Khobir et al., 2025). Customs that are in line with Islam are preserved and revived, while those that do not are altered or abandoned. The community and educational actors in Aceh do not accept all aspects of custom as they are; instead, they see them within the context of Islamic law. For instance, the attempts of educators and leaders (*teungku*) to reinterpret folktales and celebration feast customs (*khanduri*) in accordance with Islamic morals and monotheistic ideals are clear examples of this mindset. This selective approach serves as an ongoing "value filtering" process for transformative learning, guiding students to critically assess cultural traditions and embrace only those that promote tauhid and ethical commitment. As a result, Aceh's Islamic education, which is founded on custom and sharia, creates a dynamic model of transformational education in which students are not only socialized into tradition but also prepared to reevaluate, reformulate, and act upon it in conformity with Islamic rules.

The Acehnese instance also shows a useful example of scientific and epistemic integration when viewed through the lens of M. Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnected Islamic education paradigm. By encouraging communication between revelation, reason, and empirical reality in educational practice, Abdullah highlights the necessity of bridging the gap between religious and nonreligious sciences. The results of this study demonstrate how adat syariat ideals serve as an integrative paradigm in Aceh, connecting local cultural and religious realities with the national curriculum, which is primarily technocratic and standardized. In addition to being incorporated as ancillary "local content," local knowledge develops into a fundamental viewpoint that influences curriculum structure, classroom dynamics, and cooperation between formal and informal organizations like *madrasah*, *meunasah*, TPA, and dayah. This illustrates Abdullah's belief that Islamic education should incorporate social sciences, local cultural knowledge, and normative Islamic knowledge into a cohesive framework that is sensitive to the socio-historical context.

The contribution of this research is its more thorough explanation of the complete integration of religion and culture within the institutional framework of Islamic education when conceptually compared with other studies on local wisdom-based education in other parts of Indonesia. According to a number of studies conducted in different contexts, local wisdom is typically positioned as "local content" or supplemental material that is not part of the core curriculum. The results of this study, on the other hand, demonstrate that in Aceh, customary-sharia values are not only positioned as extra content but also as a paradigm that influences teacher-student relationships, curriculum structure, pedagogical approaches, and partnership patterns between formal and non-formal institutions. According to Abdullah's integrative interconnected framework, syariat and adat are not neglected or relegated, but rather regarded as valid sources of knowledge that function well with contemporary sciences and national educational norms. Therefore, this study contributes both theoretically and practically: first, it expands the discussion of local wisdom-based Islamic education beyond cultural preservation to include cultural transformation; second, it offers an operational model

of adat–syariat integration that can be used as a benchmark for other settings with robust Islamic traditions.

However, this study also highlights the conflict between the national education system's uniform and technocratically oriented structure and the transformative education paradigm grounded in Islamic law. Customary and sharia values are frequently marginalized in formal classrooms due to the national curriculum's dominance, the trend toward secularization of education, teachers' limited ability to create contextual learning, and regional policies' lack of support for the creation of local content (Hatija et al., 2025; Sartini et al., 2025; Zamroni et al., 2024). Because instructors and students are often compelled to prioritize exam-oriented information above locally relevant knowledge, these institutional constraints limit schools' potential to become spaces of critical reflection and emancipatory action from the perspective of transformative learning. However, from an integrative-interconnected perspective, the marginalization of adat-syariat in formal education shows that the integration of local culture, national curriculum, and religious knowledge is still contested and partial, shaped by power dynamics in curriculum politics that define what constitutes acceptable "knowledge" in schools.

Several action plans and practical consequences can be suggested in light of these findings. First, in order to prevent local content from being entirely dependent on the initiative of individual instructors or administrators, institutional efforts are required to incorporate customary and sharia norms into regional curriculum regulations. Second, culturally grounded pedagogical capability, such as the capacity to handle traditional texts, regional customs, and social behaviors as legitimate learning materials that promote transformative learning aims, must be strengthened in teacher professional development programs. Third, in keeping with Abdullah's vision of integrative Islamic education, reviving *meunasah* and dayah as hubs of Islamic and customary education is essential to creating a complementary educational ecology between formal and non-formal institutions. Fourth, to develop a design for Acehnese Islamic education that is specifically based on the "*Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh*" paradigm and focused on critical, reflective, and emancipatory learning, a cooperative forum comprising local governments, academics, religious scholars, and traditional leaders is required. In order to determine the degree to which this model can be replicated, altered, or adapted in various sociocultural contexts and to assess its efficacy in promoting transformative and integrative Islamic education, more research utilizing quantitative or mixed-method approaches as well as comparative studies between regions is crucial.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the idea of "Adat *Geunareh*, Syariat *Geunaseh*" is genuinely present in Acehnese Islamic education. A transformative Islamic education model with integrative, participatory, emancipatory, and contextual-cultural features is emerging in *madrasah, dayah*, TPAs, and *meunasah*. Adat and syariat are understood as an integrated value system and are manifested through traditions like *peusijuek, khanduri, hikayat, zikir*, and *meuseuraya*.

Theoretically, by highlighting that adat-sharia might be the main paradigm rather than just supplementary local content, this research enhances the study of Islamic anthropology, transformational learning, and scientific integration. As a framework for transformational Islamic education applicable to Aceh and other areas with strong traditions, the resulting model offers a practical illustration of how local Acehnese values can be incorporated into the national curriculum, teaching methods, and school culture.

The model's quantitative and long-term effects are not yet described by this study because it is currently restricted to a qualitative approach and a limited scope. In order to evaluate, improve, and broaden the application of the transformational Islamic education paradigm based on "Adat Geunareh, Syariat Geunaseh," further research employing mixed techniques, reaching more institutions and areas, and undertaking comparative and longitudinal study is required.

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