



Building Harmony through a Local Wisdom-Based Curriculum at a Madrasah in a Muslim Minority Setting

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Abstract

Interfaith harmony is an important foundation for social cohesion in a pluralistic society, but it does not always occur naturally and requires a planned educational strategy. This study aims to analyze the construction of harmony through a local wisdom-based curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah Bali Bina Insani (MA BBI), a madrasah located in a Muslim minority context in Tabanan Regency, Bali. The research focuses on how local wisdom values are systematically integrated into the curriculum and educational practices to build interfaith harmony. This study used a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with eight key informants, including madrasah principals, Muslim and non-Muslim teachers, and community leaders; participant observation of the learning process and socio-religious activities; and documentation of curriculum documents and institutional policies. Data were analyzed using an inductive-interactive analysis model. The results show that MA BBI actively integrates Balinese local wisdom into its learning materials, inclusive pedagogical approaches, and institutional policies, thus creating an educational climate that supports tolerance, mutual respect, and social harmony. The curriculum serves not only as an academic tool but also as a social instrument in building harmony amidst religious diversity. The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on the madrasah curriculum as a medium for fostering harmony among minority communities. This study confirms that developing a curriculum grounded in local wisdom is a powerful educational strategy for building social harmony in pluralistic societies and recommends further research across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Keywords: *Harmony, Local Content Curriculum, Interfaith Relations, and Active Tolerance.*

Abstrak

Kerukunan antarumat beragama merupakan fondasi penting bagi kohesi sosial dalam masyarakat plural, namun tidak selalu terbentuk secara alamiah dan memerlukan strategi pendidikan yang terencana. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konstruksi kerukunan melalui kurikulum berbasis kearifan lokal di Madrasah Aliyah Bali Bina Insani (MA BBI), sebuah madrasah yang berada dalam konteks minoritas Muslim di Kabupaten Tabanan, Bali. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada bagaimana nilai-nilai kearifan lokal diintegrasikan secara sistematis ke dalam kurikulum dan praktik pendidikan untuk membangun kerukunan antarumat beragama. Penelitian ini menggunakan

pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap delapan informan kunci yang meliputi pimpinan madrasah, guru Muslim dan non-Muslim, serta tokoh masyarakat, observasi partisipatif terhadap proses pembelajaran dan aktivitas sosial-keagamaan, serta studi dokumentasi terhadap dokumen kurikulum dan kebijakan kelembagaan. Data dianalisis menggunakan model analisis induktif-interaktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa MA BBI secara aktif mengintegrasikan kearifan lokal Bali ke dalam materi pembelajaran, pendekatan pedagogis inklusif, dan kebijakan institusional, sehingga menciptakan iklim pendidikan yang mendukung toleransi, saling menghormati, dan harmoni sosial. Kurikulum tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai perangkat akademik, tetapi juga sebagai instrumen sosial dalam membangun kerukunan di tengah keberagaman agama. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penegasan peran kurikulum madrasah sebagai medium konstruksi kerukunan dalam konteks masyarakat minoritas. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pengembangan kurikulum berbasis kearifan lokal merupakan strategi pendidikan yang ampuh untuk membangun kerukunan sosial di masyarakat plural dan merekomendasikan penelitian lanjutan dalam konteks sosial-budaya yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: *Kerukunan, Kurikulum Muatan Lokal, Relasi Antar Umat, dan Toleransi Aktif.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has acquired a socio-religious landscape, as characterized by highly diverse ethnicity, religion, and culture. This condition may lead to social harmony, but with the absence of proper management, this will result in social tensions between groups (Sahin, 2018). The complexity of Indonesia's diversity (multiculturalism and pluralism) necessitates the adoption of an inclusive and transformative education approach to maintain social cohesion amid its diversity (Fahmi et al., 2025; Rohmah et al., 2023; Rozanita et al., 2026). Education carries crucial role during this endeavor, including the Islamic education offered in schools or madrasah (Islamic school). In Bali, one of the regions in Indonesia with a majority population of Hindus, madrasahs encounter issues in promoting a harmonious life among people with different religions. Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah (one of the madrasah aliyah, which is equivalent to high school) is one of the madrasahs that operate in the non-Muslim majority area (Syaifuddin et al., 2019). This madrasah encountered significant resistance from its surroundings, including the rejection of 2 billion in development assistance from the government (Fahmi et al., 2022). As a response, this madrasah has adapted its educational program into the local culture by promoting social harmony through a curriculum based on local wisdom.

Islamic curricula in madrasahs and schools should facilitate comprehension of interfaith harmony and reinforce national unity (Fahmi et al., 2025; Erawadi & Setiadi, 2024; Paisun et al., 2025) al., 2025) by incorporating the local culture (Rahmawati et al., 2024). However, in practice, the existing curriculum is not sufficiently flexible to accommodate specific local social contexts, especially in areas with a non-Muslim majority, such as Bali. The integration of local wisdom values in Islamic education is often overlooked, despite its capacity to enhance social harmony. Therefore, a study that analyzes the implementation of local culture-based Islamic education curriculum is of paramount importance (Arizona et al., 2025; E. Y. Lestari et al., 2025; Rugaiyah & Ma`arif, 2025). Further, a madrasah curriculum that integrates local culture has not been widely documented through studies, resulting in a discrepancy between the Islamic education theory and the everyday practice.

Ideally, the Islamic education in madrasah should incorporate a curriculum that reflects moderate and tolerant Islamic values (Fahmi et al., 2021). However, the existing curricula often focus merely on the rigid religious wisdom without incorporating the local culture, although it is the central component for social harmony. The curriculum that is not sensitive toward cultural diversity may inhibit the reinforcement of contextual and applicable tolerant values. In addition, the Indonesian curriculum reformation mostly encounters issues in the process of comprehensive local culture adoption (Sholeh et al., 2019). The local culture, which often manifests in tradition, may serve as a unifying force that bridges differences between groups. However, it is often overlooked during the development of the curriculum in madrasah. In the Muslim majority areas, the madrasah's curriculum pays minimal attention to diversity within the regions with Muslim minority, such as in Bali. Therefore, students are given insufficient space to learn the values of tolerance and harmony (Hussain, 2025).

The majority of studies on Islamic education curriculum mostly focus on the implementation of universal, religion-based curricula, neglecting the importance of local culture inclusion within the curriculum. A study from Sahin (2018) observed a crisis in the Islamic education system in both Muslim majority and minority areas, while presenting minimal discussion on the local culture-based Islamic education curriculum. Widodo & Hamzah (2024) proposed local culture preservation in various Muslim communities in Indonesia as an element of a relevant and inclusive education system. Meanwhile, Najiyah et al. (2023) described the religious learning practice based on the local culture in an Islamic school, which fosters students' patriotism and cultural pride.

In the madrasah context, Khosi'in et al. (2024) introduce a learning strategy incorporating local culture to improve students' learning motivation and learning quality. Mardhiah et al. (2021) revealed that the Islamic education course, which is tailored based on the local cultures and wisdoms, enhances university students' social and affective skills. Meanwhile, Ramadani & Fitriasia (2023) presented a successful practice of a local history-based character education program, as one of the examples of effective local culture intervention in the education sphere. However, despite the findings concerning application of local culture in the learning process reported in the aforementioned studies, there has not been research that specifically explore local culture based curriculum capacity in enhancing the harmony living among the followers of different religions, particularly in the madrasah situated in Muslim minority areas. Therefore, this research is of significance as it contributes to the a lacuna of knowledge which receives a minimum amount of discussion. This study offers a novelty in analyzing a local culture-based curriculum and the construction of interfaith harmony in madrasahs in Muslim minority areas.

METHOD

This study adopted a case study design, a qualitative research approach that is commonly applied in an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon, program, institution, or a particular group to gain a comprehensive understanding of the involved process, meaning, and dynamics (Paulson, 2015). Case study emerges as the appropriate approach for this research as it focuses on an in-depth analysis of the construction of interfaith harmony through a local wisdom-based curriculum at the Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah. This school was selected for its challenge

in fostering tolerance and harmony among the Muslim and Hindu citizens. Besides, a case study also enables an in-depth exploration of the recent phenomena and reality in daily life (Yin, 2025). The comprehension of this matter is essential for the dynamics of harmony in areas with specific characteristics.

This research used the primary data (field data) and secondary data (relevant literature). During the data collection process, a number of methods were employed, including in-depth interviews with eight key informants, participatory observation of students' activities in the madrasah, and documentation of relevant data. Using purposive sampling and a snowball approach, school principals and teachers were involved as participants in this study. Then, to ensure the credibility and validity of the data, this study used triangulation techniques (Takona, 2024), along with *checks and rechecks* from the source of information and data collection method.

The gathered data were processed and analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through an inductive-interactive approach. The data analysis was carried out using data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2018; Elliott, 2018). This process was conducted systematically, flexibly, and validly. This was deemed appropriate for qualitative research that seeks to analyze the construction of harmony through a local wisdom-based curriculum in a madrasah in a Muslim minority area.

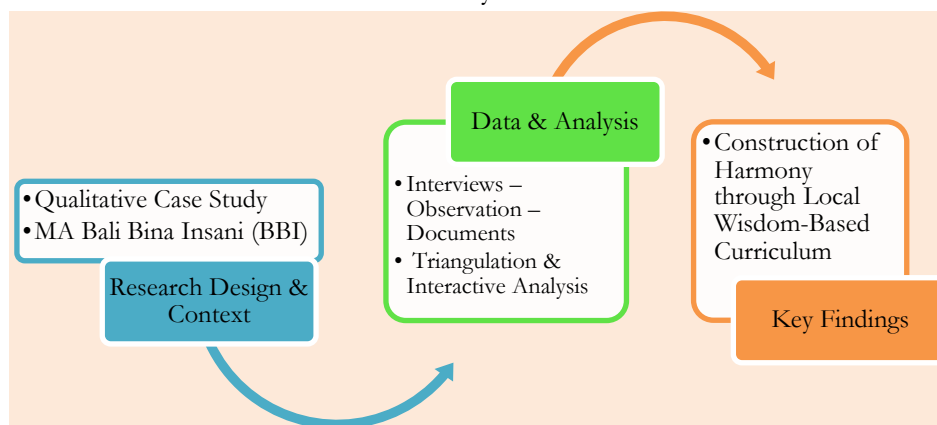


Figure 1. The Flow of Research Design

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Local Culture-Based Curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah-Bali Bina Insani

Madrasah Aliyah-Bali Bina Insani (MA-BBI) is a high school institution initiated by the caretaker of La-Royba Bali Bina Insani Islamic Boarding School situated at Meliling Village, Kerambitan, Tabanan Residence, ± 11 km west of Tabanan City (Taruna et al., 2022). This madrasah was established on July 16, 2000 (Nandug et al., 2025), following the Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Tsanawiyah LA Royba Institution, which was built on August 9, 1997. The Madrasah Tsanawiyah had progressed exponentially, thereby, the institution initiated to establish another madrasah as the continuation of the existing Madrasah Tsanawiyah. These two madrasahs have secured an increasing level of trust, particularly from the Muslim society in Bali, as signified by their increasing number of students annually.

The MA-BBI develops a local culture-based curriculum as a response to the plural socio-cultural context of Bali, which is dominated by the non-Muslim population. This curriculum is tailored following the national education and the religious standard, as well as the Balinese local culture values. The local culture-based curriculum is manifested in the provision of local content courses, such as the Balinese language, traditional art, and traditional dance courses, along with the Al-Qur'an recitation classes adapted to the local context. This integration of local culture is aimed at cultivating mutual respect, tolerance, and awareness of harmonious coexistence amid religious and cultural diversity (Bahri, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022).

The vision of MA-BBI is "Strong Faith, Noble Character, and Excellence in Achievement." As the realization of its mission, this school has been proven to excel in the following programs: (1) foreign language proficiency (Arabic and English), (2) memorization of Juz 30 of the Qur'an (Juz Amma), (3) bob training, internships, and life skills, (4) community service practice, (5) formal teaching practice (micro teaching), (6) scientific writing, (7) guidance on the admission to State Universities and scholarships, (8) participation in every academic and non-academic championship event (Fahmi et al., 2021). The implementation of the curriculum and education program in the Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah cultivates a moderate and inclusive character among the students. The head of this madrasah described that the enhancement of religious and academic achievement is always maintained following the pluralistic social context in Balinese society, which emphasizes the need for harmonious coexistence with the surrounding community (Bahri, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022).

In addition, the mission of MA-BBI is described in the following: (1) every school activity is designed to enhance faith and devotion to Allah SWT; (2) the program for enhancing intelligent, disciplined, and noble personalities is designed to adhere to the Qur'an and Hadith; (3) education program is developed to enhance students' responsibility, consistency, dedication, and high commitment; (4) environment that is endeavored to be conducive, comfortable, and pleasant for students in supporting the learning process; (5) education program that serves to guide and train students to be creative and innovative in the development of science and technology, as well as foreign language proficiency (Arabic and English); (6) students' is directed to uncover the local excellence so that they can excel in regional and national achievements; (7) students are nurtured and trained to develop life skills; (8) cooperation with other institutions and agencies is established to improve the quality of the madrasah's role in society (Syaifuddin et al., 2019). The madrasah also offers community service programs, contextual learning, and the cultivation of lifeskills that enable students to establish positive interaction within a multicultural environment. As described in a previous study, the madrasah curriculum and learning activities should be tailored to enhance students' appreciation of the local culture, without adopting its ritual practices (Sulaiman, Personal Communication, August 15, 2022).

MA-BBI has a number of objectives, including (1) to have professional teaching and educational staff; (2) to facilitate students in achieving a 100% pass rate in the final examination and getting enrolled into public and private universities through the national selection, academic achievement, or scholarship pathways; (3) to enable students achieve a minimum average difference of 0.5 in national examination results or graduate scores; (4) to assist students to be

creative and innovative in the development of science and technology; (5) to nurture every student's potential talents and interests, thereby facilitating them to present their best potential in competitions; (6) to guide graduates to possess life skills; (7) to direct students to be skilled in communicating in foreign languages (English and Arabic) and to become champions in every event or competition; (8) to facilitate students to compete in every Olympic competition and are able to become champions at the district and provincial levels (Fahmi et al., 2021).

During its inception, the MA-BBI adopted the competence-based curriculum until 2005, then it shifted into a school-level-based curriculum from 2006 to 2013. At the beginning of the odd semester in 2014, this madrasah adopted the 2013 curriculum for the tenth grade, while eleventh and twelfth grades remained using school-level-based curriculum. In the subsequent stage, following the circular letter from the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, in the second semester of the 2014/2015 academic year, the curriculum for grade X for general subjects returned to a school-level-based curriculum, and for religious subjects, they continued to use the 2013 curriculum (Fahmi et al., 2021). Meanwhile, in the odd semester of 2015/2016, Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah used the 2013 curriculum for the tenth grade, while the eleventh and twelfth grades used a school-level-based curriculum. In the following years, in 2020, all madrasahs were instructed to use the Revised 2013 Curriculum. Meanwhile, when this research was conducted (2022), Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah had already implemented the independent curriculum (Bahri, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022).

The local content curriculum development, specifically the involvement of Balinese language and dance, was undertaken because Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah is located in Bali Province. Aside from this local culture content, the madrasah also provides BTQ (Al-Qur'an quotation and recitations), which is intended to develop further students' potential in mastering the Quran (Sulaiman, Personal Communication, August 15, 2022).

The implementation of a local wisdom-based curriculum at MA-BBI is not limited merely on the design of the course, but is also reflected in the inclusive pedagogical approach and madrasah policies, such as the involvement of interfaith teachers, the use of local cultural symbols and practices in educational activities, and the inculcation of social attitudes that appreciates the traditions of the surrounding community (Observation, August 16, 2022). Therefore, the local culture-based curriculum development at Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah serves as both an educational instrument and a social strategy for building interfaith harmony within the multicultural context of Balinese society.

Furthermore, the involvement of non-Muslim teachers and student participation in cross-cultural social activities strengthens the curriculum's function as a social instrument. One of the local community leaders has declared that the educational approach at Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah directly affects the social relations between the madrasah and the surrounding community, particularly in establishing trust and harmony between religious communities (Turkan, personal communication, August 15, 2022). This confirms that the curriculum implementation at Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah does not only aim towards academic achievement, as it also serves as a strategic role in building tolerance and harmony between religious communities through an approach based on local wisdom.



Figure 2. Balinese Dance Performed by MA-BBI Students

The local wisdom-based curriculum at MA-BBI incorporates Islamic religious instruction, as well as functions as an instrument that integrates local Balinese cultural values, which are deeply rooted in Bali's rich traditions. This curriculum is designed to foster mutual respect among students and teachers from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. One of the teachers in this madrasah describes that the local wisdom-based curriculum also incorporates the courses that teach students about Balinese language, Balinese dance, Balinese history, customs, and the importance of maintaining harmony in diversity. One of the courses entitled "Introduction to Balinese Traditional Values," provides students with insight into the philosophies of life embraced by the Balinese people, such as *Tri Hita Karana* (three principles of harmonious life which comprises of the relationship between humans and God, the relationship between humans and others, and the relationship between humans and nature) (Suardani, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022).

This curriculum also incorporates elements of Balinese tradition that do not conflict with Islamic teachings, such as the use of *wayang* (puppetry) in moral and ethical learning. It also employs interfaith discussions that introduce Islamic and Hindu philosophies that align within the context of social harmony (Usbuni, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022). Aside from the formal learning courses, this curriculum also adopts a pedagogical approach that enables reinforcement of social harmony. For instance, in the Islamic Religious Education course, there is a specific chapter that discusses the introduction to the values of pluralism and tolerance, as well as the application of local wisdom in conveying Islamic teachings. Additionally, the teachers utilize references that amalgamate religious understanding with local Balinese culture. For example, in explaining teachings on harmony, teachers not only refer to hadiths or verses of the Quran, but they also draw parallels between these Islamic sources and Hindu teachings on

tolerance and harmony that apply in Bali (M. Mahfud, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022).

The curriculum document from MA-BBI suggests that each course incorporates Islamic values, as well as the elements of Balinese local wisdom within the learning materials. The curriculum includes a discussion on Balinese dance culture, an introduction to customs, and traditional Balinese art and music (Bahri, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022). This becomes a strategy to introduce students to Bali's diverse social life and foster mutual respect among religious adherents.

Establishing Harmony Through a Local Wisdom-Based Curriculum

As an educational institution situated in a predominantly non-Muslim area, MA-BBI faces significant challenges in creating a harmonious sphere between religious communities. However, through an inclusive local-culture-based approach, this madrasah is able to foster harmony among students, teachers, and the local community. The Principal of the madrasah, Yuli Saiful Bahri, stated that:

The building of harmony in Madrasah Aliyah-Bali Bina Insani is based on tolerance, respect, and understanding between different religions. Even for the teachers, the madrasah recruits Hindu and other non-Muslim teachers. Every policy has been enacted based on the pluralistic situation in Balinese society. In the learning activities, students are taught to honor local culture and other religions. The madrasah also emphasizes the importance of training and coaching for teachers to create a safe and supportive atmosphere, harmony among interfaith religious groups (Bahri, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022).

Following the results of observation conducted on August 16, 2022, there has been an emphasis on integration activities that prioritize diversity. For instance, commemoration of religious festivals, discussion between people from different religions, and habituation of an inclusive attitude toward diverse cultural localities. The students come from various cultural backgrounds and classes, yet they are very open to discussing values in a plural society. Construction of harmony in this madrasah has been observed not only in the formal activities, but also in the extracurricular activities, such as cultural festivals and community service. These programs not only involve Muslim students but also the non-Muslim teachers who accompany them. These programs demonstrate that the construction of harmony in the madrasah has been carried out in an excellent manner, as the program invites students to work together without seeing their diverse religions, cultures, and classes.



Figure 3. Balinese Traditional Clothing Exhibited During Cultural Activities at MA-BBI

The construction of harmony through a local wisdom-based curriculum at MA-BBI has demonstrated a tangible impact, particularly in students' social relationships and character development. This curriculum is designed to habituate students to appreciate differences and understand that diversity should not be regarded as an obstacle to harmonious coexistence (Ida Qomariyah, Personal Communication, August 15, 2022). Local community leaders described that the madrasah's success in maintaining interfaith harmony lies in its moderate Islamic teachings, along with its involvement in social activities that involve all elements of society, regardless of their religion (Turkan, Personal Communication, August 15, 2022). Furthermore, the implementation of a local wisdom-based curriculum that prioritizes the values of mutual respect and maintaining peace between religious communities greatly supports the creation of harmony. The recruitment of non-Muslim teachers at this madrasah further enhances the local wisdom that impacts harmonious life among stakeholders (Suardani, Personal Communication, August 17, 2022).

Conversely, another observation conducted on 16/08/2022 suggests that the students in MA-BBI understand the importance of interfaith harmony and directly engage in activities that demonstrate tolerance and mutual respect. For example, during a Hindu religious day, Muslim students also participated in the Hindu community's social activities, refrained from activities that would cause crowds during Nyepi Day, and did not display Islamic symbols when leaving the madrasah complex. This illustrates a form of solidarity and respect to the Hindu community (Sulistiyowati, Personal Communication, August 16, 2022).

In addition, the construction of a local wisdom-based curriculum at MA-BBI has also been observed in the extracurricular activities, such as community service. The madrasah facilitates social and interfaith dialogue programs, which have a significant impact on strengthening relationships between students and teachers from diverse cultural and religious

backgrounds. This program is conducted in the classroom learning, while also encouraging students to apply the values of harmony in their daily lives (Observation, August 16, 2022).

MA-BBI has successfully realized a harmonious life habituation through a local culture-based curriculum that combines Islamic teachings with Balinese cultural values. The implementation of this local culture-based curriculum has a positive impact in creating an inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious educational environment. The madrasah's programs that prioritize cultural, religious, and social diversity serve as a reference for other madrasahs in areas with high social, cultural, and religious diversity. Its harmonious structure is not only theoretical but is reflected in concrete activities involving students, teachers, and the community (Observation, August 16, 2022). The local culture-based curriculum has successfully generated a space for students to understand and appreciate differences, as well as shape them as tolerant and respectful individuals. In the matrix, the findings of this research are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Construction of Harmonious through Local Wisdom-Based Curriculum at MA-BBI

Curriculum Aspects Based on Local Wisdom	Implementation	Values of Harmonious Life	Effects on Students and the Environment
Course of Local Balinese Culture	Balinese language, Balinese dance, local arts and customs	Appreciation of local culture and diversity	Students used to honor the culture of the non-Muslim majority
Religious and Cultural Values	Association between Islamic teachings <i>and Tri Hita Karana</i> values	Tolerance, balance, and social harmony	Moderate and contextual understanding of religion
Inclusive Learning Approach	Interfaith references in religious studies	Mutual respect for interfaith religious	Establishing open dialogue and attitude
Institutional Policy	Recruitment of non-Muslim teachers	Equality and inclusivity	Harmonious relation between educators and students
Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities	Cultural festivals, social devotion, and interfaith dialogue	Cooperation and social solidarity	Real-life experience in a plural society
Social and Religious Practices	Respect religious holy day (Nyepi, etc.)	Empathy and tolerance	Harmonious living values in daily life

Table 1 above shows that the local culture-based curriculum at MA-BBI has transcended beyond the normative level, as it is also translated into inclusive educational practices that ultimately produce interfaith harmony. Further, the results are illustrated in Figure 4.

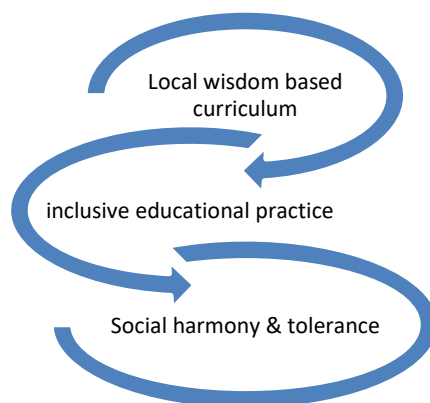


Figure 4. Model of Social Harmony through Local Culture-Based Education

Figure 4 illustrates that the local culture-based curriculum is rooted in the local norms and culture, thereby serving as an instrument for the integration of Islamic and local cultural values. It is observable through the practice of contextual and inclusive learning activities, as well as the interfaith activities. Further, it affects the harmonious living among the adherents of different religions, as evident in the form of tolerance, social harmony, and the internalisation of diversity within society.

Discussion

Local Culture-Based Curriculum as a Strategy for Establishing Harmonious Living

The findings that describe the educational practices at MA-BBI indicate that this madrasah functions as an institution for transmitting religious knowledge, as well as a social space that actively mediates religious and cultural diversity. In the context of Bali, which is dominated by non-Islamic cultures and religions, the harmonious relationship between Muslim students and non-Muslim teachers indicates an internalization of tolerance values that transcend the formal boundaries of the curriculum. This strengthens the argument that Islamic religious education can operate constructively in a multicultural context if its curriculum is tailored to the local context and an inclusive approach. The integration of local Balinese cultural values into the madrasah curriculum serves as both a pedagogical and cultural strategy. Pedagogically, this approach enables students to understand Islamic teachings in the context of surrounding social realities. Culturally, this integration serves as a social adaptation mechanism that strengthens harmonious coexistence in a multireligious environment. These findings align with the multicultural education framework, which emphasizes the importance of contextual relevance and recognition of local cultural identities during the learning process (Banks & Banks, 2019).

In addition, the educational practices at MA-BBI support previous research findings, which report that multicultural-based religious education contributes to the formation of an attitude of acceptance towards *"the others,"* while strengthening social cohesion. (P. A. Lestari, 2024) describes that Islamic religious education that integrates a multicultural perspective encourages students to understand an inclusive interpretation of religion, while also comprehending the values of religion as a source of ethical conduct that supports harmonious

living in a pluralistic society. Meanwhile, multicultural education emphasizes the importance of diversity in education and suggests that the curriculum should be directed toward greater respect for cultural differences (Fahmi et al. (Azkiya et al., 2024), 2020). In alignment with that assertion, (Anas et al., 2025) position inclusive educational policies and practices in Indonesia as a strategic instrument in establishing interfaith tolerance and reducing the potential for social exclusion.

The education practice at MA-BBI can also be conceptualized as a form of interfaith learning in practice, where interfaith learning is not always manifested through formal dialogue, but rather through daily interactions imbued with values of mutual respect. Visser et al. (2023) assert that interfaith learning will be more strategic when implicitly integrated into the curriculum and school culture, as opposed to solely the implementation of normative curricular interventions. In this regard, Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah demonstrates how madrasahs can become a social learning space that facilitates the development of sustainable intercultural competencies. Conceptually, these findings broaden the discourse on the role of madrasahs in multicultural societies by positioning them as agents of social integration and peace. This challenges reductionist views that view Islamic education as exclusive or incompatible with pluralism. Conversely, Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah's educational practices confirm that a curriculum based on local wisdom enables madrasahs to contribute significantly to strengthening tolerance and social harmony, as emphasized in the literature on multicultural education and global intercultural education.

In addition, MA-BBI utilizes a local culture-based curriculum that focuses on Islamic teachings, as well as respecting and acknowledging the local cultural diversity. This is crucial for fostering a broader understanding of harmonious living and tolerance in everyday life. Social harmony can be realised through an educational process that involves intergroup dialogue, understanding of diversity, and acceptance of differences. In this regard, Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah employs an approach that involves activities of students from various cultural backgrounds and groups, such as interfaith discussions and social activities. This commitment is further reflected in the curriculum, which teaches the values of tolerance and respect for local culture. This finding aligns with the theory of the local culture education approach, which focuses on the application of the existing local community's values and traditions to enrich the curriculum (Ma'arif et al., 2025; Salabi, 2026; Zaman & Hefner, 2010). The integration of local wisdom into the curriculum may enhance the relevance of education to the local socio-cultural situation (Mulyana, 2024). In this madrasah, a local wisdom-based curriculum is practiced through the teaching of Balinese history, culture, language, dance, and traditional values, as well as the teaching of moderate Islamic teachings that respect local culture.

The construction of harmonious life at MA-BBI has also been observed in the management of student diversity through the integration of local religious and cultural values in every aspect of education, within the teaching process and extracurricular activities. This aligns with Suyuti's assertion that Islamic education is not only concerned with teaching spiritual aspects but also with the cultivation of respect for differences and the establishment of harmonious life (Suyuti, 2022). The local culture-based curriculum at Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah exemplifies the successful adaptation of Islamic education to the local social and cultural contexts, while maintaining the essential Islamic principles. The construction of harmonious life at this madrasah encompasses various interrelated dimensions, ranging from the integration

of diversity in teaching and learning activities, management of interfaith relations, to internalization of mutual respect and tolerance within the madrasah culture. The collective awareness of the school community on the importance of a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of religious and cultural background, demonstrates that harmony is not understood merely as a given social condition, but rather as the result of deliberate and sustainable educational practices.

The MA-BBI has established a pluralistic approach, which is manifested through interfaith discussion activities, learning that fosters dialogue, and student involvement in pluralistic social activities. This practice aligns with the findings from (Anas et al., 2025), who emphasized that acceptance of "*the others*" in educational settings carries a crucial role in building tolerance and social cohesion in pluralistic societies. Furthermore, Körs et al. (2020) accentuate that interfaith education based on dialogue and direct experience encourages students to have a more reflective and empathetic understanding of interfaith, rather than merely normative knowledge about other religions.

Local Culture-Based Curriculum and Active Tolerance Reinforcement

The practice of a local culture-based curriculum at MA-BBI is also demonstrated through daily interactions between students from diverse cultural backgrounds and social groups. This reinforces an authentic and active practice of tolerance, which further enhances harmonious relationships. This is also evident in the involvement of Muslim students in commemorating Hindu religious holidays, such as Nyepi and Galungan, through adherence to the rules applicable during these celebrations. Their participation appears as a form of implicit intercultural learning, where the value of respect for differences is instilled through everyday social practices. Leask & de Gayardon (2021) assert that interaction across integrated cultures during school activities is more strategic in establishing intercultural competence compared to the formal approach during curricular activities.

The practice of harmonious life at MA-BBI reflects that education functions as a means of developing an individual's capacity for peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society. Will Kymlicka & Wayne Norman (Eds., 2025) describe that civic education in a pluralistic society also carries a crucial role in reinforcing social cohesion through acknowledging diversity and instilling values of mutual respect. Within the framework of Islamic education, this approach aligns with Sahin's (2021) viewpoints, which emphasize the need to reconstruct Islamic education to be responsive to the reality of religious and cultural plurality, without losing its normative Islamic foundation.

The construction of harmonious life in MA-BBI can be observed as a multicultural educational practice that aims towards short-term social harmony, as well as towards students' inclusive religious attitudes and intercultural competence. This practice strengthens the argument that madrasas, when integrating local values and multicultural educational principles, have strategic potential as agents of peace and social integration in the context of a multireligious society, as emphasized also within the contemporary multicultural education literature (Banks & Banks, 2019; Fahmi et al., 2020).

The local culture-based curriculum at MA-BBI integrates Islamic teachings with Balinese cultural values. This curriculum introduces Balinese cultural values, such as *Tri Hita Karana*, which focuses on harmonious relationships between humans and God, humans and others, along with humans and nature. This aligns with Mulyana's opinion that the incorporation of local wisdom in education enhances the relevance of education to the surrounding social and cultural conditions (Mulyana, 2024; Desmiati et al., 2023; Susilo et al., 2026; Syamsi et al., 2024). The teaching of Balinese customs and Islam is conducted in a complementary manner. During this course, students are instructed on the importance of maintaining social harmony that is rooted not only in Islamic teachings but also in local Balinese cultural values. These values emphasize the importance of peaceful coexistence. In this case, the curriculum focuses not only on religious teachings but also on the teaching of social values, which supports the creation of interfaith harmony.

The establishment of a harmonious life through a local culture-based curriculum at MA-BBI has proven effective in cultivating an inclusive and harmonious educational environment. In line with this, (Fahmi et al., 2022) described that the integration of local cultural values with Islamic teachings aids students' understanding of the importance of tolerance, respect for differences, and cooperation between religious communities (Suyuti, 2022). Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah has successfully instilled these values through a curriculum that integrates religious teachings with local Balinese culture.

A local culture-based curriculum applied in this madrasah also aligns with the spirit of the independent curriculum, where local culture is incorporated into the independent curriculum through a project-based approach (Hakim et al., 2024). This confirms that the incorporation of local cultural values may reinforce students' tolerance and respect for one another. Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah employs a curriculum that teaches Islam but also respects and acknowledges the local cultural diversity, to enhance a broader understanding of harmony and tolerance in everyday life. This strategy appears to better establish social harmony among each other.

MA-BBI employs an approach that incorporates activities of students from various cultural backgrounds and groups, such as interfaith discussions and social activities. This is reflected in the curriculum, which is designed to establish the values of tolerance and respect for local culture (Sukeriyadi & Duraesa, 2023). Similarly, (Sahid et al., 2021) report the need for locally based intercultural training, as it has proven in enhancing harmony in Islamic educational spaces (Mardhiah et al., 2024). A study from Clothey et al. also describes the importance of adapting the curriculum that is sensitive to local contexts, particularly in the context of a plural religious and cultural society (Clothey & Meloche, 2022).

Table 2. Constructing Harmonious Life through Local Culture-Based Curriculum at MA-BBI

Findings	Proposition	Production
Integration of Balinese culture into the madrasa curriculum, particularly the Balinese history, customs, language, art, and local social values.	Multicultural education emphasizes relevance, context, and recognition of local culture in learning.	Integration of local culture into the curriculum not only serves as an academic instrument but also as a social tool that enhances cross-cultural understanding and strengthens harmony.

Harmonious relations between Muslim students and Non-Muslim teachers.	Islamic education in a plural society requires a natural, contextual, and inclusive approach to build social cohesion.	Islamic education functions as a social mediator in a multireligious context, instead of exclusive institutions.
Participation of Muslim students in the commemoration of Hindu holidays (Nyepi, Galungan) in compliance with applicable rules.	Interfaith learning based on direct experience is proven to be more effective in building empathy and tolerance.	Social participation is a form of implicit <i>interfaith learning</i> , where tolerance is implanted through practice, not only through normative discourse.
Implementation of interfaith discussions and social activities involving students from diverse backgrounds.	Cross-cultural group dialogue and interaction are important in multiculturalism and education citizenship.	Interfaith discussion reinforces the function of the madrasa as a room for social learning that prepares students to live in a pluralistic society.
Strengthening tolerance values and respect for diverse cultures in school and extracurricular activities.	Islamic education does not only emphasize the spiritual aspect, but also the formation of a tolerant society.	A tolerant school culture shows that the internalization of the harmony values takes place structurally and culturally, instead of incidentally.
The implementation of a local culture-based curriculum is in line with the project approach in the Independent Curriculum.	Integration of local culture through project-based learning improves students' social and intercultural competence.	The implementation of a local culture-based curriculum demonstrates compatibility between national education policies and local culture in establishing social harmony.

Construction of harmonious life in MA-BBI is also observed as a strategy for the management of teachers and students with diverse backgrounds. It is implemented by integrating local religious and cultural values into every aspect of education, both in the teaching process and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, despite the incorporation of local culture into the madrasah's curriculum, this does not negate a global orientation in the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum (Amin et al., 2023). This is consistent with the slogan "act locally, think globally." Therefore, a holistic approach to educational management that maintains harmony in diversity is still necessary as a concrete manifestation of contextual Islamic education

Amidst the development of globalization that increasingly strengthens interactions between cultures and religions, Islamic education in madrasas must be able to prepare a younger generation that has a strong understanding of religion, while also having the ability to live side by side with other groups in a pluralistic society. A curriculum that is based on local culture implemented in Bali Bina Insani Madrasah Aliyah serves as an exemplary model for creating a more inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious educational environment, which aligns with the social needs of a pluralistic community. This study offers a significant contribution to the development of Islamic religious education that is more responsive to the existing social and cultural context.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals important findings that can only be identified through empirical studies. It has been observed that the local culture-based curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah-Bali Bina Insani functions as a pedagogical instrument, as well as a strategic role as a social mechanism in constructing and maintaining interfaith harmony. This finding shows that the integration of Islamic values with local Balinese culture shapes inclusive and contextual religious practices, while challenging previous assumptions that Islamic education in non-Muslim majority environments tends to be exclusive or defensive. These results are evident in the students' tolerant attitudes, harmonious interactions with the surrounding Hindu community, and the presence of spaces for interfaith dialogue and collaboration in the daily life of the madrasah.

Scientifically, this study confirms a number of previous findings concerning the role of religious education in enhancing tolerant character. Further, it also expands this evidence through the context of Islamic madrasahs in non-Muslim-majority areas. Furthermore, this study challenges the normative view that strictly separates religious education from local culture by introducing the concept of an Islamic education curriculum based on local culture as an instrument for constructing social harmony. This finding offers a novel perspective in the field of Islamic education and multicultural studies, particularly in understanding how religious values can productively negotiate with the local socio-cultural context without losing their normative essence.

However, this study also has limitations, including its focus on a single madrasah case with a relatively limited number of informants and its specific geographic and socio-cultural context. Variations in educational level, gender, and age of participants have not been fully explored, thereby, the generalizability of the findings is still limited, if not impossible. Therefore, there is a need for further research with a broader scope of locations, a more diverse range of subjects, and a more detailed methodological approach to generate a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding, while also supporting the formulation of more contextual and diversity-responsive education policies.

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