



Culturally Responsive Humanistic Islamic Education among the Anak Dalam Indigenous Community

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of Islamic Religious Education within the Suku Anak Dalam communities of Bukit Duabelas by examining how a humanistic approach enables religious learning to unfold in ways that honor cultural identity and everyday lived experience. Using a qualitative case study design, the research draws on in depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis to understand how Islamic teachings are introduced, interpreted, and gradually internalized in communities shaped by semi nomadic movement, strong ancestral traditions, and an oral knowledge system. The findings reveal that religious learning emerges most meaningfully when educators adopt flexible and dialogical strategies such as storytelling, modeling, and culturally grounded conversations that align with the emotional pace and social rhythms of the community. These approaches allow Islamic values to intersect naturally with local wisdom related to solidarity, ecological ethics, and kinship obligations. The study also identifies persistent challenges, including low literacy levels, the enduring authority of adat, and limited access to formal educational resources, which require educators to negotiate teaching with sensitivity and patience. Despite these constraints, observable social transformations indicate growing familiarity with Islamic practice, particularly among children and women. The study concludes that a humanistic and culturally responsive orientation is essential for fostering inclusive and sustainable religious education in indigenous settings and contributes to broader discussions on the development of contextually grounded Islamic pedagogy in multicultural societies.

Introduction

In Indonesia, Islamic religious education has also been in a state of development due to social change; cultural diversity, and a growing understanding that religious education needs to do more than merely stimulate spiritual awareness, it needs to do so with a heightened sensitivity to human beings. Educators and scholars have noted that too much teaching that is over-reliant on dogma without regard to the lives that learners live may lead to the development of too simplistic insights that do not answer the question of the complexity of social life (Parris, 2022; Monett & Paquet, 2025). These inclinations may unwillingly support exclusion and intolerance which goes against the ethical principles of Islam, which are compassion, dignity, and respect towards human beings. As a result, an increasing amount of attention has been devoted to the creation of theories of pedagogy that focus on human experience, foster dialogues and reflections, and allow religious teachings to be internalized in a way that is both meaningful and socially productive (Yıldız, 2025; Uyuni & Adnan, 2024; Aure, 2025; Najafov, 2025; Memon et al., 2024).

This disposition becomes especially acute when Islamic education is brought to the local population in the indigenous community the beliefs, practices, and cultural rhythms of which are quite different than the predominant social pattern (Fauzan & Rohmadi, 2021; Muliadi et al., 2024; van Tilborgh, 2023). The Suku Anak Dalam communities of Air Hitam, Sarolangun, are a typical example of a cultural landscape whereby the identity is framed by the traditions of the ancestors, oral history and a deep and personal connection with the forest. The fact that they identify themselves as Orang Rimba represents a worldview where nature is viewed not as a living being but as a living being that holds life and provides it. Even though they are officially described as being part of the national religious system, i.e. as Muslim, the rituals, symbolic activities and common practices which form the moral nucleus of their being are always inseparable. Those aspects cannot be separated easily out of their social identity, which means that religious education has to start by knowing their identity and perceiving the world accordingly (Altıntaş, 2021; Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022; Verkuyten, 2021; Golec de Zavala, 2024; Jetten et al., 2021).

Implementing the Islamic religious education in such a society requires tact, sensitivity and understanding of their cultural rationality. Teachers cannot afford to use structured lessons or formal verbal teaching, as any epistemic system of the community is determined by oral tradition, collective memory, and interactions which occur organically through the day (Eizadirad & Wane, 2023; LaBranche, 2024; Malgoubri, 2025). The teaching moments do not occur during the set classes but during the periods of quietness when the community meets to have a break, tell stories, or think about the events that happened in the recent times. In such leisure time, religious teaching takes its most responsive soil. Humanistic approach is necessary, because it focuses more on listening then guiding and understanding before explaining. Through appreciating the lived experiences of the community, teachers can create a learning community where Islamic knowledge can slowly integrate with local knowledge (El Yazidi & Rijal, 2024; Moslimany et al., 2024).

It can be observed in the field that, despite the Suku Anak Dalam community officially joining the Muslim Islamic faith, its interaction with the Islamic teachings is still influenced by the practices that have existed over the years. Sacrificial gifts, ecological taboos, family duties and ancestral stories still hold a dominant place in their world consciousness. The practices are not indications of unwillingness towards Islam, but it is a kind of living religion where new teaching has to agree with adat to achieve moral legitimacy. This arrangement of culture proves that the gap between stipula and practice is not an obstacle but a framework where one can engage in the reflective conversation. Humanistic orientation helps religious educators to fill in this gap by relating the values of Islam towards the cultural expressions that are already relevant to the community (Salamuddin et al., 2025; Karimullah & Mahbubi, 2023; Musthofa et al., 2025).

In that context, the current work examines the use of Islamic religious education in the Suku Anak Dalam communities of Lubuk Jering, Bukit Suban and Pematang Kabau. The paper recognizes the need to contextualize education in the community sociocultural realities and admit the role of humanistic approaches that lead to a more inclusive, respectful and dialogical approach to religious learning. Through interviews, observations, and engagements with the communities, the research is able to capture subtle manner in which Islamic teachings are slowly being incorporated, challenged or re-contextualized in relation to the wisdom of ancestors. The paper also lists the obstacles encountered which include low literacy rates, poor educational facilities and the perennial effects of the traditional practices among others and the mechanisms adapted by both teachers and the elderly to cope with the complexities. Using this

analysis, this paper adds to the larger debates on culturally responsive pedagogy and how Islam education in the indigenous context needs to change in order to be useful and pertinent.

It is this introduction that sets the background of how humanistic values establish avenues in which Islamic religious education can thrive in communities with a very strong cultural background. The study places itself in the current levels of designing religious education that acknowledges cultural autonomy and also steering learners towards more profound religious consciousness. Through this orientation, the research provides information on how adaptive, relational, and culture-based methods could empower Islamic religious education within indigenous settings like Suku Anak Dalam.

Methods

Research Design

The current study has taken a qualitative descriptive approach under a case study design, a paradigm decision that is based on the necessity of describing the experiences and cultural peculiarities of the Suku Anak Dalam community. Instead of recording the events, the case study approach allowed the researcher to infer the subtle exchanges of cultural identity, the practice of education and religious knowledge as they naturally occurred in the field. Such orientation was essential because of the semi-nomadic life of the community, oral traditions, and a strong sense of attachment to the tradition of ancestors, which required a methodological framework that would consider the depth of context. Thus, the design was not only used to accumulate data but also to enter the world of the community where the researcher entered with respect to its complexity and internal rationality.

This approach was also selected based on the goal of explaining humanistic Islamic Religious Education on an indigenous setting. Through its grounding of the question in the realities of the community, the study could bring out the levels of meanings that could have been hidden in more strict or formal research designs. In this respect, such an approach to the methodology played the role of the mediator between the intellectual analysis and the cultural reality, allowing a more factual and empathic understanding of the observed practices in education

Sampling Technique and the Research Participants.

The participants of the study included people that have comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics and education practices of the community. They were the officers of the Bukit Duabelas National Park Conservation Center, traditional leaders, e.g., Temenggung and Jenang, heads of the villages of Lubuk Jering, Pematang Kabau and Bukit Suban, staff of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Department of Social Affairs, the elders of the community, the members of the Suku Anak Dalam per se, children, and local Islamic religious teachers. This gave each participant a unique view, which balanced the rest creating a complex mosaic of opinions, which added to the depth of analytical analysis of the study.

Purposive sampling was used as the sampling method, which means that the chosen participants of the investigation were able to give valuable and relevant data about the phenomenon under study. In a tribal situation where people often pass knowledge orally and where authority is rooted in lineage and social position, purposive sampling was particularly suitable. It helped steer the research down the path of the natural legitimacy structures of the community instead of using the outside standards, which resulted in increased trust and helped the researcher to have more open discussions and natural observations.

Data Collection Techniques

Data was gathered in three main methods, each of which made a unique texture on a general picture. The in-depth interviews became the main gateway to the personal thoughts and perceptions of Islamic Religious Education of the participants. The interviews, which were carried out based on a conversational register, helped to create a relaxed and credible atmosphere and enable the participants to express their ideas openly. This method was particularly effective in retrieving narratives, exemplars, and beliefs that yielded much more understanding than the literal response in the case of Suku Anak Dalam where communication is highly influenced by oral tradition.

The interview information was reinforced by participatory observation that allowed the researcher to observe directly the process of integration of religious teaching in the background of daily life. Instead of limiting the investigation to the formal context, the researcher trailed the communal practices, story-telling situations, pedagogical exchanges, and traditional meetings. The observations added to the data in the form of expressions, gestures, and nuances of social interactions that would have been hard to describe in interviews and in showing the humanistic aspects of the educational experience as the relations of empathy, mutual respect and familiarity with a particular culture.

Document analysis was also an added advantage as it made available written documents, local data and policy documents related to religious and social development programmes in the region. Despite the fact that even the community itself is dependent heavily on oral tradition, institutional records helped to contextualise the way of how the governmental institutions and educational establishments conceptualise their functions. Together with interview and observational results, these documents enabled the mapping of the tensions and harmonies between the formal systems and indigenous practices.

Data Analysis

The data analysis framework followed an interpretive line, starting with the careful transcribing and sorting of all field notes, recording of interviews and observation notes. Instead of focusing on the material as disconnected fragments, the researcher viewed it as connected stories that offer understanding of patterns when taken as a whole. Themes were developed during the process of reading repeatedly, and the themes were later assessed against humanistic values and the human culture of the community. A fluid interpretation and description happened throughout the analysis and repeatedly tried to leave the experiences of the community guide the understanding as opposed to forcing the theoretical conceptualizations.

The process of crystallisation of patterns involved the researcher in reflective interpretation, thinking about the way that the cultural values, religious practices, historical experiences and day-to-day interactions were interacting. This interpretive position allowed the findings to be able to express not only what takes place, but also why such phenomena are important to the community. In this respect therefore, the analysis respected the methodological purpose of creating knowledge based on lived experience but in a way that is in touch with larger academic discourses about humanistic education.

Results and Discussion

The following part is an empirical research based on a prolonged and intensive interest in the Suku Anak Communities in Lubuk, Bukit, and Pematang Kaba. The results are treated as processes that evolved over time, as they continued to interact, have experiences and negotiate, as opposed to having a particular result that was achieved at one moment. This method is

indicative of the everyday experience of indigenous education, where learning is built in the presence, trust, and repetition in every day life.

It was also clear since the early phases of fieldwork that the Islamic religious education in this situation could not be sufficiently comprehended through the conventional educational indicators like attendance, lesson completion, or coverage of the curriculum. Not only was learning to be never conducted in designated spaces, but also it was not conducted in linear training courses. Rather, it was enclosed in social relations and it was fashioned by the mobility patterns, oral traditions and the authority of adat which persisted. Owing to this reason, the manner in which findings are presented is more relational, cultural textural and even temporal, enabling the reader to trace the slow emergence of religious understanding to establish space in the moral world of the community. These findings are arranged in thematic form and the initial one clarifies the empirical range and informant pool, the next patterns of learning practice, cultural mediation and the observable social change. All themes have descriptive narrative backing, direct quotes and comparative tables that make it transparent with respect to the empirical grounds of interpreting.

Empirical Scope and Informant Profile

These tools of religious education among the Suku Anak Dalam community were intermediated through a complex of social actors whose roles defined who gains access to, and how Islamic teachings are understood. Elders acted as moral leaders who were supposed to evaluate the cultural legitimacy of new practices and adult women were mediators of learning in households. Adult men were also engaging with the religious ideas and ideas at the same time as they were engaged in subsistence activities and rituals are often learned by children as part of imitation and through peer interaction. The role of Islamic instructors and facilitators was that of relational intermediaries as opposed to being authorities, and in such a way they influenced the dissemination of knowledge within the community.

Table 1. Qualitative Profile of Informants Referenced in the Results

Informant Group	Core Social Role	Analytical Contribution
Elders (Temenggung/Jenang)	Moral and cultural authorities	Mediation between adat and religious teaching
Adult women	Domestic caregivers	Household-level internalization
Adult men	Subsistence actors	Selective engagement with instruction
Children	Learners and imitators	Early adoption and diffusion
Islamic instructors	External educators	Adaptive and relational pedagogy
Facilitators	Institutional intermediaries	Logistical and contextual support

Table 1 is provided to expose the empirical basis of the results through the description of the social statuses of informants whose narratives and views were used in the analysis. The table, instead of being a demographic summary, has an analytical role in depicting the distribution of religious learning among specific social roles of Suku "Anak" Dalam community. These informant groups bring with them distinct kinds of knowledge, power and practice, which together constitute the process of Islamic religious education. The elders, especially the Temenggung and Jenang, are in moral and cultural positions of authority. Their power cannot be quantified in terms of how often they interact but their ability to legitimize or challenge new religious ways through the adat. Religious practices are often put to the test, modified and maintained in domestic practices, which makes adult women main agents of

internalization at home. Adult men also provide some light regarding the role of negotiation of religious exposure in relation to processing subsistence and ritual duties. At the same time, children are not only passive consumers but active learners and spreaders of emergent practices by imitation and peer activity. Islamic teachers and facilitators are also incorporated to recognize the relational and institutional aspects of the learning process; their presence puts the community into context with regard to how external religious knowledge comes to the community and how it is restructured through local interaction. Mapping such roles, Table 1 creates transparency on the voices that influence the results and underlines that Islam religious education is a socially distributed process and not a teacher-centered activity.

Adaptive Learning as the Dominant Educational Pattern

In all of the research sites, Islamic religious education developed using adaptive but not structured learning processes. Teaching experiences were created out of emotional preparation, social climate, and workload. Teachers always changed their way of teaching and delayed or shortened the interactions whenever members of the community looked tired or engaged. Field observation revealed that learning was best after periods of tranquility and social openness, which represented a common knowledge that the emotional state was a contributing factor to the level of receptivity to religious teaching. The variation in settlement patterns further contributed to learning dynamics as it is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparative Learning Dynamics Across Villages

Dimension	Lubuk Jering	Bukit Suban	Pematang Kabau
Settlement pattern	Semi-settled	Semi-nomadic	Highly mobile
Predictability of encounters	Relatively stable	Moderately variable	Highly variable
Typical learning spaces	Communal areas	Forest margins	Temporary shelters
Role of elders	Supportive mediators	Active interpreters	Cultural gatekeepers
Observed learning depth	More sustained	Moderately sustained	Fragmented

Table 2 has offered a comparative analysis of learning processes in Lubuk Jering, Bukit Suban and Pematang Kabau to reveal the effect of the spatial aspects and mobility patterns on the nature of the religious learning. The table would not be meaning that there is not a variety within each village, but this is just an overview of the prevailing tendencies in the field of engagement. Settlement pattern is hypothesized as a parameter dimension since spatial stability has direct impact on predictability of interaction between the instructors and the members of the community. In Lubuk Jering, semi-settled forms of living allowed the idea about religion to be reinforced gradually through the formed encounters. Semi-nomadic movement also created episodic but repeated learning experiences in Bukit Suban, but high mobility in Pematang Kabau prevented longer learning experiences, and learning had to be done in short-term response situations.

The aspect of ordinary learning places underlines the fact that learning was not carried out in formal locations but it occurred in culturally significant places like meeting places, forest-fringe or temporary accommodation. The functions of the elders also differed depending on the location, and this indicates a variation in exercising adat authority in mediating religious knowledge. The last row, perceived depth of internalization is an interpretative measure obtained by recurrent exposure to practice, recall and incorporation of routine, and not a

quantitative result. In general, Table 2 shows that contextual alignment determines the depth of learning, and not the intensity of instruction.

Storytelling and Oral Transmission of Islamic Values

Storytelling was used as the major channel through which Islamic values were passed. In an oral cultural context, stories offered a readily recognisable framework of bringing moral concepts into existence. Religious messages were often presented by means of narratives that resonated with the ancestral narratives so that the learners could relate the new information to the already existing ethical frameworks.

It was observed that learning that was based on storytelling enhanced the preservation and replication of religious behaviors, especially among children. The individuals who interacted with storytelling had emergent religious manifestations in their daily interaction, e.g. invocation of greetings or remembering of short prayers, without explicit teachings.

This trend suggests that storytelling was used as an essential epistemic practice and not as an additional instructional instrument.

Negotiation Between Adat and Islamic Teachings

Adat remained a central reference point through which Islamic teachings were evaluated. Adat was still a key point of reference by which Islamic doctrines were judged. Instead of being pushed out, the traditional practice provided an ethical system of decoding religious concepts. The elders were instrumental in mediation of this process by converting Islamic values into terms that resonated culturally.

An example of this would be the environmental responsibility that was often discussed as a common ethical issue that would help to bridge the gap between the protection of the ancestral forests and the Islamic stewardship. It was an interpretive strategy that minimized the possibility of tension and allowed acceptance of religious teachings without jeopardizing the continuity of culture. Where there was hesitation this was rather a matter of caution and deliberate thought than of refusal and a tendency was to modify gradually.

Differential Engagement Across Age and Gender Groups

Islamic learning activities were gender and age-differentiated. Children were the most receptive and frequently learn practices as a result of imitation and peer interaction. Adolescents were more situationally engaged and adult women were more likely to incorporate learning slowly into the domestic activities. Adult men were engaged in a discontinuous manner influenced by the subsistence needs.

The role of elders was selective yet powerful as they measured religious practices as per adat. These differences highlight the fact that religious education spread out over socially contextualized channels and not by means of standardized education.

Indicators of Gradual Social Transformation

The changes that could be observed related to religious education came about in bits with time. The initial stages were more teacher-oriented, and the subsequent stages were more routinized and independent. The analytical summary of these patterns is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Interpretative Indicators of Social Change

Indicator	Early Phase	Intermediate Phase	Later Phase
Religious expressions	Instructor-initiated	Learner-initiated	Routine practice
Children's prayer recall	Partial	Short prayers	Independent recall
Women's practice	Observational	Situational	Consistent
Ritual reflection	Minimal	Emerging discussion	Open reflection

Table 3 is intended to capture patterns of gradual social transformation associated with Islamic religious education. Table 3 will be intended to demonstrate the tendency of the gradual social change that is related to Islamic religious education. The presented indicators are interpretative constructs of longitudinal observation and repetitive interaction, as opposed to defined stages or time frames. The table graphs the change that was progressive due to exposure and relational reinforcement.

Early stage is a preliminary phase where religious expressions happen to be instructor guided and the learner is introductory. Intermediate phase refers to a transition period where learners start to take the initiative to practice although generally in limited or situational forms. Later stage marks the signification of routinisation, i.e., the processes that have become a part of daily routine and need no outside encouragement. All indicators prefigure a different field of change: the religious expressions are associated with the manifested practices like greetings or prayer gestures; the prayer recall among children is associated with the new familiarity with religious language; the practice of women focuses on the domesticization of religious norms; the reflection of rituals captures the change in the discussion and assessment of practices of adat. Comparing these domains,

Table 3 will prove that the change was not uniform in all social spheres, which once again supports the perspective that change in religion is processual as opposed to uniform.

Empirical Synthesis

To maintain transparency, Table 4 summarizes representative field-based observations that support the analytical themes discussed.

Table 4. Analytical Summary of Field Observations

Theme	Field-Based Description
Adaptive learning	Teaching adjusted to emotional and social readiness
Cultural integration	Islamic values framed through ecological ethics
Gradual change	Practices emerging within household interaction
Negotiation	Religious ideas assessed through adat authority

Table 4 is an analytical transitional instrument between thematic interpretation and descriptive findings. Instead of giving direct quotes, the table is a summary of the repeated field-based experiences that underpin the key themes of analysis presented in the Results. The reason why this method is selected is to maintain the integrity of ethical principles, because the entries are based on shortened meanings after interviews and observation instead of word-to-word translation.

The themes are associated with a pattern that is always present in the sites. Adaptive learning describes the way the emotion preparedness and situational sensitivity influenced the instruction. Cultural integration emphasizes the ethic of framing of Islam values, which is an ecological and an adat ethic. A gradual change is an indication of the development of the practice of religion in the household interaction especially through the children and women. Negotiation highlights the importance of elders in evaluating and arbitrating new practices in the current moral structures.

Table 4 represents the summaries in the table format, which improves the transparency of the analysis without exaggerating the position of raw data. The table emphasizes that the results were based upon the repeated observation and interaction, and the interpretation is closely connected to the empirical experience.

Humanistic Pedagogy and Indigenous Knowledge in Dialogical Perspective

The fieldwork manifested in the learning environment elicits a learning environment that is influenced by relational processes, ecological attachments and long-term oral practices as opposed to formal schooling that is characterized by rigid frameworks. Such dynamics cannot be perceived in vacuo; these dynamics are close to the recent debates on culturally based Islamic Religious Education, and the need to develop pedagogies that recognize the lived experiences of the students. In recent years, scholars have stressed that the intentional religious learning in the context of marginalization or indigenization is experienced through responsiveness to local rhythms, a sense of emotional warmth, and the cognitive patterns that communities already utilize to make sense of the world around them (Ridwan and Satriawan, 2024; Ciofalo et al., 2022; Kale et al., 2025). The flexibility that was observed in Bukit Duabelas can be attributed to this trend towards humanistic practice whereby timing, pacing and the relational atmosphere are taken to be as important as the content being passed across. The research of humanistic curriculum design in Indonesia supports this principle when it proves that learning becomes more profound when the teacher modifies his or her approach to the cultural rhythm of the community (Young, 2025; Sawyer, 2025; Buzsáki, 2025).

This is particularly sensitive when the role of storytelling is considered. Stories in this community do not just operate as illustrations but act as the architecture through which knowledge is created, passed and recalled. The incorporation of the ideas of Islam into the existing narrative genres resembles the results of the current studies that show that the indigenous storytelling traditions offer powerful channels of adapting the new moralizing models without distorting the cultural identity (Martinez, 2021; Martinez, 2021). Oral knowledge systems are emotional, socially recorded and ecological, that is why students are more likely to be appealed to teach in a narrative format, than through exposition (Assessing Indigenous Knowledge System, 2024). By placing the themes of the Quran in contexts local to the curriculum, the instructors develop a medium through which Islam can be perceived as a local rather than a foreign discourse.

There is other level of meaning that transpires with the role of the elder. Their existence defines the moral command of the learning process in such a manner that few structural forms can imitate. Their interpretative voice gives credibility and continuity to new precepts especially where religious ideas are prone to conflict with cultural values. Current studies about indigenous leadership always emphasize the exceptional ability of the elders to bridge tradition and novel knowledge and, thus, helping communities to make delicate transitions without losing cultural unity (Setiawati, 2025; Syariati et al., 2024). In Bukit Duabelas the elders do not only endorse the contents of the religion, but paraphrase it, smear its edges, and diffuse its ethical purpose into idioms which are trusted by the community. It is also consistent

with the research on community-based Islamic education, which has shown that deep learning is most likely to occur when the interpretive process is guided by the local authority figure (Muhson, 2024; Parris, 2022).

The meaning-making of ecology adds to this cultural and religious interaction. The spiritual connection that the community has with the forest, manifested by the spirit under the form of tree guardianship and land taboos creates a strong ethical point of entry of religious teachings. As soon as the concept of stewardship in Islam is developed using the ecological practices that the community already appreciates, religious and cultural ethics do not conflict but instead support each other. Recent environmental religiosity findings validate the fact that ecological commitments are intensified when a conjugation of religious stories is incorporated into the existing environmental identities (Ives et al., 2023; Agusalim & Karim, 2024; Mo et al., 2023). What happens in Bukit Duabelas thus demonstrates a mutually reinforcing relationship: ecological metaphors provide Islamic teachings with a grounding in culture, and ecological practices with a moralizing dimension of the religious.

The patterns of participation observed along the lines of gender and age groups indicate faint socio-cultural processes that stimulate the process of learning diffusion. Women are more inclined to learn through everyday domestic experiences, which are also demonstrated in the studies of family-based Islamic education when maternal influences define religious identity of children in subtle and significant ways (Abubakar et al., 2023; Nurlaili, 2025; Saffutra et al., 2025; Jaim, 2021). At the same time, there is a fluid agency among children that is reflected in their retelling of lessons to siblings and peers, which is in line with scholarship that defines peer-led learning as a hallmark of oral cultures. These tendencies indicate that pedagogical power is distributed within relational networks instead of the official lesson plans, and that there is an urgent need to develop programs in which households and peer groups can be viewed as pedagogical zones.

Simultaneously, the challenges that were experienced, namely low literacy, fewer facilities, and cultural sensitivities, represent the issues that have been commonly reported in recent Indonesian studies concerning the application of religious education to indigenous settings. These pieces assume that the materials produced to be used in mainstream schools do not work when they are transferred to the oral-first setting, where learning relies more on memory, performance, and relational closeness than on a text-based interaction (Binder, 2022; Hughes, 2023; Radmehr et al., 2024). The effectiveness of home visits and small group interactions that is witnessed in this case is consistent with the research studies carried out in the field of humanistic education which reveal that, trust, physical closeness and personal attention are factors that improve openness of learners significantly. Such approaches might require more time and emotional input, but they create the relational background that is required in the long-term internalization.

In a more ethical and pedagogic perspective, dialogic quality of learning process in this community echoes the controversies surrounding the role of religious education in promoting identity and not oppression. Critical Islamic education scholars support the use of methods that encourage negotiation, active listening, and common interpretation, especially in culturally diverse environments (Mohammadi Zenouzagh et al., 2023). The interaction in Bukit Duabelas is typical of such dialogic interaction: instead of Islam being brought forward as an authoritative substitute of adat, teachers work with other members of the community to find areas of intersection. This orientation is an extension of a greater dedication to the respect of the dignity of indigenous learners in a way that they are allowed to engage in the construction of meaning in the teachings that they are exposed to.

The observations beg the reconsideration of the way of measuring success in educational programs of such kind. The percentage of attendance or the amount of lessons taken do not reflect the less obvious cultural and relational shift which occurred throughout the study. According to recent reviews in the research of indigenous education, indicators are suggested that reflect changes in narrative repertoires, transformation in the interpretation of the rituals, and changes in intergenerational flows of knowledge (Ouma, 2022; Opesemowo, 2025). The thematic patterns reported in the study (siblings teaching, household adoption and mediated reinterpretation by older people) provide the exact type of culturally-based indicators that are required to assess learning in oral communities.

What is revealed through the general analysis is an image of Islamic Religious Education that sprouts out of the cultural soil of the community. Oral tradition pedagogies, deference to the authority of the elders, ecology-based, and future-oriented relational intimacy from pedagogy, will serve better in indigenous space than more standardized instructional paradigms. The knowledge produced in this context does not simply add to existing arguments, but builds on them by showing how religious learning can be made a collaborative, culturally situated process and not an imposed system. By doing so, the results confirm a major philosophy, which is education is rooted more when it is created by the world that the learner is already familiar with.

Conclusion

The empirical data of the study show that the efficacy of the Islamic Religious Education practices in the Suku Anak Dalam communities have the greatest depth when it is treated as a humane, dialogical and culturally sensitive process, but not an instructional schema of determination. Empirical research in the field demonstrates that learning is experienced not via traditional classroom practices, but through the routine activities of everyday life mediated by the power of movement, ecological sense and intergenerational relationships. Teachers entering the community with a sense of patient, humble, find that religious knowledge is best received when it is also interwoven with the familiar textures of everyday life through stories recounted at dusk, silent demonstrations and the rivers, or even soft explanations of things that follow the community activities, hence the idea is that a humanistic orientation is not a choice of pedagogy but is a necessary response to the community lived reality.

With introduction of the Islamic teachings based on culturally sensitive channels, there is an evident though a slight change in the way people think and manifest their religious identity. Such changes in everyday routines as children reciting short prayers to their brothers and sisters, women wearing modest clothes, and elders reformulating ecological teachings in Islamic concepts are indicators of the creation of a common moral vocabulary that unites the concept of religion with the values of the ancestors. Such changes do not take place at once, but annoyingly evolve over time, fed by the collective belief in teachers and supported by the interpretive role of the elders who disarm new teachings into ideas that can be absorbed with adat. The gradual overlap of Islamic morality and local wisdom proves that humanistic education does not act by substituting tradition, but rather by finding those areas of agreement in which both systems of meaning can exist together, and support each other.

However, the research finds various difficulties to moderate the rate and extent of learning of religion. Low literacy rates in the community, the strength of old practices, and the necessities of a semi-nomadic lifestyle are natural restrictions which teachers should approach and act upon intelligently. These struggles are not evidence of resistance, but they bring about enlightenment about the safeguarding aspect of culture as a generator of identity and continuity. Therefore, teachers should continue to employ adjustive solutions that keep pace

with the community, provide education through short but significant interactions, and continue to maintain close relations with the elders and local institutions. The effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education in this context depends on the ability to keep relational trust and recognize the dignity of the community and gradually increase their knowledge about the way they practice religion.

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