



Efforts to Preserve Local Wisdom Amid Globalization and Technological Advancement in the Baubau City Community

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ABSTRACT

Globalization and technological advancement have generated profound transformations in social life, influencing patterns of education, communication, and cultural practices. This study adopts a qualitative research design, combining observation, in-depth interviews with community leaders, educators, and youth groups, as well as analysis of government documents and local policy initiatives. The findings reveal that despite the strong influence of global culture, Baubau society actively pursues strategies to preserve cultural identity. These strategies include the integration of local values into school curricula, the revitalization of communal traditions such as Po'oma and collective work practices, and the strengthening of religious institutions as moral and educational foundations. Moreover, cultural digitalization programs have emerged as innovative tools to promote heritage and engage the younger generation, turning technology from a potential threat into a medium of cultural sustainability. The study concludes that maintaining local wisdom in Baubau requires collaboration among communities, educational institutions, and government authorities. Such efforts not only safeguard Baubau's cultural identity but also contribute to global discussions on how local traditions can coexist with globalization and technological change.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the rapid advancement of information technology have brought significant transformations to societies across the world. The fast flow of information, cross-border communication, and the penetration of foreign cultures through social media and digital content have collectively contributed to changing cultural patterns, values, and local identities (Rayhan et al., 2025). Meanwhile, local wisdom, as a cultural heritage formed through historical, environmental, and social relations, faces the risk of erosion due to the homogenizing forces of global culture if conscious preservation efforts are not made (Sabila & Safitri, 2025).

Local wisdom is not merely a collection of traditions or habits but also encompasses moral values, social norms, customary practices, language, and the arts that form the identity of a community. On the other hand, education, religious institutions, and government bodies play crucial roles in mediating between global pressures and the preservation of local identity (Penelitian, 2018). In this context, local wisdom-based character education emerges as an essential strategy to prevent younger generations from losing their cultural roots. For instance, the study *Local Wisdom-Based Character Education for Facing Globalization Strategic Issues in the Digital Era in Primary School Students* found that character education grounded in local wisdom effectively prevents the negative impacts of globalization on students' morals and cultural identity (Layli et al., 2024).

Previous research also suggests that strategies for preserving local wisdom may vary depending on context. For example, the study *Is Local Wisdom Able to Build Sustainable Communities in Informal Flood-Prone Settlements? Evidence from Glintung Kampong, Malang City, Indonesia* revealed that *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and *guyub rukun* (social harmony) strongly influence a community's adaptive capacity to flood risks, particularly through collective social efforts in mitigation (Sedyowati et al., 2023). Another study, *Local Wisdom-Based Policy Innovation in Indonesia During 2018–2021*, demonstrated that local governments tend to be more proactive than central governments in developing public service innovations based on local wisdom, due to their closer engagement with communities and local needs (Darumurti, 2024).

Building upon this background, this study aims to explore the efforts of the people of Baubau City in preserving their local wisdom amid globalization and technological advancement. The focus includes how educational institutions, local governments, community organizations, and youth contribute to these efforts, as well as how technology can serve not only as a threat but also as a tool for cultural preservation. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of contextual Islamic education studies by emphasizing the importance of integrating local wisdom values into the formation of Islamic character that is adaptive to globalization. Practically, the findings of this research may serve as a foundation for educators, local governments, and religious institutions in formulating culturally grounded educational strategies relevant to technological developments and global challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globalization is a multidimensional phenomenon that influences every aspect of human life economic, social, political, and cultural (Syakhsiiyah & Safitri, 2025). From a sociological perspective, globalization is often viewed as a process of cultural homogenization driven by the global flow of information, lifestyles, and values originating predominantly from the Western world (B, 2023). However, Castells (2010), in *The Rise of the Network Society*, emphasizes that local communities still possess the capacity for the “re-networking of identity,” meaning they can reconstruct their cultural identities through participation in global digital networks (Higher & America, 2010). Despite this, globalization does not necessarily eliminate local identities; rather, it can promote cultural hybridization, or the blending of local traditions with global cultural forms (Ningtyas, 2025).

Local wisdom can be understood as a body of knowledge, values, and social practices inherited across generations, functioning as a moral compass that guides communities in maintaining harmony with nature, fellow human beings, and God (Ufie, n.d.). Within the realm of education, local wisdom has become a strategic instrument for building the moral and cultural character of younger generations. The inclusion of local content within school curricula – especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) – has been proven to bridge religious values with cultural traditions (Lokal, 2024). According to Tilaar (2015), multicultural education rooted in local culture can cultivate collective awareness among students, encouraging them to be more tolerant, value-driven, and connected to their regional identity (Khairunnisa, 2025). Similarly, Syam (2020) found that the integration of cultural values into education enhances young people’s pride in local traditions while fostering critical awareness of foreign cultural influences (Hanapi et al., 2025).

In addition to education, the role of religious institutions is also vital in maintaining the continuity of local wisdom. Mosques, *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), and *majelis taklim* (study circles) function not only as spiritual centers but also as social spaces that internalize Islamic values into everyday community life (Hasan et al., 2025). Abdullah (2019) argues that the collaboration between religion and local culture produces a distinctive synthesis of identity known as *Islam Nusantara*, where Islamic teachings are interpreted in accordance with local cultural contexts (Fikri, 2023). In the context of Baubau, the integration of Islamic manners (*adab islami*) with local traditions such as *Po’oma* exemplifies how religion reinforces social cohesion and upholds communal morality.

Moreover, the rise of digital technology has created new opportunities for cultural preservation. Whereas local wisdom was once transmitted primarily through oral traditions and direct practice, digitalization now enables broader documentation and dissemination of cultural heritage (History, 2025). Wahid (2021) asserts that the use of digital technology for cultural promotion strengthens local identity on the global stage, particularly among youth who are more engaged with social media. This phenomenon suggests that technology should not be seen solely as a threat of homogenization, but rather as a strategic tool for expanding the global reach of local culture (Ramdani & Agustina, n.d.).

This aligns with findings by Al-Ansi, Rahim, and Al-Hattami (2021) in *Heliyon (Elsevier)*, which emphasize that integrating Islamic values with educational technology innovations enhances cultural and spiritual resilience in the global era. This perspective underscores that preserving local values within the framework of digital Islamic education represents a synergy between tradition and modernity (Mumbi et al., 2021).

Thus, the existing literature indicates that the interaction between globalization and local wisdom is not dichotomous but dialectical. Local communities are not passive objects of globalization; rather, they act as dynamic agents of resistance, adaptation, and innovation. This reinforces the relevance of examining how the people of Baubau City sustain their local wisdom amid globalization – where education, religion, tradition, and technology collectively play crucial roles in shaping cultural resilience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design focusing on the community of Baubau City, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. This approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of social phenomena, particularly those related to strategies for preserving local wisdom amid the intense forces of globalization and technological advancement (Creswell, 2014).

The research subjects include traditional leaders, religious figures, educators, local government officials, and youth representatives, all selected using purposive sampling techniques based on the relevance of their experiences and knowledge to the study's theme. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary studies of government policies, traditional manuscripts, and related academic literature.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The credibility and validity of the data were ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, by comparing information obtained from different participants and integrating findings from interviews, observations, and document reviews.

This approach is considered relevant because it effectively uncovers the internal dynamics of Baubau society in maintaining Islamic and local cultural values within a global context. Through this methodology, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the people of Baubau preserve their local cultural identity while simultaneously adapting to the demands of globalization and digital technological progress.

Theoretically, this method also contributes to the development of Islamic education research methodologies based on local wisdom by emphasizing the importance of contextual understanding of religious practices, social values, and cultural traditions as an integral part of enriching Islamic studies in the global era.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the people of Baubau City demonstrate strong commitment to preserving their cultural identity through various adaptive strategies aligned with the dynamics of modernization. One of the most tangible forms of this effort is the mainstreaming of local wisdom values within the formal education system, particularly through *Islamic Religious Education (PAI)* and local-content curricula based on Butonese culture. Teachers and educators do not merely deliver cognitive material but also strive to instill noble values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberative consensus), and *adab islami* (Islamic manners) into students' daily lives. As one elementary school teacher explained:

"We always relate religious lessons to local customs—such as helping one another and respecting elders so that children understand our culture aligns with Islamic teachings".

This practice affirms the role of education as a strategic space for transmitting cultural heritage while shaping the moral character of the younger generation. This finding aligns with Layli et al. (2024), who argue that local wisdom-based education can serve as an effective instrument to confront globalization while preserving Islamic moral values.

This is further supported by the words of Allah SWT in Surah *Al-Mā'idah*, verse 2: "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..." (Qur'an, *Al-Mā'idah* [5]: 2).

This verse is highly relevant to the findings that practices such as *gotong royong*, *musyawarah*, and *adab islami* in Baubau are not merely customary traditions but concrete manifestations of *al-birr* (virtue) and *taqwa* (piety) as prescribed in *Al-Mā'idah* [5]:2. The principle of "cooperation in goodness" is reflected in the social life of the Butonese people through collective activities such as *Po'oma* (mutual assistance), communal efforts in constructing places of worship, and shared participation in traditional and religious ceremonies.

These values are then integrated into the formal education system—especially through Islamic Religious Education and local-content subjects based on Butonese culture—to foster religious, social, and cultural character among students. Such a model of education represents a religio-cultural synthesis, a harmonious convergence between the universal teachings of Islam and the particular wisdom of local culture, wherein tradition and religion reinforce each other to shape morally upright and culturally grounded individuals.

Moreover, the Baubau community exhibits adaptive creativity in sustaining these values through cultural digitalization. Islamic and local traditions such as Qur'anic study gatherings, religious sermons (*dakwah*), and the history of the Buton Sultanate are now documented and disseminated through social media and digital platforms. This demonstrates that the community's efforts go beyond symbolic preservation, transforming these traditions into media for da'wah and character education relevant to the global era.

These findings resonate with the research of Mansur & Sholeh (2024) published in the *Journal of Integrated Elementary Education (JIEED)*, which showed that the integration of local values in Islamic education strengthens character formation, fosters social empathy, and cultivates religious awareness that is adaptive to modern change (Sholeh et al., 2024). Similarly, Mansur & Sholeh (2024) in *Implementing Character Education Based on Local Wisdom in a Public Islamic Elementary School*—also published in JIEED (Ramadani & Fitriasia, 2023)—demonstrated that character education grounded in local values such as politeness, social ethics, and religious personality enhances students' moral development in ways contextual to their school environment.

In line with these studies, the findings in Baubau further strengthen the argument that local wisdom-based educational strategies function not only as tools of cultural preservation but also as crucial instruments in shaping Islamic character formation that is adaptive in the modern era.

The study also identified a revitalization of collective traditions such as *Po'oma*, a voluntary cooperation practice involving social activities, public facility construction, and traditional ceremonies. One community leader stated: "*Po'oma* is our way to strengthen brotherhood and mutual help, as Islam teaches us to maintain *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and solidarity."

This tradition serves not only as a symbol of social solidarity but also as a mechanism for strengthening social cohesion amid modern individualism. Religious institutions such as mosques, *pesantren*, and *majelis taklim* continue to play a dominant role as centers of moral and spiritual education. Their presence bridges Islamic values with local traditions, thereby fostering a balance between religious identity and cultural belonging among the people of Baubau. This finding aligns with Abdullah's (2019) perspective on *Islam Nusantara*, which emphasizes that Islamic values can be internalized within local cultural contexts to promote social harmony and strengthen moral consciousness.

Beyond the domains of education, culture, and religion, the findings also highlight the importance of digital technology as a new medium for cultural preservation. Cultural digitalization programs initiated by local governments in collaboration with youth communities, artists, and literacy activists have become essential innovations in documenting and promoting Baubau's cultural heritage. Through social media, websites, and other digital platforms, various traditions such as Butonese dance, traditional cuisine, oral storytelling, and rituals are now promoted not only locally but also nationally and internationally.

As one youth activist stated:

"We want young people to love their culture through digital media. Otherwise, our culture will be overshadowed by foreign content."

This finding supports Wahid's (2021) argument that cultural digitalization is an effective strategy for expanding the reach of local values amid globalization, while also transforming technology into a medium for *da'wah* and character education. Accordingly, the people of Baubau exhibit a creative adaptation pattern, transforming the potential threat of cultural homogenization into an opportunity to strengthen local identity in ways relevant to global developments.

This integrative strategy demonstrates that local wisdom does not merely function as a symbolic cultural artifact but as a dynamic form of social capital essential for building sustainable culture in an era of globalization and technological advancement. Conceptually, these findings affirm the theory of contextual Islamic education (Tilaar, 2015; Syam, 2020), which emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between religious values, local culture, and modern social dynamics.

Hence, strengthening local wisdom is not only an act of cultural preservation but also a practical expression of living Islamic values within society – embodying both spiritual depth and social relevance in navigating the challenges of the globalized era.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the people of Baubau City demonstrate steadfast commitment to preserving their cultural identity through adaptive strategies integrated across various aspects of life. Education, tradition, religion, and digital technology serve as the main pillars in sustaining local wisdom values that remain relevant within the dynamics of globalization. The integration of Butonese cultural values into *Islamic Religious Education* and local-content curricula highlights the strategic role of education as both a medium for cultural transmission and a means of shaping the character of the younger generation.

At the same time, the revitalization of collective traditions such as *Po'oma* stands as a tangible symbol of social solidarity that strengthens community cohesion, while the role of religious institutions ensures a balanced relationship between Islamic principles and local cultural identity. The use of digital technology has also expanded the reach of Baubau's cultural promotion to national and even international levels, demonstrating that globalization should not be seen as a threat but rather as an opportunity to strengthen local identity.

Furthermore, the findings of this study contribute significantly to the broader field of global Islamic studies, illustrating how Islamic values embedded in local culture can adaptively transform amid globalization without losing their spiritual and moral essence. This research also enriches the discourse of Islamic education studies by affirming that the integration of local wisdom into Islamic Religious Education represents a transformative strategy for shaping learners who are religious, culturally grounded, and adaptive to global technological progress.

Thus, the local wisdom of the Baubau community does not merely survive as a cultural symbol but evolves into a dynamic form of social and intellectual capital that strengthens cultural sustainability and enriches the contextual discourse of Islam in the modern era.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, strategic and continuous efforts are required to maintain a balance between modernity and tradition.

1. Local governments and educational institutions should strengthen the integration of local wisdom values into both formal curricula and extracurricular activities.
2. Traditional communities, religious leaders, and youth groups must continue collaborating to revitalize collective traditions, ensuring they remain relevant to contemporary needs.
3. The utilization of digital technology should be further enhanced in a more systematic manner—through cultural archive digitalization, the development of creative cultural content, and the promotion of local culture via global networks.

Through this multi-stakeholder synergy, the local wisdom of Baubau's community can continue to thrive, adapt, and inspire the development of a civilization deeply rooted in cultural identity while remaining open to global progress.

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