

Navigating through Tradition and Faith: The Integration of Islamic Values within Baduy Indigenous Wisdom

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of Islamic values within the local wisdom of the Baduy Indigenous community. Its focuses on cultural and religious harmony, utilizing a descriptive-analytical method to explore the socio-cultural and religious dynamics reflected in scientific texts and documents. This research employs a qualitative approach through a systematic review of relevant literature, including scientific journals, books, research reports, academic articles, official documents, and previously published interviews (Mills & Birks, 2017). The primary data consists of literature directly addressing the interaction between Islamic values and Baduy traditions, while secondary sources provide additional context regarding the social, historical, and religious dimensions of the community. The qualitative data analyzed includes narratives, concepts, principles, and interpretations of customary and religious values as practiced by both the Outer and Inner Baduy groups. The thematic analysis was employed following an inductive process, emphasizing textual comprehension alongside a contextual and reflective interpretation of the integration of Islamic principles, while also recognizing the distinctiveness

of Baduy customs. Through this methodological framework, the study contributes to the development of a theoretical model for understanding cultural and religious harmony, supported by comprehensive and in-depth literature analysis.

Keywords: *Islamic values, local wisdom, Baduy community, cultural harmony, religion.*

Abstrak

Studi ini mengkaji integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam kearifan lokal masyarakat adat Baduy. Penelitian ini berfokus pada harmoni budaya dan agama, menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis untuk mengeksplorasi dinamika sosial-budaya dan agama yang tercermin dalam teks dan dokumen ilmiah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui tinjauan sistematis literatur relevan, termasuk jurnal ilmiah, buku, laporan penelitian, artikel akademis, dokumen resmi, dan wawancara yang telah dipublikasikan sebelumnya (Mills & Birks, 2017). Data primer terdiri dari literatur yang secara langsung membahas interaksi antara nilai-nilai Islam dan tradisi Baduy, sementara sumber sekunder memberikan konteks tambahan mengenai dimensi sosial, sejarah, dan agama masyarakat. Data kualitatif yang dianalisis mencakup narasi, konsep, prinsip, dan interpretasi nilai-nilai adat dan agama sebagaimana dipraktikkan oleh kelompok Baduy Luar maupun Baduy Dalam. Analisis tematik digunakan mengikuti proses induktif, menekankan pemahaman tekstual di samping interpretasi kontekstual dan reflektif mengenai integrasi prinsip-prinsip Islam, sekaligus mengakui kekhasan adat Baduy. Melalui kerangka metodologis ini, studi ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan model teoretis untuk memahami harmoni budaya dan agama, didukung oleh analisis literatur yang komprehensif dan mendalam.

Kata Kunci: *nilai-nilai Islam, kearifan lokal, masyarakat Baduy, harmoni budaya, agama.*

Introduction

Indonesia exemplifies how social harmony can be achieved despite complex differences, as it is home to a rich tapestry of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity (Kawangung, 2019). Among the Indigenous communities that have drawn academic and practical interest is the Baduy, a group residing in the interior of Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The Baduy people have long symbolized

the preservation of local wisdom in the face of modernization (Komariah, 2024). Their way of life, characterized by simplicity and an unwavering commitment to ancestral customs, reflects a deep cultural continuity passed down through generations. The values embedded in Baduy traditions emphasize harmony with nature and social relationships (Iskandar, 2017). Islam, as Indonesia's majority religion, introduces universal principles centered on justice, peace, and balance. The intersection of Islamic values and Baduy traditions presents a compelling subject for research, highlighting how diversity can foster meaningful engagement between religion and culture (Fadli, 2017).

The Baduy community is divided into two main groups: Inner Baduy and Outer Baduy, each displaying varying degrees of adherence to tradition. The Inner Baduy remain steadfast in preserving their ancestral customs, largely isolating themselves from external influences. In contrast, the Outer Baduy demonstrate greater openness to modernization, allowing interactions with broader society, including the introduction of religious principles. This openness creates possibilities for integrating Islamic values within the framework of local wisdom, particularly among the Outer Baduy, whose daily lives reflect a greater acceptance of cultural diversity (Iskandar, 2018). However, this process is not without challenges. Tensions often emerge between adherence to customary practices and religious teachings, exacerbated by external stereotypes that shape perceptions of the Baduy community (Utami, 2024).

In principle (*das sollen*), the integration of Islamic values into Baduy traditions should enrich both cultural and spiritual life (Faridah, 2020). Islam's core philosophy of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* aligns with several long-standing Baduy values, including respect for nature, honesty, and social harmony (Hasbiyallah et al., 2017). Ideally, this integration serves as a means to reinforce cultural identity while creating space for universally recognized religious principles. In practice (*das sein*), however, this process is often met with resistance. Some individuals or groups view the adoption of new values as a threat to the survival of customs that have been preserved for generations. The tension between maintaining tradition and embracing change presents a complex challenge in the context of Baduy society (Köchler, 2012).

This research aims to explore cultural harmony theory approach that emphasizes finding common ground between two entities: religion and local culture, to foster a complementary relationship (Gede Agung et al., 2024). This theory is particularly relevant in the context of Indigenous communities, which often must navigate new values while preserving their cultural identity. Additionally, social interaction theory is employed to understand how the relationship between the Baduy community and the surrounding Muslim community is formed, maintained, and developed (Orrick et al., 2024).

By understanding how the Baduy community successfully integrates Islamic values, readers can gain new insights into the importance of an inclusive and dialogical approach to building social harmony. This research contributes to both academic studies and practical applications in fostering unity amidst Indonesia's diversity.

Literature Review

Previous studies have discussed the relationship between Islam and local wisdom in various Indigenous communities in Indonesia. One critical study was conducted by Geertz (1981), who studied the relationship pattern between Islam and Javanese culture. Islam in Indonesia has experienced intense acculturation with local traditions, resulting in a distinctive form of Islam, as seen in the religious practices of the *Abangan* and Santri communities. The same approach can be applied to understand how Islam interacts with local wisdom in other Indigenous communities, such as the Baduy.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the Baduy Indigenous community. Most studies focus more on aspects of tradition, social system, or the relationship between the Baduy community and the government and modernization. For example, some studies highlight how Baduy people maintain their identity amidst the pressure of modernization or preserve the environment based on customary values (Iskandar, 2007). Research that explicitly discusses integrating Islamic values into the local wisdom of the Baduy community is still minimal (Hasanah, 2012; Holilah et al., 2023). This research gap shows the need for a more in-depth study to understand the mechanism and dynamics of such integration in the context of cultural and religious harmony. Research conducted by Iskandar (2018) reveals that integrating Islamic values with local traditions often occurs through cultural dialogue. In his research on Indigenous people in South Sulawesi, local traditions that are ritualistic and sacred are usually harmonized with Islamic teachings without losing their traditional essence (Hidayati, 2017).

Another research by Roibin et al. (2021) shows that Islam in Indonesia has inclusive and accommodating characteristics that blend well with local culture, thus facilitating the integration process. In addition, a more specific study of the Baduy community by Yulia (2023) shows that they have a flexible value system, allowing room for the integration of new values as long as they do not contradict the basic principles of adat.

This research holds crucial academic significance, particularly in the fields of cross-cultural and religious studies. The urgency of this research lies in its relevance to the challenges of diversity in Indonesia. In the context of globalization and modernization, many Indigenous communities are facing threats to their cultural identity (Geertz, 2023). This research is critical not only for documenting the practice of integrating Islamic values in the Baduy Indigenous community but also for providing a model or guide for other Indigenous communities facing similar dynamics. Additionally, it can serve as a reference for policymakers in developing local wisdom-based programs that respect religious values and cultural traditions.

This research presents a scientific novelty in the study of the integration of religion and local culture, focusing on the Baduy indigenous community, which has rarely been examined from an interactive and harmonious perspective between Islamic values and local wisdom. Most previous studies have highlighted the preservation of Baduy customs in the face of modernization or their structural relationship with the government, without examining the process of integration of religious values that takes place culturally and socially more deeply. This research fills the gap by examining

how Islamic values, such as honesty, justice, and care, have successfully integrated into the Baduy life system, particularly the Outer Baduy group, through a dialogical mechanism that does not impose, but rather fosters a meeting point between Islamic teachings and Baduy customs. This research has presented a conceptual model of shared value-based harmony that can be applied to other indigenous communities facing the dilemma between preserving tradition and embracing universal religious values.

Unlike previous research that often examines general intersections between religion and culture, this study focuses specifically on integrating Islamic values into the everyday practices of the Baduy people. Drawing on the literature, this research addresses a gap in studies on Indonesia's indigenous communities, particularly concerning the internal dynamics between the Inner Baduy and Outer Baduy groups. The study offers theoretical and practical insights into how Islam can coexist with local traditions without compromising their authenticity. Academically, it introduces a fresh perspective on cultural and religious acculturation, providing valuable insights into preserving local heritage in the face of societal change.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach through a literature review, aiming to examine the integration of Islamic values within the local wisdom of the Baduy Indigenous community. It focused on cultural and religious harmony, utilizing a descriptive-analytical method to explore the socio-cultural and religious dynamics reflected in scientific texts and documents. Data collection process

involves a systematic review of relevant literature, including scientific journals, books, research reports, academic articles, official documents, and previously published interviews (Mills & Birks, 2017).

The primary data consisted of literature directly addressing the interaction between Islamic values and Baduy traditions, while secondary sources provide additional context regarding the social, historical, and religious dimensions of the community. The qualitative data included narratives, concepts, principles, and interpretations of customary and religious values as practiced by both the Outer and Inner Baduy groups.

A content analysis technique and a hermeneutic approach were applied to interpret the symbolic meanings embedded in the texts (Cushman, 2021). The researcher categorized the data into core themes, such as the harmony of values, mechanisms of cultural adaptation, and the dynamics of socio-religious dialogue. The analysis followed an inductive process, emphasizing textual comprehension alongside a contextual and reflective interpretation of the integration of Islamic principles, while also recognizing the distinctiveness of Baduy customs.

To ensure the validity of findings, the research adopts source triangulation and maintains openness to diverse academic perspectives. Through this methodological framework, the study contributes to the development of a theoretical model for understanding cultural and religious harmony, supported by comprehensive and in-depth literature analysis.

Result And Discussion

Local Wisdom of Baduy Indigenous People: Social Structure, Tradition, and Cultural Value

The Baduy community is divided into two main groups: the Inner Baduy and the Outer Baduy. Both groups strongly uphold cultural traditions that shape their daily lives. Their way of life is rooted in simplicity, harmony with nature, and strict adherence to customary laws known as *pikukuh*. These values not only define the Baduy identity but also serve as the foundation for their sustainable way of living (Krisnadi, 2024).



Figure 1. Inner Baduy and Outer Baduy Community
Source: tempo.co (2022)

In the social structure of the Baduy community, a clear hierarchy exists, with a significant position held by the customary leader, known as *Pu'un*. *Pu'un* is responsible for community supervision, cultural preservation, and conflict resolution. *Pu'un*'s leadership is based not only on formal authority but also on the deep respect of community members. This position is passed down through generations, although an individual's ability to understand and practice *adat* remains a significant factor in leader selection (Asteria,

2021). This social structure ensures the continuity of the Baduy community's tradition and cultural values. Besides *Pu'un*, there is *Jaro*, who serves as an intermediary between Indigenous people and outsiders, especially for administrative matters. This role becomes essential, especially in facing the challenge of modernization, which is getting closer to the Indigenous community (Waluya, 2023).

The traditions of the Baduy community reflect deep spiritual values and a unique philosophy of life. One of the most prominent is the *Kawalu* ritual, performed as an expression of gratitude to the Creator and a request for blessings for the entire community. This ritual includes prayers, specific taboos, and the reinforcement of customary values. *Kawalu* serves as a key moment for collective reflection and social cohesion. It demonstrates how the Baduy people integrate spiritual devotion into their everyday lives. Additionally, their simple, eco-friendly farming practice, such as human-powered agriculture, illustrates their deep harmony with nature. This system respects natural cycles and avoids overexploitation of resources. (Dewi, 2023).

Simplicity is a defining characteristic of the Baduy community. This value is reflected in their daily lives, as they reject modern technology and luxury goods. Their resistance to modernity is not rooted in ignorance but stems from a conscious effort to preserve their cultural identity and communal integrity. This simplicity is evident in their clothing: members of the Inner Baduy wear only white and black garments, which they sew themselves. These colors symbolize purity, order, and obedience to tradition. For the Baduy, simplicity goes beyond material life, it is a life philosophy that emphasizes balance, contentment, and harmony (Gartiwa, 2024).

Harmony with nature is a core value that shapes the Baduy community's interaction with their environment. They view nature as an inseparable part of life, treating it with deep respect and a strong sense of responsibility. Their customary laws strictly prohibit deforestation, river pollution, and the overuse of natural resources. In daily life, the Baduy people manage these resources wisely and sustainably (Astheria, 2024). For example, in house construction, they only use natural materials such as bamboo and wood, which are taken in moderation without damaging the ecosystem (Rohmatullayaly, 2025). This is in line with the following interview results:

“Nature is life, so never destroy it. If we protect nature, nature will protect us. Don't just think about momentary benefits but about our children and grandchildren later. We in Baduy always try to live in harmony with nature, and I hope outsiders can learn from our way of life.” (Interview with AM as Baduy traditional leaders, 09/01/2025)

Customary rules (*pikukuh*) become the primary foundation in the life of the Baduy community. This *pikukuh* regulates all aspects of life, from relationships between individuals and farming procedures to interactions with outsiders. One of the most well-known principles of *pikukuh* is the prohibition of using modern tools, such as motorized vehicles, in the customary area. This prohibition aims to maintain the sanctity of the customary territory while limiting the influence of outside cultures that are considered to disrupt community harmony. *Pikukuh* teaches the importance of living in order and togetherness, so conflict between community members is rare (Waluya, 2024).

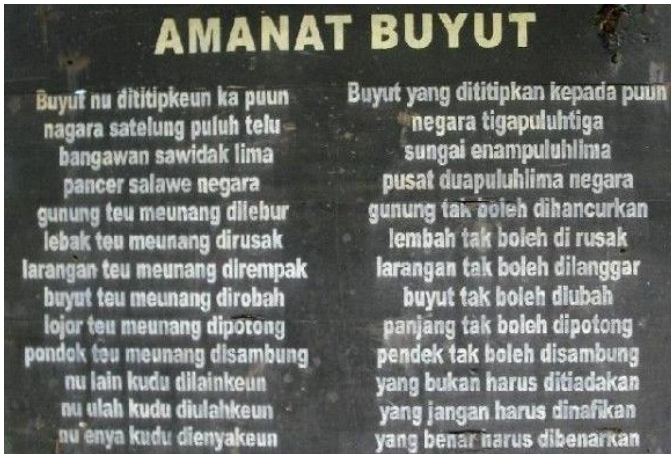


Figure 2. Mandate of the Buyut *Pikukuh* of Baduy Community
Source: Tambunan (2022)

Harmony with nature is a fundamental value that guides the Baduy community's relationship with their environment (Tambunan, 2022). They see nature as an integral part of life, treating it with deep respect and a strong sense of responsibility. Their customary laws strictly forbid deforestation, river pollution, and the overexploitation of natural resources. In everyday life, the Baduy people manage these resources carefully and sustainably (Praptika, 2024).

The Baduy community faces quite complex challenges in this modern era. Technology penetration, changes in the younger generation's mindset, and economic pressure are issues that must be faced (Amalia, 2023; Darmadi, 2024). The Baduy community has a strong social and cultural mechanism to filter these influences. They tend to be selective in accepting changes, ensuring they do not damage community harmony and customary values. This approach shows the Baduy community's ability to maintain its local wisdom in the face of globalization.

Based on field observations, this research finds that the cultural values of the Baduy community remain highly relevant in contemporary society. Their principles of simplicity, harmony with nature, and adherence to traditional customs offer alternative approaches to addressing global challenges such as environmental degradation, social isolation, and the crisis of cultural identity. The Baduy community's local wisdom not only represents a rich cultural heritage but also serves as a source of inspiration for sustainable and inclusive development (Kenedy, 2022).

The sustainability of Baduy culture largely depends on the respect and support of outsiders. Excessive interference or disregard for their traditional values may undermine the community's integrity. Therefore, ongoing dialogue and mutual understanding are essential in every interaction with the Baduy people. This approach helps preserve their local wisdom and supports Indonesia's cultural diversity.

Islamic Values and Its Relevance to Baduy Tradition

Honesty is one of the central values in Islamic teachings, reflected in the life of the Baduy people. Honesty in Islam is a moral foundation that directs individual and community behavior toward goodness (Rahmat & Yahya, 2021). This aligns with the practices of the Baduy community, who uphold honesty in all aspects of life. Their commitment to this value is evident in daily interactions, both within their community and with outsiders. For instance, the Baduy are known for being honest and transparent traders, particularly in terms of the price and quality of their goods. The trust they receive from consumers reflects their consistent adherence to the principle

of honesty (Hasanah, 2012). The value of honesty not only strengthens social cohesion within the community but also increases harmonious relations with outside parties. This value is in line with the words of Allah in the Qur'an, "And do not approach the wealth of an orphan, except in a more beneficial way, until he is an adult. And perfect the measures and scales fairly. We do not impose a burden on someone, only on their capabilities. And when you say you should act justly, even though he is your relative." (QS. Al-An'am: 152).

The implementation of honesty values in the daily lives of the Baduy people is emphasized by a Baduy local cleric who said:

"Honesty is essential to us. In trading, for example, we always state the price and quality of the goods as they are. We believe that people will continue to trust us if we are honest. Additionally, in the community, we are taught to be honest from childhood, both in our speech and actions. Honesty maintains harmony, both within the village and with outsiders. We believe that if we live honestly, God will care for us." (Interview with AK as Baduy local clerics, 10/01/2025)

Justice is a core value in Islam and is reflected in the traditions of the Baduy community. Islam emphasizes fairness in all aspects of life, including social relationships and decision-making. In Baduy society, justice is practiced through the equitable distribution of tasks and responsibilities. Each member of society has a clear role, from traditional leaders such as *Pu'un* to ordinary community members. Traditional leaders ensure that decisions reflect the common interest and do not harm one party. This principle is reflected in the distribution of harvests or other resources that are managed collectively. The Baduy community has succeeded in creating social harmony with minimal conflict with this system

(Sumawijaya et al., 2020). This principle of justice is in line with the teachings of Islam, as stated in QS. An-Nisa: 135, “O you who believe! Be upholders of justice and witnesses for Allah, even if it is against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether rich or poor, Allah knows best what is in his interests. So do not follow your desires because you want to deviate from the truth.”

Caring for others is another dimension that is the common thread between Islamic values and Baduy traditions (Said et al., 2020). Islam teaches the importance of helping others and maintaining the community’s welfare. As the Prophet Muhammad SAW said, “None of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself” (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). This value is evident in the traditions of the Baduy community, which emphasize togetherness and solidarity. For example, they work together to build houses or tend fields. Such practices not only support those in need but also strengthen social bonds. Helping others is seen as a moral duty, performed without expectation of reward, as part of a shared community responsibility.

This caring value is seen in how the Baduy people maintain a balanced relationship with nature. Islam emphasizes the importance of preserving the environment as a form of human responsibility as caliphs on earth (Mirajiani, 2023). This aligns with the principles of the Baduy people, who live in harmony with nature. They avoid excessive exploitation of natural resources and maintain the sustainability of forests as a source of life. This principle is reflected in customary rules prohibiting the indiscriminate felling of trees and the use of chemicals in agriculture. In the Qur’an, Allah says, “And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order,

and pray to Him with fear and hope. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is very close to those who do good” (QS. Al-A’raf: 56). Thus, the traditions of the Baduy people not only reflect concern for fellow human beings but also for other living things and the ecosystem as a whole.

The Baduy community’s adherence to Islamic values remains highly relevant in today’s modern context. Their commitment to simplicity, justice, and compassion offers meaningful alternatives to global challenges such as environmental degradation, social inequality, and cultural disconnection. The Baduy way of life teaches that true fulfillment lies not in material wealth, but in strong human relationships and harmony with nature (Prawiro, 2017). Islamic values and Baduy traditions share a common vision of promoting harmony and sustainability. This research highlights the importance of a dialogical approach to understanding the relationship between Islamic values and local traditions. Such an approach fosters a more inclusive and complementary perspective, encouraging respect for Indonesia’s cultural diversity. Islamic values, therefore, are not only relevant to Muslim communities but also adaptable across diverse cultural contexts, as illustrated by the Baduy community.

The Baduy traditions represent a rich cultural heritage and reflect universal principles aligned with Islamic teachings. Their emphasis on honesty, justice, and social concern demonstrates the broad applicability of Islamic values across cultures. This study aims to support the preservation of local traditions and enhance understanding of the dynamic relationship between Islam and regional cultures in Indonesia.

Interaction and Integration of Islamic Values in Baduy Traditional Life

The interaction and integration of Islamic values within Baduy traditional life occur through a complex yet harmonious process. The Outer Baduy community is more open to external influences, including Islamic values, compared to the Inner Baduy, who strictly preserve their customs. This integration reflects a cultural dialogue in which Islamic values are adapted into Baduy daily life, fostering strong tolerance and harmonious social relations. These values are evident in everyday practices aligned with Islamic teachings, such as honesty, cooperation, and respect for nature. Honesty, for instance, is a core principle in the Baduy's social and economic life. They are widely recognized as trustworthy traders, a trait highly esteemed in Islam. Honesty is a customary value and reflects a moral ethos similar to Islamic principles as expressed in QS. Al-Baqarah: 42, "And do not mix truth with falsehood and do not hide the truth, even though you know it."

The value of *gotong-royong*, or cooperation characteristic of the Baduy community, aligns with Islamic teachings. *Gotong-royong* in Islam is a form of social concern that is required, as reflected in the concept of zakat and infaq. The Baduy community traditionally applies *gotong-royong* in various aspects of life, such as building houses, opening fields, and holding traditional events (Salima et al., 2021). This practice strengthens community solidarity and shows how Islamic values can blend with local traditions without causing conflict. This indicates that the interaction between Islamic values and Baduy customs is more complementary than competitive.

A continuous cultural dialogue exists between the Muslim and Baduy communities. This dialogue unfolds through both verbal interactions and everyday practices that demonstrate mutual respect and understanding (Naziaha & Dhona, 2021). For instance, during religious events like Eid al-Fitr, the Outer Baduy community often participates or expresses respect for Islamic traditions. In turn, Muslims living near the Baduy area honor traditional rituals such as *Kawalu*, a sacred period for the Inner Baduy. This mutual respect fosters deep tolerance and harmonious relationships. Their tolerance is rooted in an appreciation of differences and a shared commitment to preserving social harmony (Prawiro, 2013). In Islamic teachings, tolerance is considered one of the essential pillars of building a peaceful society, as emphasized in the Quran. Al-Kafirun: 6, “For you your religion, and me my religion.” This principle is reflected in the attitude of the Muslim community, which does not impose Islamic values on the Baduy community but prefers a dialogical approach that respects local customs and traditions. This approach enables the Islamic values to be adopted voluntarily and gradually by the Baduy community without compromising their cultural identity.

A clear example of this integration can be found in the field of education. In recent decades, initiatives have been introduced to establish formal Islamic-based schools in the Baduy region. These schools combine Islamic teachings with elements of local culture in their curricula. The goal is to foster a younger generation that not only understands Islamic principles but also respects and preserves traditional Baduy customs. Through this approach, education serves as a key medium for integrating Islamic values with Baduy traditions

(Muslim, 2021). The integration of Islamic values is seen in the agricultural practices of the Baduy community. Islam teaches the importance of maintaining the balance of the ecosystem and not over-exploiting natural resources, as stated in QS. Al-A'raf: 56, "And do not cause corruption on the earth after Allah has set it in order." This principle aligns with the practices of the Baduy community, which significantly respects nature and manages its resources sustainably. The prohibition on using chemicals in agriculture and customary rules prohibiting indiscriminate felling of trees show the harmony between Islamic values and Baduy customs in preserving the environment (Iskandar, 2007).

Integrating Islamic values into the lives of the Baduy community involves several challenges. A key issue is the differing perspectives between the modern Muslim community and the traditionally oriented Baduy people. These differences can lead to misunderstandings, particularly in interpreting religious and cultural values. However, this challenge has been addressed through open dialogue and a mutual willingness to learn. Ongoing conversations have fostered idea exchange and more profound understanding, strengthening social ties between the two groups. The study also highlights the broader relevance of Islamic values within Baduy traditions today. Core principles like honesty, cooperation, and respect for nature, central to the Baduy way of life, offer meaningful insights for addressing global issues such as environmental degradation, social disconnection, and economic inequality. The synergy between Baduy traditions and Islamic teachings can support the development of a more harmonious and sustainable society.

The results of this study show that the interaction and integration of Islamic values within Baduy traditional life reflect not only the harmony between two distinct value systems but also the strong potential to develop an inclusive and sustainable model of coexistence. The cultural dialogue between the Muslim community and the Baduy people proves that differences do not always have to be a source of conflict, but can be an opportunity to learn from each other and enrich life together (Yulia, 2023b). The findings of this research provide an essential contribution to the understanding of the relationship between Islam and local culture, as well as the potential of both to build a more harmonious and tolerant society. The findings on the integration of Islamic values in Baduy traditional life are in line with the following interview results:

“We in Outer Baduy are used to interacting with Muslims. Values such as honesty, cooperation, and respect for nature have been part of our customs for a long time. When Islamic values entered, we felt similarities, such as maintaining honesty in trading or cooperation in building a house. We still hold on to our customs, but do not close ourselves off. For us, this is about understanding each other and maintaining harmony.”
(Interview with JS as Baduy community members, 05/02/2025)

Challenges and Opportunities for Harmonization between Baduy Traditions and Islam

The interaction between Baduy and Islamic traditions is a dynamic process marked by both challenges and opportunities. This process reflects ongoing efforts to preserve the Baduy people’s cultural identity while demonstrating how Islamic values can enrich local traditions without erasing their authenticity. The main challenges stem from differences in core principles, yet these also present opportunities to foster lasting harmony through inclusive and

respectful cultural dialogue. A significant challenge lies in reconciling the spiritual beliefs and practices of Islamic teachings with the customs of the Baduy. For instance, the Inner Baduy strictly upholds ancestral traditions, which include rejecting external religious or cultural influences. They view this as a form of loyalty to their forebears, guided by *Sialanuh*, or customary law. In contrast, Islamic teachings emphasize monotheism and a universal obligation to worship, which can sometimes clash with Inner Baduy values, especially when Islamic principles are introduced directly into their community. Meanwhile, the Outer Baduy, who are more receptive to external influences, tend to adopt Islamic values more readily, although they still strive to preserve the distinctiveness of their cultural heritage (Sobarna, 2024).

Another challenge involves the potential for social conflict stemming from differing perspectives between the Muslim and Baduy communities. In some instances, certain Muslim groups perceive Baduy traditions as being at odds with Islamic teachings. This perception can create social distance and hinder efforts toward harmonious integration. However, this research found that most Muslim communities living near the Baduy prefer an inclusive and dialogical approach. Guided by the values of the Qur'an, they recognize the importance of respecting local traditions as part of the nation's cultural heritage, in line with Islamic principles that promote tolerance and respect for diversity. Al-Hujurat: 13, "O mankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and then We made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another." IR confirmed this finding as the Baduy mantri of faith. He said:

“There are definitely challenges, especially if there are those who do not understand our customs. But as long as there is dialogue, it can usually be resolved well.” (Interview with IR as Baduy community members, 06/02/2025)

This research identifies several opportunities to foster harmony between Baduy and Islamic traditions. A key opportunity lies in the shared core values of both systems. For instance, the principles of simplicity, honesty, and cooperation, central to the Baduy tradition, are closely aligned with Islamic teachings. Simplicity is considered a form of piety in Islam, as reflected in the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, “Simplicity is part of faith” (HR. Abu Dawud). Likewise, cooperation, an inseparable part of Baduy community life, is similar to the concept of *ta’awun* or mutual assistance in Islam.



Figure 3. Dugdug Rempug, a typical community service of the Baduy community
Source: Somantri (2020)

These shared values provide an opportunity to create a constructive cultural dialogue (Somantri, 2020). Cultural dialogue not only involves exchanging ideas or concepts, but also encompasses daily

life practices that reflect mutual respect and learning from one another (Enjang, 2022). For instance, Muslim communities can learn from the Baduy people's local wisdom in preserving ecological balance and living harmoniously with nature. In turn, the Baduy community can draw inspiration from Islamic teachings that promote inclusive and justice-oriented social values. This research finds that education grounded in Islamic values, while respecting local traditions, holds great potential to serve as a bridge between these two communities. Schools near the Baduy area, for example, can teach universal Islamic principles such as justice, honesty, and compassion, while honoring Baduy customs. This approach fosters stronger ties between the Muslim and Baduy communities, promoting a more inclusive and tolerant understanding of cultural and religious diversity among the younger generation (Warsihna, 2017).

This research shows that Islamic principles of environmental sustainability can strengthen the Baduy tradition of respecting nature. In Islam, protecting the environment is a moral responsibility that every individual is obligated to fulfill, as stated in the Quran. Al-A'raf: 56, "And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order." This principle aligns with the Baduy tradition, which prohibits the excessive exploitation of natural resources. With this shared vision, both communities can work together to promote sustainable practices that support environmental sustainability (Khastini, 2018).



Figure 4. Local wisdom of the Baduy tribe in preserving nature
Source: 1001indonesia.net (2016)

Tolerance is key to creating harmony between Baduy and Islamic traditions. Tolerance means respecting differences and a willingness to understand and accept different values as part of the commonwealth (1001indonesia.net, 2016). Tolerance in Islam is a fundamental principle consistently emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad. This value is exemplified in the Medina Charter, which serves as a model for peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies. In the context of the Baduy community, tolerance is evident in their respect for the religious practices of their Muslim neighbors. Likewise, the Muslim community reciprocates by honoring the traditional rituals of the Baduy (Fadli, 2024).

The findings of this research indicate that achieving harmony between Baduy and Islamic traditions necessitates collaborative efforts from both parties. Challenges, such as differing principles and potential social tensions, can be addressed through inclusive and respectful dialogue. Shared values, education, and joint efforts in environmental conservation offer opportunities to build more harmonious and sustainable relationships (Septini, 2022). This

research contributes to understanding the relationship between local traditions and religious values, as well as the potential of both to foster more inclusive and tolerant societies.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates how the integration of Islamic values into the local wisdom of the Baduy Indigenous community creates a distinctive harmony between culture and religion. The Outer Baduy group, in particular, exhibits openness to Islamic values while preserving its cultural identity. This integration occurs through a gradual adaptation process in which universal Islamic principles, including honesty, justice, and social responsibility, become embedded in daily life.

Honesty, a fundamental Islamic value, is deeply ingrained in the social and economic interactions of the Baduy community, which is known for its transparency and trust in both internal and external relations. This reflects Islamic teachings that prioritize moral integrity as the foundation of communal life. Justice is similarly evident in the community's social structure, where responsibilities and resources are distributed equitably. Traditional leaders, such as the Pu'un, maintain harmony within the community, demonstrating the significance of justice in governance.

Social responsibility forms a connection between Islamic values and Baduy traditions. The strong communal ties and cooperative economic activities of the Baduy people align with Islamic teachings that encourage mutual support and collective well-being. Their deep respect for nature also resonates with the Islamic principle that views humanity as stewards of the environment.

The novelty of this study lies in its formulation of an adaptive and dialogical model for integrating values. It illustrates how indigenous communities can incorporate Islamic values without compromising their cultural identity. Rather than resulting from imposed transformation, this integration emerges through an organic process that acknowledges the shared meanings and practical relevance of these values in everyday life. This research provides new perspectives on the compatibility between Islamic ethical principles and Baduy customary norms, such as *pikukuh*, cooperative social practices, and environmental conservation. By moving beyond the conventional dichotomy between religion and culture, it presents an alternative approach that promotes tolerance, mutual respect, and sustainability through cultural dialogue.

One of the main limitations of this study is its narrow focus, particularly on the Outer Baduy community, which is more receptive to external influences. As a result, the research does not fully explore the perspectives of the Inner Baduy, who demonstrate strong resistance to change. Additionally, time constraints and limited access to restricted customary practices prevented more extensive participatory observation. Another limitation is the insufficient attention to the role of younger generations in navigating the integration of Islamic values into contemporary Baduy life. Future research could expand its scope by engaging more deeply with the Inner Baduy and examining intergenerational dynamics in balancing religious and customary values. A long-term collaborative ethnographic approach would provide a more nuanced and contextualized understanding.

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