



REOG AS EDUCULTURAL PRACTICE IN PESANTREN: INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM AND ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY AT WALI SONGO NGABAR ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL, PONOROGO

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Abstract:

This research aims to examine the harmony between local wisdom and Islamic spirit through educulture practices at Wali Songo Islamic Boarding School in Ngabar, with Reog as the main focus. Pesantren are regarded not merely as institutions of Islamic learning, but also as cultural arenas that play a strategic role in preserving and transmitting local values. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, through observation, interviews, and documentation, and was analyzed using the model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The results show that Reog is not merely preserved as a performing art but has been adapted as a medium for character education, discipline, and togetherness among students. Elements of polytheism and mysticism have been removed and replaced with Islamic poetry, prayers, and narratives emphasizing moral and spiritual values. The integration of Reog is evident in annual carnival, spectacular show, and extracurricular activity. Although Reog has frequently been discussed as a form of Javanese cultural heritage, studies that explore its reinterpretation within the educational and spiritual environment of pesantren remain limited. This research addresses that gap by examining how Reog is transformed into an educultural medium that harmonizes local tradition with Islamic ethical values in the daily life of the pesantren. The novelty of this study lies in revealing how pesantren actively reconstruct local cultural expressions into a pedagogical space that nurtures both cultural identity and spiritual character among students.

Keywords: Reog, Educulture Islamic Boarding School, Integration Wisdom Local

INTRODUCTION

Reog is one of the traditional arts of the archipelago that was born, grew, and is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural life of the people of Ponorogo, East Java. This art is not merely understood as an aesthetic expression or folk entertainment, but as a symbolic representation of local wisdom values imbued with historical, philosophical, and moral meaning. In the historical and mythological stories that accompany it, Reog reflects the spirit of courage, leadership, social solidarity, and the struggle against injustice, articulated through figures such as Warok Klono Sewandono and the symbol of the peacock. These values make Reog not only an intangible cultural heritage but also a medium for transmitting values across generations with significant educational potential (Koentjaraningrat, 2000). UNESCO's recognition of Reog as part of Indonesia's Intangible Cultural Heritage further confirms the strategic position of this art in the context of cultural preservation and character education based on local wisdom (Sedyawati, 2006).

In development latest Reog is no longer solely present in the public spaces of traditional societies but has begun to experience a transformation in meaning and function when adopted by religious educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This phenomenon raises an interesting academic

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question, namely how Reog is positioned as an educulture of Islamic boarding schools, namely a culture that is not only preserved but consciously integrated into the education and development system of students. (Azra, 2002) At the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo, Reog is not treated as a performing art that stands outside the Islamic boarding school education system but is made part of educational activities through extracurricular activities, annual performances, and spectacular Islamic boarding school events. This practice shows a shift in the paradigm of Islamic boarding schools from institutions often associated with a resistive attitude towards local culture, to institutions that are accommodating and dialogical towards tradition, as long as it does not conflict with the basic principles of Islamic teachings. (Dhofier & Dhofier, 2011).

Problem The second issue that emerged and became an important focus of this research was the integration of local Reog wisdom with the Islamic spirit within the Islamic boarding school environment. Reog has historically been associated with mystical elements of ritual and pre-Islamic symbols, which, from certain perspectives, are considered problematic. However, the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School demonstrates a unique model of integration, where elements potentially contradicting the values of monotheism are reconstructed and Islamized through the elimination of mystical ritual offerings and the replacement of narratives and poetry with prayers and Islamic moral messages. In this context, Reog functions not only as a spectacle but is transformed into guidance, namely a medium for internalizing moral values, discipline, togetherness, and cultural da'wah for students. This integration aligns with the concept of cultural da'wah, which positions culture as an effective medium for conveying Islamic messages in a contextual and humanistic manner. (Hefner, 2000).

Next problem Third, and no less important, is the strategy of Islamic boarding schools in integrating the local Reog culture into their educational system. This integration does not occur suddenly, but rather through planned pedagogical and cultural strategies. Islamic boarding schools play a key role in selecting values, reinterpreting symbols, and adapting cultural practices to align with the vision of Islamic education. This strategy includes fostering students through arts extracurricular activities, instilling Islamic values in performance narratives, and involving Reog in official Islamic boarding school agendas such as the annual carnival and collaborative cross-cultural performances. Thus, Islamic boarding schools not only become agents of local cultural preservation but also create new meanings that integrate tradition and religiosity in a way harmonious.

Uniqueness study This This becomes even stronger when linked to the research location, namely the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo. As an Islamic boarding school located in the center of Reog culture, Ngabar holds a strategic position in representing the dialectic between Islam and local culture. This Islamic boarding school is inhabited by students from various regions in Indonesia, so the Reog practices developed not only reflect Ponorogo's local identity but also serve as a medium for multicultural integration within the framework of Islamic education. This condition makes the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School a unique socio-cultural laboratory for studying practice educulture Islamic boarding school based wisdom local.

From the study scientific study This paper presents novelty that is contextual and empirical. Several previous studies have discussed Reog as a traditional art

(Fakhiroh et al., 2020) which functions as a medium for cultural da'wah and a means of character education in the general public with an emphasis on internalizing moral values of togetherness and local cultural identity through performing arts (Pertiwi & Sudrajat, 2022). Although making important contributions to understanding the social and educational functions of Reog, these studies have not specifically placed Reog in the context of formal Islamic educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools. On the other hand, research on Islamic boarding schools and local culture generally examines the process of acculturation of Islam with Javanese traditions within a broader framework such as religious practices, cultural symbols, and the socio-Islamic construction of Islamic boarding school communities (Nurrahmah Laili et al., 2021). Several studies also discuss the relationship between Islam and local culture conceptually (Adib, 2021), but the discussion is still limited to the normative level and has not examined in depth certain performing arts-based educational practices that are carried out sustainably within the Islamic boarding school environment (Zuhdi, 2017).

Based on mapping the The research gap lies in the limited empirical studies that specifically examine Reog as an Islamic boarding school educulture, namely as a culture-based educational practice that is consciously and systematically integrated with Islamic values and spirit in contemporary Islamic boarding school life. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap through a qualitative analysis based on an in-depth case study at the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo by highlighting how Reog is not only maintained as a local cultural heritage but also reconstructed as a medium for character education, spirituality, and integration. Islamic values in ecosystem Islamic boarding school.

Urgency study This is increasingly relevant amidst the challenges of globalization and cultural homogenization, which have the potential to erode local identity and religious values. As the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are required to respond to changing times without losing their traditional roots and spiritual values. This research is important not only for documenting best practices in cultural and religious integration but also for providing theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a model of Islamic education based on wisdom. moderate local inclusive and sustainable.

In a way theoretical study This is reinforced by several conceptual frameworks, including the educulture theory that views education as a cultural process (Banks, 2015), the theory of cultural integration in education (Gay, 2018), the concept of acculturation of Islam and local culture (Azra, 2002), and the cultural da'wah approach that emphasizes the importance of cultural context in conveying Islamic values (Hefner, 2000). This theoretical framework is used to read the practice of Reog integration at the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School as a dynamic process that brings together local traditions and Islamic spirit in a unified Islamic boarding school education system.

RESEARCH METHODS

Study This use approach qualitative descriptive with design studies case For understand in a way deep practice integration culture local with Islamic values in environment Islamic boarding school. Approach qualitative chosen Because allows researchers dig meaning, experience, and interpretation of the perpetrators education

to the phenomenon being studied in natural context. Research data served in form narrative descriptive which emphasizes meaning to practice culture and education that takes place in Islamic boarding schools. The analysis process done in a way inductive, so that findings study born from dynamics of data obtained in the field (Fadli, 2021).

Data sources in study This includes primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained in a way direct through interaction researchers with informant on site research, while secondary data obtained from various document institutional, report activities, as well as relevant literature with theme study (Malahati et al., 2023).

Study This held at the Pondok Islamic boarding school Guardian Songo News. Election location This based on role Islamic boarding school in develop practice education that is not only emphasize on strengthening values Islamic, but also open dialogue space with tradition culture local. One of the form integration the looks in development art traditional Reog Ponorogo as a medium for development character and preservation wisdom local in life students.

Informant study chosen purposively, namely based on involvement and understanding they to activity culture and education in Islamic boarding schools. Informant in study this covering leadership Islamic boarding school, teacher or mentor activity culture, trainer Reog, students involved in activity mentioned, as well as figure surrounding community Islamic boarding school. Presence various informant This expected capable give diverse perspectives about practice integration culture and spiritual values in environment education Islamic boarding school.

Data collection was carried out through three technique main, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation done For observe in a way direct dynamics activity culture, training process, as well practice internalization Islamic values in activity Reog in the environment Islamic boarding school. Interview done in a way deep with informants use get greater understanding comprehensive about meaning, purpose, and strategy integration culture in the educational process Islamic boarding school. Meanwhile that, documentation used for complete research data through collection archives activities, photos, program reports, and other related documents with implementation activity culture in Islamic boarding schools.

Data analysis in study This using analysis models interactive model developed by Johnny Saldana, Matthew B. Miles, and A. Michael Huberman. This model covering three stages main, namely data reduction, data presentation, and withdrawal and verification conclusion (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction is done with selecting, grouping, and focusing relevant data with theme research. Furthermore, the data that has been organized served in form description descriptive so that make it easier researchers in see pattern connection between findings. Stage final is withdrawal conclusions drawn in a way gradually and continuously verified during the research process use ensure validity as well as consistency of the data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reog as Representation Wisdom Local and Identity Culture Ponorogo

Interview results show that art Reog understood by the community Ponorogo No just as show art, but as representation wisdom local containing values social, historical, and cultural. Informants explain that Reog reflect mark courage, solidarity, and Spirit holopis egret, a line that describes deep mutual cooperation life society. Production process Reog, start from manufacturing sudden peacocks, masks, costumes, etc., preparation staging, involving collaboration Lots party so that reflect culture collective public (Ahmad Habibulloh, personal communication, January 5, 2026). In perspective anthropology culture, practice This show How tradition become room inheritance meaning social and identity cultural. Views This in line with Clifford Geertz's thoughts, which emphasize that culture is network inherited meaning in a way symbolic and become method public understand as well as interpret reality his life (Morgan, 1978).

Besides that, Reog is also seen as symbol identity culture public Ponorogo, which was inherited in a way hereditary. Tradition This No only become pride public local, but also has recognized in a way wide as part from inheritance Indonesian culture. In perspective society, existence Reog strengthen identity cultural area at a time become a unifying medium public (Bekti, 2022).

From the side historically, the informant also emphasized that art Reog own root strong history and mythology, such as the satirical legend of Ki Ageng Kutu the power of King Brawijaya as well as story Clone Sewandono proposed to Princess Songgo Sky. Narratives the show that Reog No only functioning as art performance, but also as a conveying medium values history and symbols living resistance in memory collective public (Purnani, 2017).

Findings This show that Reog is form wisdom local blend mark social, history, and identity culture. In context public Ponorogo, Reog become room expression culture at a time means unifying force that strengthens social solidarity (Amandha et al., 2023).

Integration Reog in Islamic Boarding School Education System

Research result show that Cottage Islamic boarding school Guardian Songo News integrate art Reog as part from activity education and culture Islamic boarding school. Integration This No only aim preserve culture local, but also make Reog as a formative learning medium character students.

According to Imron Rosyidi, arts Reog involved in various activity Islamic boarding schools, such as carnival art annual as well as show spectacular like Regular Spectacular Show and Art Collaboration held every year. In activity said, students No only become audience, but also involved direct as players, dancers, and musician in show Reog (Imron Rosyidi, personal communication, December 2025).

Practice This show that culture local can become a contextual and participatory learning medium. The idea the in line with Abdurrahman Wahid's thoughts emphasize the importance of dialogue between Islam and culture local as room enriching culture practice Islam in life public (Alfanny et al., 2025). In perspective indigenization of Islam, tradition culture No positioned as something opposite with religion, but rather as a cultural medium that allows Islamic values are present in a way contextual and down to earth in dynamics social public (Rosidi, 2016).

Involvement students in various activity Islamic boarding school create a learning process contributing participatory in formation character like discipline, responsibility answer, and work The same (Maryono, 2022). Activity students in activity the create experience learning that is participatory. Through the process of practice and performance, students Study about discipline, work same, responsibility answer, and love to culture local. This is show that Islamic boarding school No only play a role as institution education religious, but also as room preservation culture.

More far, integration Reog in Islamic boarding schools also show the existence of an educational process contextual culture. Reog No only functioning as art performance, but also contains moral and educational values that can used as a learning medium at a time means distribution Islamic values in public (Warsini, 2022). In Educational context in Islamic boarding schools, Reog No positioned just as entertainment, but as a connecting learning medium mark culture with formation character santri. With Thus, the practice This reflect approach educulture, namely integration between education and culture in the learning process that allows participant educate get experience Study in a way participatory at a time understand mark living culture in community. Approach This in line with practice education based culture that can strengthen formation character through experience social and traditions that develop in the educational environment (Rohdiana et al., 2023).

Internalization of Islamic Values in Show Reog

Findings research also shows that practice Reog in the environment Islamic boarding school undergo a process of reinterpretation that adapts with Islamic values. Leadership cottage Islamic boarding school News explain that Islamic boarding school make an effort fill in art Reog with moral and spiritual messages to remain in harmony with Islamic teachings.

This process seen in the disappearance elements that are considered contradictory with mark Islam, such as practice offerings or habit drink a lot of alcohol a number of tradition Reog Still found in society. As instead, the show Reog at Islamic boarding school filled with elements religious like reading prayer, chanting blessings, and songs spiritual nuances such as Lir-Iilir, Turi-Turi White, and various poetry reminder (pepeling) which contains moral message (Imron Rosyidi, personal communication, December 2025).

Besides that, narrative symbolic in the show is also interpreted repeat in a way educational. Figures Warok and Klono Sewandono interpreted as representation mark courage and truth, while symbol tiger interpreted as representation characteristic bad thing to do controlled. In narrative said, victory figure kindness on symbol badness describe the moral message is that truth must always fought for (Rochmahningtyas & Trisakti, 2025).

Difference this is also visible clear between Reog which is developing in society general and Reog which is performed in Islamic boarding schools. If Reog in society often understood as entertainment, then Reog at Islamic boarding school directed as a medium for da'wah and education character. Therefore that, Reog in the environment Islamic boarding school No only become spectacle, but also becoming guidance that conveys values Islam to the students and the community.

Impact Educational and Social Reog for Students

Involvement students in art Reog give impact positive to formation character and attitude social they. Based on results interview, response students to activity Reog at Islamic boarding school very enthusiastic. This is seen from Spirit they in follow exercise and moment staging taking place. One of the students disclose that involvement in activity Reog make it feel more believe self when appear in front general as well as Study Work The same with his friends in One team. He also said that exercises performed in a way routine practice discipline and foster a sense of responsibility answer to the role played in show (Rizqi Bintang Pradana, personal communication, December 2025).

Art Reog capable grow character courage, enthusiasm and solidarity among students. Dynamics movement dance, accompaniment gamelan music, as well as involvement collective in staging create experience full learning energy and enthusiasm togetherness. Besides that, art Reog also became means effective Islamic propagation. Some studies also show that art Reog contain values character like courage, enthusiasm struggle, togetherness, and award to diversity culture that can utilized as a strengthening medium character generation young (Sari, 2023). Through narrative symbolic and moral messages conveyed in performance, students No only Study about diversity Indonesian culture, but also understand values Islam contained in it.

With Thus, research This confirm that Islamic boarding school can play a role as room creative that brings together tradition local with spiritual values in practice education. Reog in context Islamic boarding school No only preserved as inheritance culture, but also interpreted as an educulture medium that connects preservation culture with formation character santri. Contribution study This lies in the affirmation that integration between culture local and values Islam No must understood as mutual relationship contradictory. Rather, through dialogical and contextual approach, tradition culture precisely can become means effective in strengthen education character, preaching cultural, as well as formation identity generation young people rooted in values culture at a time own strong spiritual awareness.

CONCLUSION

Study This show that art Reog at the Pondok Islamic boarding school Guardian Songo News No only functioning as form preservation culture local, but also as a medium of integration between wisdom local and values Islam in practice education Islamic boarding school. Reog interpreted return through a process of reinterpretation cultural that emphasizes the values of mutual cooperation, courage, solidarity, and Spirit the struggle that is reflected in philosophy holopis egret line. In environment Islamic boarding school, arts This No just become spectacle culture, but develop as an educulture medium that instills education character, discipline, and spiritual awareness to the students. Integration the done through strengthening moral narrative, disappearance elements that are not in harmony with Islamic teachings, as well as enrichment show with prayers, blessings, and poetry nuanced religious.

Findings This confirm that Islamic boarding school own role strategic as dialogue space between tradition Islamic culture and values, so preservation culture local can walk along with strengthening education character and preaching contextual cultural implications study This show that approach integrative between culture local and education Islam can become a development model education more Islamic boarding schools contextual, at the same time open opportunity for institution other

Islamic education For utilise wisdom local as a learning medium character and reinforcement moderation religion in the middle an increasingly diverse society diverse.

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