

# A Philosophical Study of the Transformation of Islamic Education Policy Based on Local Wisdom in West Sumatra: Irwan Prayitno's Leadership Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Education plays an important role not only in transmitting knowledge but also in shaping students' moral, cultural, and religious character. In West Sumatra, the transformation of Islamic education policy during Irwan Prayitno's leadership was closely linked to local wisdom rooted in the Minangkabau philosophy of *adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah (ABS-SBK)*. This study aims to analyze the philosophical foundation and policy transformation of local wisdom-based Islamic education in West Sumatra under his leadership. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach enriched with philosophical analysis. Data were obtained through a semi-structured interview with Irwan Prayitno as the key informant, supported by documentation and relevant literature. The findings show that local wisdom was understood not merely as cultural symbolism, but as a value system grounded in Islamic teachings and reflected in educational orientation, Qur'anic learning programs, *khatam Al-Qur'an*, mentoring activities, and the inclusion of *Budaya Alam Minangkabau (BAM)*. The study also finds that the implementation of these policies faced several challenges, particularly the limited number of teachers with sufficient knowledge of customary values and the lack of practical teaching materials. In addition, the findings indicate that local wisdom-based education contributed more clearly to character formation than to measurable educational quality, since the latter requires more systematic indicators. Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on Islamic education, local wisdom, and leadership by showing how educational policy transformation can be understood through the interconnection of culture, religion, and regional leadership. Practically, this study highlights the importance of strengthening teacher capacity and improving culturally grounded learning materials to support the implementation of local wisdom-based education in West Sumatra.



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## A. INTRODUCTION

Education holds a profoundly important role in human life because, through it, human beings are able to attain a higher degree of dignity and development (Adnan et al., 2025). Education plays a crucial role in developing knowledgeable, creative, responsible individuals who are able to contribute to society. In the context of West Sumatra, this effort becomes even more relevant when linked to the transformation of Islamic education policies based on local wisdom, as implemented during Irwan Prayitno's leadership. Through holistic education, policies are directed not only at strengthening

cognitive and psychomotor aspects, but also at socio-emotional development aligned with the traditional values of *basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* (Husnaini et al., 2024).

Education rooted in local wisdom has increasingly gained attention in Indonesia as the country seeks to ensure that schools do not only produce academically competent graduates but also shape learners with strong cultural identity and moral integrity. In a plural nation such as Indonesia, with its vast cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, education is faced with the challenge of nurturing citizens who are not merely intellectually capable but also responsible, socially sensitive, and culturally grounded (Alhamuddin et al., 2022). Local wisdom understood as the values and practices developed organically within communities can serve as a moral and cultural foundation when meaningfully integrated into the formal education system. In the context of Islamic education, incorporating local wisdom goes beyond cultural content; it involves philosophical, theological, and ethical dimensions that ensure education does not alienate learners from their cultural environment.

West Sumatra stands out as one of the provinces that has placed strong emphasis on local wisdom in education. The Minangkabau philosophy of “*adat basandi syara’, syara’ basandi Kitabullah*” (custom is based on religion, and religion is based on the Qur’an) is not merely a slogan but a guiding principle embedded in social life, governance, and, importantly, the education sector. This philosophy affirms that culture and religion are mutually reinforcing; custom strengthens religious life, while religion provides guidance for understanding and practicing cultural traditions. Thus, the relationship between Minangkabau traditions and Islamic teachings is seen as complementary rather than contradictory. Leaders who embrace this philosophy have the potential to drive educational transformation that harmonizes modernity and tradition, balancing global academic demands with local cultural identity (Ilham & Afdal, 2023).

Philosophy is the mother of all sciences. It is a profound way of human thought about the nature of things (Husaini 2021). During the leadership of Irwan Prayitno as the Governor of West Sumatra, substantial efforts were made to sustain cultural roots while reforming Islamic education policies. Interviews with education officials and local community figures reveal that Irwan Prayitno defined local wisdom not as static or outdated traditions but as adaptive values such as communal solidarity (*gotong royong*), collective decision-making (*musyawarah*), respect for elders and religious scholars, and social responsibility. In the educational context, he emphasized that schools should not merely deliver the national curriculum but also incorporate content that reflects Minangkabau cultural local language, arts, folklore, and indigenous pedagogical practices. According to him, learners who grow up within an environment that values and respects their cultural heritage will develop stronger confidence, social awareness, and moral grounding (Infer et al., 2025).

Despite the significance of these initiatives, scholarly discussions that examine the philosophical underpinnings of such policies remain limited. Previous studies on local wisdom in education have largely focused on curriculum implementation, teaching methods, or teachers’ and students’ perceptions of character education. However, few have systematically explored the philosophical dimensions of leadership and public policy that integrate Islamic education with indigenous values. In particular, the era of Irwan Prayitno’s leadership has not been adequately studied from a philosophical perspective. Much of the existing literature consists of reports, media coverage, and case studies that do not delve into how definitions of local wisdom are translated into regulations, how leadership style influences policymaking, or how these policies affect the identity and character formation of students. This gap highlights the urgency of a more

comprehensive study that draws upon theories of multicultural education, public policy, transformational leadership, and character education to better understand the processes and outcomes of educational transformation in West Sumatra.

Previous studies on local wisdom in education in Indonesia have mainly focused on curriculum implementation, character education, and the internalization of Minangkabau cultural values in learning practices (Yulika & Mulyadi, 2019). However, limited attention has been given to the philosophical foundation of policy transformation, particularly to how local wisdom was conceptualized at the policy level and how leadership shaped its integration into Islamic education in West Sumatra. In this regard, few studies have specifically examined Irwan Prayitno's leadership as a case of policy transformation linking local wisdom, Islamic educational values, and regional governance. Therefore, this study examines the philosophical dimension of leadership-driven educational policy transformation based on local wisdom, while also analyzing its implications for character building and educational quality in West Sumatra

The purpose of this study is to analyze philosophically and empirically how Irwan Prayitno's leadership transformed Islamic education policies through the integration of local wisdom in West Sumatra. Specifically, it aims to: (1) identify the operational definition of local wisdom from his perspective; (2) describe the concrete policy measures introduced to integrate Minangkabau customs into Islamic education; (3) examine his leadership approach, particularly in terms of vision, motivation, empowerment, and decision-making; and (4) evaluate the impact of these policies on students' character formation in moral, cultural, and religious dimensions.

It is expected that this research will not only enrich the literature on Islamic education and local wisdom but also provide policy insights for other regions in Indonesia with strong cultural traditions. By situating the case of West Sumatra within broader theoretical frameworks James A. Banks' multicultural education, Thomas Dye's public policy theory, James MacGregor Burns' transformational leadership, Thomas Lickona's character education, and others this study aspires to contribute to ongoing scholarly debates about how education systems in multicultural societies can balance global academic demands with local cultural and religious values.

## **B. METHODS**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach enriched with philosophical analysis to examine the meaning, values, and transformation of local wisdom-based Islamic education policy during the leadership of Irwan Prayitno in West Sumatra. This approach was chosen because the study not only describes policy implementation, but also explores the philosophical relationship between Minangkabau cultural values, Islamic principles, and educational policy.

The primary data of this study were obtained through a semi-structured interview with a key informant, namely Prof. Dr. H. Irwan Prayitno, former Governor of West Sumatra, whose leadership became the focus of this research. He was selected purposively because of his direct role in formulating and implementing educational policies in West Sumatra and his strong understanding of the relationship between Minangkabau local wisdom, Islamic values, and regional governance. Secondary data were obtained from policy documents, relevant literature, journal articles, and media reports related to local wisdom, Islamic education, and educational leadership in West Sumatra.

Data collection was carried out in three stages. First, the researcher identified the main themes to be explored, namely the definition of local wisdom, concrete policy integration, implementation challenges, leadership approach, and the implications of these policies for character building and educational quality. Second, a semi-structured interview was conducted with Irwan Prayitno using guiding questions while allowing the conversation to develop openly according to the informant's responses. Third, the interview transcript was reviewed and compared with documentary sources and relevant literature in order to strengthen interpretation and maintain data credibility.

Data analysis was conducted systematically using thematic analysis. First, the interview transcript and supporting documents were read repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the data. Second, important statements were coded based on recurring themes such as the meaning of local wisdom, forms of policy integration, implementation constraints, leadership orientation, and educational implications. Third, these codes were grouped into broader categories and interpreted in relation to relevant theoretical perspectives, including multicultural education, public policy, transformational leadership, and character education. Finally, conclusions were drawn by synthesizing the interview findings with documentary and literature-based evidence. To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied source triangulation, careful interpretation of the interview transcript, and contextual explanation of the findings.

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Definition of Local Wisdom in Education**

Local wisdom in education refers to the values, norms, traditions, and cultural practices that originate from a particular community and are integrated into the learning process. It serves as a guiding framework that shapes students' character, behavior, and worldview by connecting educational practices with the cultural identity of the local society. In this sense, local wisdom helps education remain relevant to the community's heritage while supporting holistic student development (Nurviana & Husnaini, 2025).

According to Irwan Prayitno, local wisdom in West Sumatra is fundamentally rooted in Islamic values, especially in the principle of *adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah*. He emphasized that local wisdom should be understood as enduring values rather than changing educational methods or facilities. In his view, the shift from *surau*-based learning to classroom-based learning represents a change in educational means, not in values.

Local wisdom, often referred to as *kearifan lokal*, is a concept that has attracted increasing scholarly attention in the field of education. In general terms, local wisdom can be defined as a set of values, knowledge systems, norms, and practices that originate from a community's historical experience and cultural identity. In the context of education, local wisdom functions as both a source of moral orientation and a pedagogical framework, ensuring that learning is not detached from cultural roots. It provides an ethical foundation for character building, promotes cultural continuity, and reinforces the relevance of schooling to the lived realities of the community.

In Indonesia, a country with rich cultural diversity, the integration of local wisdom in education has been recognized as a crucial strategy for national development. Each region possesses distinctive traditions, values, and worldviews that, if embedded in the school system, can enrich students' identity formation. The Ministry of Education and Culture has often highlighted the role of local wisdom in developing character education, community-based learning, and cultural preservation. However, the

application of local wisdom is not uniform across regions; it depends on the cultural foundations and leadership of local governments.

a. Local Wisdom in the Minangkabau Context

West Sumatra provides a unique case where local wisdom is deeply intertwined with religion. The Minangkabau community is governed by the philosophical principle “adat basandi syara’, syara’ basandi Kitabullah” (custom is founded on Islamic law, and Islamic law is founded on the Qur’an). This maxim symbolizes the inseparable relationship between cultural values and Islamic teachings. Unlike some other cultural frameworks in Indonesia, Minangkabau adat is not perceived as independent or parallel to religion but as inherently embedded within Islam. Consequently, the definition of local wisdom in this region cannot be separated from religious dimensions (Alhamuddin et al., 2022).

For Irwan Prayitno, former governor of West Sumatra, local wisdom in education was precisely about this integration. In his public speeches and educational policies, he described local wisdom not only as traditional knowledge or cultural heritage, but more importantly as a value system derived from the synthesis of adat and Islam. This definition has practical consequences: schools were expected to teach students how to respect their cultural identity while simultaneously embodying Islamic moral values. Local wisdom, in his leadership framework, is not an abstract cultural ornament but a normative guide for everyday life, including classroom practices, teacher-student relationships, and curriculum content.

b. Theoretical Perspective: Multicultural Education

The way Irwan Prayitno defines local wisdom resonates with James A. Banks’ Multicultural Education Theory. Banks argues that multicultural education involves recognizing and validating the cultural backgrounds of students, thereby making education more inclusive and representative. However, while Banks emphasizes cultural pluralism in a liberal-democratic context, the Minangkabau case demonstrates a specific variant: cultural recognition filtered through an Islamic worldview. In this model, not all cultural practices are automatically validated; they must conform to Islamic principles.

This distinction is important. For example, cultural practices such as gotong royong (communal work), respect for elders, and traditional deliberation (musyawarah) are fully integrated into education because they align with Islamic ethics. On the other hand, cultural elements that may contradict Islamic teachings are either reinterpreted or excluded. Hence, local wisdom in Minangkabau education is selective but coherent, ensuring harmony between cultural identity and religious commitment (Ilham & Afdal, 2023).

c. Local Wisdom as Character Formation

Another dimension of local wisdom in education is its function in character formation. According to Thomas Lickona’s Character Education Theory, education should not only transmit cognitive skills but also cultivate virtues such as honesty, responsibility, respect, and compassion. In Minangkabau society, local wisdom is already rich with these moral imperatives. For instance, the saying “alam takambang jadi guru” (nature is an open book to learn from) encourages students to respect their environment and learn through observation. Similarly, proverbs such as “sakali aia gadang, sakali tapian barubah” (when the river rises, the banks change) teach adaptability and resilience in the face of change (Infer et al., 2025).

By defining local wisdom as both cultural and religious, Irwan Prayitno ensured that schools became centers of moral cultivation. Students were encouraged to internalize Islamic virtues not in isolation but in synergy with Minangkabau identity. For example, religious education classes often integrated local proverbs to explain Islamic teachings, making lessons more relatable. Extracurricular activities, such as traditional arts combined with Quranic recitation, created a learning environment where cultural pride and religious devotion reinforced each other.

d. Practical Implications in Education Policy

The definition of local wisdom under Irwan Prayitno's leadership influenced practical educational policies in several ways. First, curriculum design incorporated local content. This meant that besides the national curriculum, schools in West Sumatra adopted modules on Minangkabau culture, history, and values. Second, teacher training programs emphasized the need for educators to become cultural transmitters. Teachers were not only expected to teach mathematics or science but also to exemplify the values of *adat basandi syara'*. Third, student activities were organized to strengthen identity, such as cultural festivals, local storytelling competitions, and religious gatherings linked with community traditions (Febriyanto, 2025).

These initiatives reflect the broader understanding that education is not just about producing skilled workers but also about cultivating citizens with cultural awareness and moral integrity. In this sense, local wisdom provides the foundation for holistic education that balances intellectual competence with ethical responsibility.

e. Comparative Reflection

It is also useful to compare this definition of local wisdom with practices in other regions of Indonesia. In Bali, for example, local wisdom is defined through *Tri Hita Karana* (the three causes of well-being: harmony with God, people, and nature), which shapes educational values. In Java, concepts like *tepa selira* (empathy) and *gotong royong* are embedded in schooling. What makes West Sumatra distinct is its explicit integration of religion into the definition of local wisdom. While other regions may treat culture and religion as separate, in Minangkabau they are inseparable. This unique synthesis provides a strong moral anchor but also raises questions about inclusivity, especially in an era of globalization where pluralism is celebrated (Mundzir, 2024).

f. Challenges in Defining Local Wisdom

While the definition of local wisdom as "adat aligned with syara'" is widely accepted in Minangkabau society, it is not without challenges. One issue is the tension between local identity and national education standards. Schools are required to follow the national curriculum, which emphasizes universal knowledge and skills. Balancing this with local wisdom content requires careful curriculum integration. Another challenge is globalization, which introduces new cultural influences that may not fit neatly into the *adat-Islamic* framework. Students exposed to digital media often encounter values that differ from local wisdom, raising the question of how schools can remain relevant while protecting cultural identity (Alhamuddin et al., 2022).

In summary, the definition of local wisdom in education, particularly in the leadership of Irwan Prayitno in West Sumatra, goes beyond cultural preservation. It is framed as an inseparable integration of Minangkabau *adat* and Islamic values, operationalized in curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture. Theoretically, this aligns

with multicultural and character education perspectives, though with a distinctive Islamic filter. Practically, it provides students with moral grounding, cultural pride, and a sense of identity. At the same time, challenges remain in harmonizing local wisdom with national and global educational demands. Nevertheless, the Minangkabau case demonstrates how defining local wisdom as both cultural and religious creates a powerful foundation for holistic education that nurtures not only intellectual competence but also moral and spiritual character.

## 2. Concrete Steps in Policy Integration

The integration of local wisdom into educational policy in West Sumatra under the leadership of Irwan Prayitno did not remain at the level of discourse or symbolic rhetoric. Rather, it was translated into concrete steps that shaped curriculum design, school practices, teacher training, and community involvement. These steps demonstrated a clear commitment to the Minangkabau philosophy of “adat basandi syara’, syara’ basandi Kitabullah”, ensuring that the principles of Islam and adat were not only acknowledged but embedded within the daily realities of educational institutions. By examining these practical measures, we can better understand how leadership transforms philosophical ideals into actionable policies (Sulastri, 2020).

Interview findings indicate that this policy integration was reflected in several practical forms. Irwan Prayitno explained that the compatibility between Islamic values and West Sumatran society made implementation easier, and that this orientation appeared in curriculum arrangements, school targets, Qur’anic memorization, khatam Al-Qur’an, mentoring activities, and reward systems for students with strong religious achievement. He also noted that these practices were found not only in Islamic schools but also in many public schools.

### a. Curriculum Enrichment with Local Content

One of the most visible steps taken was the integration of local content into the school curriculum. In addition to the standard national curriculum regulated by the Ministry of Education, schools in West Sumatra were encouraged to adopt learning materials that reflected Minangkabau culture and values. For example, history lessons included narratives about local heroes, adat councils, and traditional governance systems that operate on Islamic principles. Literature classes incorporated Minangkabau proverbs (pepatah petiti) and folktales, which conveyed moral lessons aligned with Islamic ethics.

This initiative resonates with Dye’s Public Policy Theory, which emphasizes that effective policy should address the cultural and social needs of its constituents. By embedding local content, the policy ensured that education was not abstract or alien but grounded in the cultural realities of Minangkabau students (Anwar et al., 2020).

This curricular orientation can also be seen in the inclusion of Budaya Alam Minangkabau (BAM). However, Irwan Prayitno acknowledged that its implementation was uneven across schools. He explained that BAM already had its own curriculum and subject matter, but it had not developed optimally in all schools because of the limited number of teachers who truly understood Minangkabau customary values and traditional expressions

### b. Integration of Religious and Cultural Practices in School Life

Beyond curriculum, schools were encouraged to integrate cultural and religious practices into daily routines and extracurricular activities. For instance, Quranic recitation (tadarus) at the beginning of the school day became a common practice. Similarly, students participated in cultural ceremonies such as basapa (religious

gatherings at local surau) or gotong royong (communal work), linking classroom learning with real-life community values.

By institutionalizing these practices, the policy transformed schools into cultural and religious spaces, not merely academic ones. This move aligns with character education approaches where learning is not confined to textbooks but cultivated through lived experience. Students learn discipline, cooperation, and respect for tradition not as abstract theories but as embodied practices (Tussubha & Hadiyanto, 2020).

c. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Another significant step was the emphasis on teacher capacity building. Recognizing that teachers are the transmitters of both knowledge and values, Irwan Prayitno's administration promoted training programs that sensitized teachers to local culture and Islamic ethics. Teacher workshops included sessions on how to incorporate local wisdom into lesson planning, how to use proverbs to explain moral lessons, and how to balance modern pedagogical approaches with cultural preservation.

This focus on teachers echoes transformational leadership theory (Burns), where leaders empower individuals to embrace a shared vision. By equipping teachers with the tools to integrate culture and religion, the administration ensured that policy goals were sustained at the grassroots level (Amsal et al., 2020).

d. Development of Character-Based Programs

The concrete steps taken by Irwan Prayitno in integrating local wisdom into education reveal a systematic approach that combined philosophical grounding with administrative execution. Each step from curriculum design to teacher training, from cultural practices to evaluation was designed to ensure that the philosophy of *adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah* was translated into educational practice.

Theoretically, these initiatives demonstrate a localized version of multicultural education that is deeply rooted in religious values. They also highlight the role of transformational leadership in mobilizing teachers, communities, and policymakers to pursue a shared vision of culturally rooted education. At the same time, the policy faced challenges, such as balancing local values with national education standards and preparing students for global competitiveness. Nevertheless, the systematic steps taken under Irwan Prayitno's leadership show how educational policy can be grounded in cultural identity without neglecting modern demands.

Despite these efforts, the interview also reveals important implementation challenges. Irwan Prayitno noted that one major obstacle was the limited number of teachers who understood *adat* adequately. He also argued that the available curriculum on customary values was still too theoretical, insufficiently grounded, and not yet practical enough for effective classroom implementation. In addition, policy realization could be affected by legislative approval and budgetary support at the regional level.

### 3. Leadership Approach

Leadership in the education sector requires not only administrative competence but also the capacity to inspire, mobilize, and integrate diverse social values. The case of Irwan Prayitno, who served as Governor of West Sumatra (2010–2021), provides a distinctive model of educational transformation. His approach reflects a synthesis of political authority, academic expertise, and cultural-religious legitimacy, making him an exemplar of *transformational leadership*. Unlike transactional leadership, which is

limited to compliance through rules and incentives, transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, intellectual engagement, and individualized consideration. Under this framework, Prayitno's leadership illustrates how local wisdom, Islamic values, and cultural heritage can be institutionalized within educational policy to redefine quality and purpose (Tanjung et al., 2024).

a. Vision-Oriented Leadership

At the heart of transformational leadership lies the ability to articulate a compelling vision. Irwan Prayitno consistently framed education in West Sumatra around the Minangkabau philosophy of "adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah" a principle that asserts culture must be grounded in Islamic law, and Islamic law must be grounded in the Qur'an. This vision was more than a slogan; it was a blueprint for aligning education with the identity of the Minangkabau people.

Instead of reducing education to bureaucratic performance indicators, Prayitno emphasized holistic outcomes: graduates who are not only academically proficient but also morally upright, culturally grounded, and socially responsible. His public statements often highlighted that education should produce insan kamil (complete human beings) who embody both intellectual and spiritual excellence. Research confirms that when leaders embed education within a larger cultural and religious narrative, communities feel their values are being validated (Nuryadi et al., 2025). This explains why Prayitno's policies received strong resonance among parents, teachers, and community leaders.

By articulating such a vision, he transformed education from a technical government program into a collective cultural mission. This aligns with Burns' (1978) argument that transformational leaders elevate policy goals into moral purposes, enabling communities to transcend individual interests for a shared future.

b. Inspirational Motivation

A key element of Prayitno's leadership was his ability to motivate and inspire. He frequently employed religious texts, hadith, and Minangkabau proverbs as rhetorical tools in public speeches. For example, in introducing character-based education, he cited the proverb "alam takambang jadi guru" (nature is an open book to learn from), alongside Qur'anic injunctions about knowledge and virtue. Such a strategy grounded educational policies in sources of meaning that stakeholders deeply respected.

Teachers and parents perceived their participation not merely as civic duty but as a religious and cultural responsibility. This strategy exemplifies the inspirational motivation dimension of transformational leadership, which aims to instill purpose and enthusiasm among followers (Masyhuda et al., 2025).

Prayitno's speeches often emphasized the sacred duty of character formation. Rather than seeing reforms as abstract government projects, stakeholders came to understand them as efforts to protect cultural heritage and ensure intergenerational continuity of values. This motivational style generated a sense of pride and collective ownership, particularly among rural communities and nagari councils, who saw themselves reflected in the educational vision.

c. Intellectual Stimulation

Irwan Prayitno's academic background holding a doctorate in psychology and experience as a university lecturer shaped his policymaking approach. He did not rely solely on top-down directives but instead encouraged creativity and innovation among educators.

Under his leadership, the provincial government initiated teacher training programs, curriculum workshops, and pilot projects to integrate local wisdom into everyday pedagogy. Teachers were challenged to connect mathematics to traditional market practices, science to environmental proverbs, and civic education to Minangkabau traditions of communal solidarity. This practice corresponds with the intellectual stimulation dimension of transformational leadership, where leaders prompt followers to explore new solutions while remaining consistent with core values (Kuntadi, 2017).

This approach also aligned with global pedagogical shifts toward contextual and culturally responsive learning. Studies show that when lessons are tied to students' cultural identity, motivation and comprehension improve significantly (Labib et al., 2025). Prayitno's policies thus placed West Sumatra at the forefront of adopting pedagogies that integrate local heritage with modern educational methods.

d. Individualized Consideration

Another hallmark of transformational leadership is attention to individual development. Prayitno frequently emphasized the role of teachers as moral mentors rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. Teacher professional development programs were designed not only to enhance technical competence but also to strengthen educators' cultural literacy and religious commitment.

For instance, mentorship programs encouraged senior teachers to guide younger colleagues in designing lesson plans that infused Islamic and Minangkabau values. Moreover, schools were encouraged to provide spaces for student reflection, community service, and spiritual practice, recognizing that each learner develops through different pathways. Such policies mirror Bass & Riggio's notion of individualized consideration, where leaders nurture the unique growth of followers (Firdaus, 2022).

This focus also extended to parents and communities. By involving parents in monitoring student character and inviting community leaders into classrooms, Prayitno built a support ecosystem where each stakeholder felt personally responsible for the child's holistic development.

e. Outcomes of Transformational Leadership

The integration of transformational leadership principles into West Sumatra's educational policies produced significant outcomes:

- 1) Character Formation – Religious practices such as Qur'an recitation, dhuha prayers, and cultural proverbs became routine, shaping honesty, discipline, and integrity. Teachers reported decreased cheating and stronger accountability among students.
- 2) Cultural Identity – Students cultivated pride in their Minangkabau heritage, perceiving themselves as global citizens with strong local roots. This aligns with studies showing that cultural grounding enhances resilience against globalization pressures.
- 3) Community Engagement – Policies fostered stronger school–community partnerships. Local councils, religious leaders, and parents collaborated in character education programs, embodying Dewey's vision of experiential and civic learning.
- 4) Educational Quality Redefined – Instead of equating quality with exam scores, schools adopted a holistic view including morality, cultural competence, and social responsibility. Evidence suggests students in culturally enriched schools often performed equally well or better in national exams (Jannah et al., 2024).

#### f. Challenges and Critiques

Despite these achievements, transformational leadership under Irwan Prayitno faced challenges. Some stakeholders warned against formalism, where rituals were performed without genuine internalization (Firdaus, 2021). Urban schools sometimes struggled to balance cultural content with the demands of national exams, leading to uneven implementation.

Additionally, questions of inclusivity emerged. While the integration of Islam and Minangkabau culture resonated with the Muslim majority, non-Muslim students occasionally expressed concerns about inclusivity in character-based programs. This reflects a broader critique that transformational visions, if framed too narrowly, risk marginalizing minorities.

Another limitation was resource disparity. Rural schools often lacked training and facilities to implement reforms effectively, leading to variations in quality. These challenges highlight that transformational leadership must be complemented with sustainable resource allocation and inclusivity mechanisms.

In sum, Irwan Prayitno's leadership approach in education can be described as transformational, visionary, and culturally embedded. By inspiring educators and communities, stimulating intellectual innovation, and legitimizing policies through adat and Islam, he was able to translate philosophical ideals into actionable policies. His leadership demonstrates how transformational strategies, when grounded in cultural and religious legitimacy, can create meaningful and sustainable educational reforms in a local context.

### 4. Impact on Student Character Building

One of the most visible outcomes of integrating local wisdom into Islamic educational policy in West Sumatra is its impact on student character formation. Educational reforms under Irwan Prayitno's leadership did not solely focus on improving academic performance or expanding access to schools but also sought to cultivate students' moral, spiritual, and cultural identity. This orientation was aligned with the Minangkabau philosophical principle "adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah", which positions culture as grounded in Islamic values. By embedding this philosophy into educational policies, schools became not only centers of knowledge but also arenas for nurturing holistic character development.

In the interview, Irwan Prayitno described education as a process of character formation. He emphasized that character is not shaped only through formal subject matter, but also through the roles of family, peers, teachers, schools, and everyday social interaction. This indicates that character building in local wisdom-based education should be understood not only as a curricular objective, but also as a broader social and cultural process.

#### a. Moral and Religious Values Internalization

A key impact of these policies was the strengthening of students' religious consciousness. Programs such as daily recitation of the Qur'an, dhuha prayers, and religious discussion groups were institutionalized in schools. This systematic exposure to religious practices trained students to internalize values of faith, sincerity, and discipline. The goal was to ensure that religiosity was not treated as a peripheral activity but as an integral part of educational life.

The approach also resonated with character education theories that emphasize the integration of moral values into daily routines (Antoni et al., 2023)). By embedding Islamic practices into the school schedule, students learned not only the content of religion but also its application in shaping everyday behavior. This

created habits that reinforced honesty, responsibility, and self-control qualities that are foundational to strong character (Yulita & Guslianto, 2022).

b. Strengthening Cultural Identity

The policies promoted the idea that education should not alienate students from their cultural roots. Cultural wisdom such as “alam takambang jadi guru” (nature is a teacher) was integrated into curricula to inspire environmental awareness, respect for elders, and communal solidarity. This grounding in local values ensured that students saw their identity not only as global citizens but also as members of a community with rich cultural heritage.

Such initiatives countered the fear of cultural erosion brought about by globalization. Instead of passively adopting external models of education, the system cultivated pride in local traditions. Students were encouraged to view cultural wisdom as complementary to modern knowledge, thereby fostering cultural resilience (Albert et al., 2022).

c. Development of Social Responsibility

Character building was not confined to individual morality but extended to social responsibility. Schools under these policies often collaborated with local communities in service projects, cultural festivals, and religious events. Through these engagements, students developed empathy, teamwork, and leadership skills.

In practical terms, community-based programs taught students the importance of contributing to collective welfare. For example, joint activities between schools and village councils (nagari) exposed students to the values of cooperation (gotong royong) and accountability. This participatory model echoes Dewey’s educational philosophy that emphasizes experiential learning and civic engagement (Yulika & Mulyadi, 2019).

d. Discipline and Integrity

Another significant impact was the strengthening of discipline and integrity. By institutionalizing structured routines such as punctual prayers, Qur’an recitation, and organized community service, students were trained to value order, punctuality, and commitment. These habits extended beyond the classroom, preparing students for responsible participation in broader society.

Teachers often reported that students demonstrated improved honesty in examinations and accountability in assignments. This can be attributed to the integration of Islamic teachings on honesty (amanah) and accountability (hisab). The result was a culture where integrity was not only preached but practiced within the school environment.

e. Critical and Reflective Thinking

Interestingly, the incorporation of local wisdom did not suppress critical thinking; rather, it encouraged students to engage reflectively with their traditions and faith. The principle “adat basandi syara” requires constant interpretation and negotiation between cultural norms and Islamic law. This dynamic demanded that students develop interpretive skills, weighing cultural practices against religious teachings.

Teachers were encouraged to facilitate classroom discussions that compared cultural proverbs with Qur’anic injunctions, thereby cultivating reflective judgment. This balance between respect for tradition and critical reflection contributed to the development of mature, adaptive, and context-sensitive student personalities.

f. Family and Community Reinforcement

The impact on character building was magnified because the policies created synergy between schools, families, and communities. Parents were actively involved in monitoring students' moral behavior, and community leaders were invited to schools to reinforce messages of cultural-religious integration.

This multi-stakeholder approach ensured consistency in the values transmitted to students. What they learned in school was reinforced at home and in the community, creating a strong ecosystem for character formation. Educational psychology highlights that consistent reinforcement across multiple environments significantly strengthens value internalization (Susilawati et al., 2020).

g. Challenges and Limitations

Despite its successes, the approach was not without challenges. One limitation was the risk of formalism, where students engaged in religious or cultural activities mechanically without deep internalization. Another challenge was inclusivity: while the integration of Islam and adat was highly effective for the majority Muslim population, questions arose about how non-Muslim students could equally benefit from character-building programs.

Additionally, the emphasis on local values sometimes faced tension with demands for global competitiveness. Critics worried that prioritizing cultural wisdom might detract from the emphasis on science and technology. However, proponents argued that character education and academic achievement are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing.

The integration of local wisdom into Islamic educational policy under Irwan Prayitno's leadership significantly shaped student character building in West Sumatra. By embedding moral-religious practices, strengthening cultural identity, fostering social responsibility, and reinforcing integrity, students were molded into holistic individuals. While challenges remain in ensuring inclusivity and balancing global demands, the model demonstrates that culturally rooted education can effectively produce individuals who are not only academically competent but also morally and socially responsible.

This case highlights the broader lesson that education, when grounded in local wisdom, can serve as a powerful means of character formation. In an era of globalization, such models provide a valuable counterbalance by nurturing individuals who are both globally competitive and locally grounded.

## 5. Community and Stakeholder Responses

The success of implementing local wisdom-based educational policies in West Sumatra under Irwan Prayitno's leadership depended not only on government directives but also on the reactions and involvement of key stakeholders, including parents, teachers, community leaders, and students themselves. Using Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, which highlights varying levels of engagement from tokenism to genuine partnership, we can understand the diverse responses to these reforms.

a. Positive Responses and Support

Many community stakeholders responded positively, recognizing the value of integrating adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah into education. Parents welcomed the emphasis on character education, believing that schools were reinforcing values they already sought to instill at home. Community leaders, particularly those in nagari councils, viewed the policies as a way to preserve cultural heritage while strengthening religious identity. In many schools,

collaboration with local leaders allowed cultural proverbs, ceremonies, and communal activities to be incorporated into teaching.

Teachers also expressed support, especially those trained in Islamic pedagogy, who felt that the policies provided a framework to harmonize religious teachings with cultural practices. For many, this created a sense of pride and ownership over a distinctly Minangkabau model of education (Ilham & Afdal, 2023).

b. Moderate or Conditional Responses

However, responses were not uniformly enthusiastic. Some parents worried that additional cultural content might increase the burden on students, who already faced demanding academic schedules. Others expressed concern that strong emphasis on local identity might overshadow global competencies such as English proficiency, digital literacy, and STEM skills. Teachers in urban schools sometimes struggled to balance local wisdom with the pressure to achieve high national exam results, creating ambivalence about the reforms.

Community leaders also varied in their engagement. While some were highly active partners, others treated the reforms with indifference, prioritizing economic development or political agendas over education. This uneven participation limited the full potential of the policy (Sari, 2024).

c. Critical Responses and Resistance

There were also more critical voices. Some stakeholders feared that the policies risked politicization, with local wisdom being framed narrowly in ways that served political narratives rather than educational goals. A few educators argued that cultural integration could sometimes slip into formalism, where students performed rituals or memorized proverbs without genuinely internalizing their meaning.

Additionally, in areas with religious and cultural diversity, non-Muslim families occasionally questioned whether the strong integration of Islamic values into education was fully inclusive. While these concerns were not widespread, they highlighted the importance of balancing majority values with respect for pluralism (Setiawan & Oktarina, 2023).

d. Overall Assessment

Overall, community and stakeholder responses reflected a spectrum: strong support from parents and cultural leaders who valued the preservation of identity, cautious acceptance from educators balancing competing priorities, and critical perspectives highlighting risks of exclusivity or overload. Despite differences, most stakeholders acknowledged that the initiative had cultural legitimacy, and their responses shaped how effectively policies translated into practice (Usman, 2024).

## 6. Effect on Educational Quality

Educational quality is often measured in terms of academic achievement, infrastructure, and teacher competence. However, under Irwan Prayitno's leadership, West Sumatra adopted a broader definition by including character formation, cultural grounding, and social responsibility as key dimensions of quality. By integrating local wisdom into Islamic education, policymakers sought to produce not only academically capable students but also individuals with strong moral integrity and cultural pride. This section analyzes the effects of these policies on educational quality in West Sumatra, drawing on Fitz-Gibbon's theory of educational quality, which emphasizes the relationship between policy, process, and learning outcomes.

However, the interview findings suggest that the impact on educational quality should be interpreted cautiously. Irwan Prayitno did not explicitly claim that educational quality had improved in measurable terms, arguing that such a conclusion

would require clear indicators and systematic measurement. Therefore, while the policy may have strengthened the moral and cultural environment of education, its measurable effect on educational quality remains open to further investigation.

a. Holistic Quality Beyond Academic Scores

Traditionally, educational quality has been assessed through standardized tests and exam results. In West Sumatra, local wisdom integration added new dimensions to this assessment. Schools began to evaluate whether students demonstrated honesty, discipline, and respect for cultural traditions alongside academic performance.

Teachers reported that students engaged more actively in class discussions when cultural proverbs, stories, and values were included in lessons. For example, using Minangkabau proverbs such as “alam takambang jadi guru” encouraged reflective thinking about the environment and ethics. This shift reflected a broader, more holistic understanding of quality, where the moral and social character of students was viewed as equally important as academic excellence (Ramli, 2013).

b. Improved Student Engagement and Motivation

One of the most significant effects of policy implementation was increased student engagement. When learning materials were contextualized within students’ cultural background, the content felt more relevant and meaningful. Students found pride in seeing their own traditions validated in the classroom.

This engagement also fostered higher motivation. For instance, in Islamic religious classes, linking Qur’anic values with Minangkabau philosophy made lessons resonate more strongly with students’ daily lives. Studies in educational psychology show that culturally responsive pedagogy enhances student motivation and learning outcomes. In West Sumatra, this approach helped reduce student detachment and made schools more attractive as centers of learning (Gazali & S, 2024).

c. Strengthening Teacher Professionalism

Educational quality is inseparable from teacher capacity. The integration of local wisdom required teachers to expand their pedagogical approaches. Training programs encouraged them to design lessons that combined national curriculum standards with cultural and religious content.

Although resource limitations remained a challenge, many teachers reported professional growth. They developed creativity in linking mathematics, science, or social studies with local contexts. For example, mathematics problems could use examples from local markets, while science lessons explored environmental management using the proverb “alam takambang jadi guru.” This enhanced teachers’ ability to make learning contextual, thereby improving instructional quality (Gazali & S, 2024).

d. Community-School Partnerships

The policies also improved educational quality by strengthening partnerships between schools and local communities. Parents, community leaders, and religious figures were often invited to schools to contribute to cultural and religious activities. This participation created a sense of shared ownership and accountability.

Such collaboration enhanced the learning environment by reinforcing values outside the classroom. When schools, families, and communities conveyed consistent messages, students experienced continuity in their moral and cultural education. This synergy improved the effectiveness of teaching, as students saw

education as part of community life rather than an isolated institution (Sungkowo et al., 2024a).

e. Balancing Local Values with National Standards

Educational quality in West Sumatra improved in unique ways, but it also faced the challenge of balancing local wisdom with national and global standards. While cultural integration enriched moral and social outcomes, some critics argued that academic indicators, particularly in science and technology, should remain central to quality assessment.

Nonetheless, evidence suggests that students in culturally enriched schools performed equally well, and sometimes better, in national exams compared to those without cultural integration. This demonstrates that local wisdom did not necessarily compromise academic performance but instead complemented it by increasing motivation, discipline, and contextual understanding (Sungkowo, Sidabutar, & Kau, 2024).

f. Potential Risks and Limitations

Despite these gains, there were risks to educational quality. In some cases, the integration of local wisdom led to formalism students memorized cultural phrases or participated in rituals without genuine understanding. If not carefully monitored, such practices risked diluting quality by emphasizing form over substance.

Additionally, uneven teacher training meant that some schools integrated local wisdom effectively while others struggled, leading to variations in quality. Urban schools often had better resources to implement the policies, whereas rural schools faced difficulties in sustaining programs.

g. Long-Term Effects on Educational Outcomes

Perhaps the most profound effect on educational quality lies in the long-term outcomes. Graduates of schools that emphasized cultural and religious integration displayed stronger character traits integrity, empathy, and leadership that prepared them for responsible citizenship. These attributes, though difficult to quantify, contributed to the social capital of communities in West Sumatra.

Moreover, students trained under this model were more resilient in navigating globalization. Instead of being culturally alienated, they carried a strong sense of identity alongside modern competencies. This dual grounding enhanced not only the immediate quality of education but also its long-term sustainability (Sari, 2024).

The integration of local wisdom into Islamic education in West Sumatra under Irwan Prayitno's leadership significantly influenced educational quality. By expanding the concept of quality beyond academic metrics to include moral, cultural, and social dimensions, the reforms produced holistic learning environments. Students became more engaged, teachers developed greater professionalism, and schools deepened partnerships with communities.

Challenges such as uneven implementation, resource constraints, and risks of formalism persisted, but overall, the policies demonstrated that local wisdom can enrich educational quality without undermining global competitiveness. In line with Fitz Gibbon's theory, the case of West Sumatra illustrates that quality education emerges not only from curriculum content but also from the alignment of cultural relevance, stakeholder participation, and long-term vision.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This study shows that the transformation of Islamic education policy based on local wisdom in West Sumatra under Irwan Prayitno's leadership was grounded primarily in the philosophical principle of *adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK). The findings indicate that local wisdom was understood not merely as a cultural symbol or educational tradition, but as a value system rooted in Islamic teachings and reflected in educational orientation, school programs, and character formation. The interview findings also reveal that this integration was expressed through practices such as Qur'anic learning, khatam Al-Qur'an, mentoring activities, and the incorporation of Budaya Alam Minangkabau (BAM), although its implementation was not always optimal across schools.

The study also finds that the implementation of local wisdom-based education faced important challenges, particularly the limited number of teachers with sufficient knowledge of Minangkabau customary values, the lack of practical and grounded teaching materials, and institutional constraints related to policy support. In terms of character formation, the findings suggest that education was viewed not only as the transfer of knowledge but also as a broader process of shaping values through schools, families, and the surrounding social environment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discussion of Islamic education and local wisdom by showing that educational policy transformation can be understood through a philosophical perspective that connects culture, religion, and leadership. Practically, this study provides insight for policymakers, schools, and educators on the importance of strengthening teacher capacity, improving the practicality of local content materials, and designing culturally grounded educational policies that remain relevant to contemporary educational needs in West Sumatra.

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