



Educational Strategy in Preserving and Developing Malay Islamic Arts and Culture

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by concerns over the diminishing existence of Malay Islamic arts and culture amid globalization and the lack of appreciation from the younger generation. The main objective of this study is to formulate strategies for preserving Malay Islamic cultural arts so that they remain relevant in the modern era. This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method. Data were collected from various written sources and analyzed through content analysis to identify applicable preservation strategies. The results of the study reveal six main strategies: education and socialization, cultural festivals, digital documentation, artist development, cultural filtering, and the use of social media. Collaboration among academics, the government, and the community is key to successful preservation. These findings indicate that the preservation of Malay Islamic cultural arts requires an adaptive approach based on local wisdom and digital technology, which can enhance cultural awareness and strengthen the identity of the younger generation amid the challenges of globalization.

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INTRODUCTION

Malay culture is one of the largest cultural entities in the Southeast Asian region, covering Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, and parts of Southern Thailand. This culture is rich in traditional values, customs, languages, and arts that have been passed down from generation to generation. As a civilization with long historical roots, Malay culture also plays an important role in shaping the collective identity of the people in the region. In its historical process, Malay culture has experienced various acculturations, including the strong influence of Islam which then gave birth to a distinctive form of art and culture, namely Islamic art and culture with Malay nuances (Abdullah, Ibrahim, & Badaruddin, 2021; Sabri, 2020).

The preservation and development of Islamic art is important because art is a subtle medium of preaching and touches the emotional side of society. Islamic art includes various forms such as calligraphy, religious music, Sufi literature, mosque architecture, and Islamic-

themed clothing. In the Malay context, Islamic art is not only an aesthetic expression but also reflects the spiritual, moral, and social values of society. Preservation efforts are intended so that this artistic wealth is not extinct by the strong current of globalization, while development aims to adjust the form and media of delivery to be relevant to the current generation without eliminating its authentic values (Rahim, Samsudin, & Alim, 2021; Din, Mokhtar, & Wan Daud, 2022).

Meanwhile, the preservation and development of Malay culture in general is very important to maintain the ancestral heritage that is part of the nation's identity. Malay culture contains a noble philosophy of life, manners, and a value system that shapes the character of its people. This effort also supports the sustainability of local wisdom in various fields, from language, literature, culinary, to performing arts. In the modern era, the preservation of Malay culture requires an adaptive strategy to keep it alive in everyday life, especially among the younger generation (Triana & Fatika Sari, 2023; Sairin, 2004).

However, amidst the rapid development of technology and globalization, there is a phenomenon of cultural shift in Malay society. Local arts and culture are starting to be pushed aside by popular culture coming from outside. The younger generation tends to be less familiar with, let alone appreciate, the richness of Malay culture that is inspired by Islam. Many traditions are starting to be abandoned, cultural events are decreasing, and traditional artists are getting older without any clear regeneration. This raises concerns about the loss of cultural identity that has been formed for hundreds of years (Utami, 2019; Sirulhaq & Kurniawan, 2024).

Traditions from a region have significant functions and meanings for the development of the times, but in the era of globalization like today, problems regarding knowledge or a sense of concern for local wisdom are still urgent. According to Wirianto, the lack of community loyalty to culture is partly due to the lack of written documentation so that a tradition is difficult to preserve and introduce to the current generation (Wirianto, 2018).

Mentioned that the love and concern of the current generation for tradition and culture is decreasing due to the influence of globalization. In addition to the influence of foreign culture (globalization) and digitalization, the decreasing knowledge of the current generation towards cultures in Indonesia is also caused by the lack of socialization by community leaders (Amalia, Sumarwati, & Setiawan, 2019). Therefore, the problem of minimal exploration and appreciation of folklore for the current generation (Gen-Z), who are more exposed to popular culture and digital media, can raise concerns about the erosion of local cultural identity.

Therefore, research on the strategy of preserving and developing Islamic art and culture in the Malay world is very urgent. This research aims to formulate concrete and effective steps so that the art and culture not only survive, but are also able to develop with the times. By examining social dynamics, the role of cultural institutions, government, and local communities, it is hoped that the results of this research can provide a real contribution in maintaining the sustainability of Malay-Islamic civilization amidst the flow of global change. This research is also expected to be a basis for cultural policies that are more responsive and based on local values.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach using the literature review method as the main framework for data collection and analysis (Sugiyono, 2013). The data analyzed in this study were obtained from various reliable sources, including academic journals, books, scientific

articles, magazines, and official government documents relevant to national education and Islamic education issues. This method utilizes primary and secondary data collected from various literature. After the data collection process is complete, the analysis is carried out by applying content analysis techniques to identify and evaluate the main themes related to the strategy for preserving Malay arts and culture. The results of the analysis are systematically arranged to formulate comprehensive research findings that can be scientifically accounted for.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Malay Cultural Values

Riau Malay culture is an open culture. The openness of the Malays has an impact on the development of a pluralistic society and its culture. This plurality is one of the treasures of the Malay culture that is strong, and full of diversity. Therefore, people say that Malay culture is like a rainbow or a flower garden that is full of color, beautiful and stunning. One of the treasures of Malay culture that is most full of the main values as the identity of Malayness is its customs or said *adat resam*. Malay society passes down the values of integrity (honesty, consistency, and courage) through Malay cultural customs, namely teaching and socializing to children and grandchildren through speech and daily behavior both in family life, society and organizations (Zainuri et al., 2017).

The openness of Malay culture is not only a form of cultural accommodation to diversity, but also reflects the universal values in Islam, namely *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. As stated by Zainuri et al., the values of integrity and local wisdom in Malay culture such as honesty, politeness, and moral courage are still an important part of the social system of Malay society in Riau, including Bengkalis. These values are inherited through oral traditions, proverbs, and Islamic-based traditional activities, such as *kenduri doa selamat* and thanksgiving.

Indicators of Malay Cultural Values

Every culture has core values that serve as the foundation of its people's lives. In the context of Malay culture, there are six core values that are characteristic and inherited from generation to generation, namely:

1. Humble Your Heart

Humility, or low self-esteem, is one of the core values in Malay culture. This attitude reflects respect for others and awareness of one's position in society. Malay people tend to avoid arrogance and arrogance, and prefer to be gentle and polite. Phrases such as "Malay customary humility is always" illustrate the importance of this attitude in everyday life, where self-abasement is considered a sign of magnanimity and respect for others.

2. Shy or Reticent

Shyness or shyness can be seen in the behavior of Malay people who tend to maintain their dignity and avoid actions that are considered inappropriate. This shame functions as a social mechanism that helps individuals to behave in accordance with applicable norms. In this context, shame is not just a feeling, but also reflects awareness of reputation and self-worth in social interactions.

3. Peaceful or Tolerant

Malay society is known for its peaceful and tolerant nature. They value harmony and avoid conflict, so they are more likely to compromise and tolerate in situations that have the potential to cause conflict. This trait is reflected in the expression "bier rumah dekat, tapi hati

besar," which shows that even though physical conditions may be limited, an open and friendly attitude is still prioritized .

4. Simple (in Thinking and Acting)

Simplicity is an important principle in Malay culture, both in thinking and acting. Malay society avoids an excessive lifestyle that can cause social inequality. This simple attitude helps them to stay focused on the basic values of life without getting caught up in excessive ambition.

5. Sentimental and Cheerful

Malays are often described as sentimental and cheerful individuals. They have the ability to appreciate emotional relationships and show happiness in social interactions. This trait strengthens the bonds between members of society and creates a harmonious atmosphere.

6. Maintaining Self-Esteem (Marwah)

Self-respect or dignity is very important to the Malay people. They try to maintain their personal dignity and do not want to offend the dignity of others. In many situations, they will take steps to ensure that their actions do not harm their own reputation or that of others around them. This shows how important the values of honor are in Malay culture (Humairah, 2019).

Conservation Strategy

In an effort to maintain the existence of Malay Islamic culture, a comprehensive and sustainable preservation strategy is needed. This strategy covers various fields and aims to answer the challenges of the times. Concrete strategies to preserve Islamic art and culture in the Malay world:

1. Education and Socialization

This strategy aims to instill Islamic cultural values in the younger generation. Through formal and informal education, students are introduced to Islamic cultural heritage such as calligraphy, religious music, and literature. The educational curriculum also begins to integrate local cultural content.

- Instilling Islamic cultural values in the younger generation through formal (Islamic boarding schools) and informal (seminars, workshops) education.
- Integrating Islamic art into the educational curriculum so that the younger generation understands the importance of preserving their cultural heritage.

Through the *Culture-Based School policy* in Riau, Malay Islamic art and cultural values content began to be integrated into the local curriculum and extracurricular activities. This initiative received support from academics at STAIN Bengkalis who designed courses such as *Islamic Aesthetics and Malay Culture* . This program is in line with the concept of local culture-based character education as developed by Zainuri et al.

2. Festivals and Cultural Events

- Organizing Islamic arts and culture festivals regularly to reintroduce traditions such as Islamic gamelan music, Zapin dance, pantun and poetry to the wider community.
- Holding Islamic art competitions such as short video competitions or art exhibitions to attract the interest of the younger generation.

3. Documentation and Digitization

- Conducting data collection on artists, cultural figures, art communities, and Islamic art forms in each region to ensure the sustainability of these traditions.
- Utilizing digital technology to document Islamic art and culture so that it can be accessed by a global audience through digital platforms .

4. Development of Artists and Cultural Artists

- Providing training to artists and cultural figures so that they can continue to work in accordance with current developments without losing their traditional values.
- Increasing collaboration between government, religious institutions, and arts communities in developing Islamic arts.

5. Global Cultural Filtering

- Encourage society to filter out foreign cultural influences by adopting positive elements that are in line with Islamic values while maintaining local identity.
- The local Malay Customary Institution (LAM) and MUI can play an active role in guiding the community to filter foreign cultures so that they remain in line with Islamic law and local values. Guidelines for filtering culture and implementing Islamic art activities have been published and socialized to various communities (Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia, n.d.).

6. Utilization of Social Media

- Using social media to promote Islamic arts and culture to a younger generation who are more familiar with modern technology. This includes reintroducing traditional dances or literature through digital *platforms such as YouTube or Instagram*.
- Communities such as Riau Heritage Digital and Zapin Anak Negeri are active on Instagram and YouTube in promoting Malay Islamic culture through dance videos, calligraphy tutorials, and cultural podcasts (Riau Provincial Cultural Service, 2023).

The strategy for developing Islamic arts and culture in the Malay world through government policies and the role of academics can be realized through the following steps:

1. Government Policy

Cross-Ministry Collaboration

The government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) has designed a collaborative program with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy and the Ministry of Education to integrate Islamic arts and culture into the creative economy, religious tourism, and education sectors. Concrete examples include:

- **Islamic Arts and Culture Festival** : Used as a means of promotion and preservation, such as *the Islamic Short Movie Award* and the Zapin Melayu Festival.
- **Economic incentives** : Providing financial assistance to artists and cultural communities through empowerment programs to increase the productivity of works.

Data Collection and Documentation

The Ministry of Religious Affairs conducts data collection on artists, art tools, and Islamic art studios in all districts/cities. This data is used to formulate evidence-based policies and map development potential.

Cultural Protection Regulation

The government has issued binding policies to protect the intellectual property of Islamic arts and culture, such as copyright on batik motifs with calligraphy nuances or typical Malay mosque architecture.

2. The Role of Academics through Research

Academic Curriculum Development

The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programs of the State Islamic College of Bengkalis have opened a concentration in Islamic Cultural Studies for undergraduate and master's levels, such as courses designed to produce researchers who are able to formulate local wisdom-based preservation models.

Applied Research

Academics conduct research to:

- Identifying Islamic values in Malay traditions, such as the philological study of ancient manuscripts or the semiotic analysis of wood carvings.
- Designing a model for developing Islamic art that is adaptive to digital technology, for example, Islamic-themed gamelan integrated with interactive applications.

Dissemination of Research Results

Researchers act as government consultants in policy formulation, such as formulating indicators of the success of cultural festival programs or evaluating the economic impact of religious tourism.

Integration of Policy and Academics

- Involvement of Islamic Boarding Schools : Islamic boarding schools function as cultural laboratories by integrating hadroh art, calligraphy, or Malay-Islamic literature into the educational curriculum.
- Youth Training : Academics together with the government hold workshops to train the younger generation in producing Islamic cultural content on social media, such as short videos or podcasts.
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Challenges and Solutions

- Globalization Challenges : The younger generation is more interested in popular culture. The solution is to strengthen character education through the integration of Islamic art in the school and Islamic boarding school curriculum.
- Regulatory Gap : Not all regions have regional regulations that protect Islamic arts and culture. The solution is for academics to help local governments design regulations based on research data.

With synergy between progressive government policies and applied academic research, the preservation of Islamic arts and culture in the Malay world can become a model for sustainable cultural development that is relevant in the modern era (Nasution, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that preserving Malay Islamic art and culture requires a collaborative approach between the government, academics, and the community. The most effective strategies include cultural integration in education, documentation and digitization, and the use of social media to reach the younger generation. The advantage of this approach is increased public awareness and participation in cultural preservation. However, limitations in the form of a lack of regional regulations and minimal resources at the local level are still challenges. This strategy has the potential to be applied widely in areas of similar cultures, and can be used as a model for local wisdom-based policies in facing the flow of cultural globalization.

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