



## **From Ritual to Classroom: The Transposition of Islamic and Local Culture in Early Childhood Arts Education Curriculum**

**Bahtiar Arbi<sup>1✉</sup>, Muhammad Jazuli<sup>2</sup>, Wadiyo<sup>2</sup>, Agus Cahyono<sup>2</sup>, Brian Trinanda Kusuma Adi<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Islamic Early Childhood Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Arts Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Department of Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – This study explores the integration of Islamic values and Javanese cultural rituals in early childhood arts education within the Komunitas Lima Gunung in Central Java, Indonesia. It investigates how community-based rituals—such as *Merti Dusun*, *Sungkem Tlompak*, and *Jaran Papat*—serve as pedagogical spaces for the development of children’s aesthetic, spiritual, and socio-cognitive capacities. Addressing a gap in formal early childhood education, which often excludes local traditions and Islamic spiritual values, this study offers an alternative model rooted in cultural continuity and lived practice.

**Design/methods/approach** – Employing a participatory ethnographic approach, the study involved in-depth interviews, direct observation, photo documentation, and ritual participation within seven community art centers. Data were interpreted using theoretical frameworks including Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Funds of Knowledge, and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), to understand how children learn through culturally meaningful interaction.

**Findings** – The study reveals that children’s engagement in ritual performance enhances their spiritual literacy, narrative cognition, and sense of belonging. These processes occur through embodied participation, intergenerational storytelling, symbolic aesthetics, and moral learning embedded in Islamic-Javanese rituals. The study also shows how the absence of formal educators is compensated by the community’s collective pedagogical roles.

**Research implications/limitations** – This study is context-specific and based on a single ethno-regional setting. It does not measure long-term developmental outcomes or compare with other regions. However, it provides qualitative depth and cultural insight into the ways informal, non-institutional education functions effectively within Islamic and indigenous contexts.

**Practical implications** – The findings highlight the need for integrating local Islamic cultural practices into early childhood curricula. The model suggests a framework for community-based religious-cultural education that promotes identity, empathy, and critical thinking through art.

**Originality/value** – This research offers a rare ethnographic insight into how Islamic-Javanese rituals function as aesthetic and moral education for young children. It challenges dominant models of early childhood education by proposing a culturally embedded, spiritually rooted, and community-led pedagogy.

**Keywords** Early childhood education, Islamic-Javanese rituals, Arts pedagogy, Community-based learning, Funds of knowledge, Spiritual literacy

**Paper type** Research paper

---

✉ Corresponding author:

Email Address: [bahtiararbi93@gmail.com](mailto:bahtiararbi93@gmail.com).

Received: 19 May 2025; Revised: 27 June 2025; Accepted: 29 June 2025

Copyright © 2025 Bahtiar Arbi, Muhammad Jazuli, Wadiyo, Agus Cahyono, Brian Trinanda Kusuma Adi

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14421/al-athfal.2025.111-15>

## 1. Introduction

Early childhood (ages 0 – 8) represents a developmental stage that is highly sensitive to aesthetic, affective, and cognitive stimulation (Robinson et al., 2019; Subrahmanian et al., 2024). Through arts education, children can express imagination, develop creativity, and strengthen cultural identity from an early age (Meeken, 2013). However, many early childhood arts curricula remain relatively standardized, often modeled on Western or urban frameworks that fail to reflect the richness of local cultural traditions (Kang, 2023; Tian & Isa, 2024). This creates a gap between children's everyday cultural experiences and the artistic content delivered in classrooms.

At the same time, the Lima Gunung Community—situated across the slopes of Mount Sumbing, Mount Merbabu, Mount Merapi, Mount Andong, and Mount Menoreh—possesses a rich cultural heritage that includes performing arts, Javanese-Islamic spirituality, rituals, aesthetics, and intergenerational community values (Arbi, 2022; Aswoyo & Sularso, 2020). Yet, this potential has rarely been incorporated into early childhood pedagogical practice. This study departs from the assumption that ritual experiences and local cultural arts can be adapted into early childhood classrooms through cultural transposition, thereby making arts education more meaningful, contextual, and supportive of holistic child development (Chapman & O'Gorman, 2022; Haralovich, 2023).

Globally, the integration of local culture into children's curricula has become an important educational discourse (Nutbrown, 2013). Theories such as funds of knowledge emphasize the use of children's everyday knowledge and practices as learning capital (Moll et al., 1992). Culture-based education is also promoted as a strategy to safeguard local identity in the era of globalization (UNESCO, 2021). However, most studies focus on the integration of language, myth, music, or well-known local wisdom (Jagielska-Burduk et al., 2021; Stimac, 2022), while ritual-based communities embedded in Islamic values, such as the Lima Gunung Community, remain underexplored.

In the Indonesian context, research has largely centered on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), such as batik, wayang, jaipong dance, and gamelan (Ciptandi & Arumsari, 2024; Jones-Amin et al., 2006; Suprihatin & Pratamawati, 2019). The integration of traditional dance into early childhood classrooms has been examined (Paranti et al., 2019; Pürgstaller, 2021), while the use of gamelan in fostering children's creativity has also been highlighted (Antara et al., 2025). These studies suggest a focus on specific art forms, but have yet to examine the pedagogical potential of ritual communities that combine spirituality and local aesthetics within Islamic-Javanese traditions.

Embedding spiritual values, rituals, and mountain-based community practices into early childhood education, particularly in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum, offers a novel approach to enriching cultural education holistically (Nisa et al., 2024; Shrestha et al., 2025). Incorporating the ritual, spiritual, and communal dimensions of the Lima Gunung Community into early childhood curricula represents an innovation that remains rare. A key strategy in this process is cultural transposition, understood as the adaptation of indigenous cultural elements—rituals, spirituality, performing arts, and collective narratives—into formal education without losing their essential meaning (Becerra-Lubies, 2021; Kearney et al., 2014).

Ethnopedagogy enhances children's awareness of local culture and integrates traditional wisdom into early childhood education, thereby fostering character development and community engagement (Sakti et al., 2024). Incorporating local cultural practices also strengthens children's trust and appreciation of community values (Yazzie-Mintz et al., 2024). Nevertheless, most cultural transposition research remains confined to primary and secondary education, focusing predominantly on aesthetic aspects such as music and folklore, without addressing intergenerational spirituality and collective values (Csinos, 2018; Szulc, 2022).

The theoretical framework of this study is informed by two key approaches relevant to early childhood education: Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). PCK emphasizes the integration of cultural content with teaching strategies tailored to children's developmental stages (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Hakkarainen &

Bredikyte, 2019). Cultural transposition cannot merely relocate cultural elements into classrooms; it requires pedagogical approaches that allow children to experience, explore, and interpret them actively. ZPD underscores the importance of social support in enabling children to surpass their current abilities (Hakkarainen & Bredikyte, 2019; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Within this framework, the Lima Gunung cultural practices serve as a natural form of scaffolding, providing authentic social experiences for meaningful learning.

Drawing on the principles of PCK and ZPD in conjunction with funds of knowledge, cultural transposition, and ethnopedagogy, community-based arts education emerges as both relevant and necessary (Cutcher & Boyd, 2018; Mellone et al., 2021; Overby et al., 2022). Here, the Lima Gunung Community is not positioned merely as an object of culture but as a living source of knowledge embedded within educational practice (Altaş et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024). This study therefore seeks to address the following aims: (1) to examine the model of cultural transposition of Lima Gunung rituals in early childhood arts education; (2) to describe strategies of cultural transposition in the design and implementation of contextual ECE curricula; and (3) to analyze its impact on children's aesthetic, affective, and cognitive development. The study contributes by advancing a holistic model of cultural transposition that explicitly integrates spirituality, communal solidarity, and cultural identity, thereby aligning early childhood education with principles of cultural sustainability in the face of globalization (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2019; Horton, 2022; Moll et al., 1992; Overby et al., 2022; Shrestha et al., 2025).

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design with a participatory approach in order to explore how cultural rituals integrated with Islamic values are transposed into early childhood arts education. The case study design was selected because it enables an in-depth and holistic understanding of cultural practices within their natural context (Creswell, 2014; Snyder, 2012). The research setting is the Lima Gunung Community, located in the foothills of Mount Sumbing, Merapi, Merbabu, Andong, and Sindoro. The majority of the community members are Muslim, yet their social and cultural life remains deeply intertwined with traditional rituals that harmonize with Islamic spirituality. Within this context, the transposition process is understood as the adaptation of cultural and spiritual practices into the pedagogical space of early childhood education, particularly through the medium of arts. The study therefore focuses on how these rituals are not only preserved but also pedagogically transformed to support children's holistic development in identity, creativity, and spirituality.

### 2.2. Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals with direct knowledge and experience relevant to the transposition of culture and Islamic values into arts education. The selection strategy prioritized participants who actively engaged in cultural rituals, community-based Islamic practices, and early childhood arts education within the Lima Gunung Community.

Table 1. Categories of Participants and Selection Criteria

Participant Category	Number	Selection Criteria
Cultural Artists	7	Artists engaged in traditional rituals and artistic practices within the Lima Gunung Community, possessing deep knowledge of cultural traditions linked to Islam.
Parents ECE	10	Parents with children enrolled in early childhood centers, who are actively involved in cultural rituals and Islamic-local practices in everyday life.
Early Childhood Children	15	Children aged 4–8 years participating in arts activities based on local wisdom and Islamic values, observed for cultural identity formation and artistic skills.

Table 2. Key Informants and Their Contributions

Informant Name	Primary Role	Contribution
Sutanto – Studio Mendut	Senior cultural figure; Founder & Lifetime President of Lima Gunung	Provided philosophical foundations on the integration of Javanese-Islamic spirituality into arts education, emphasizing early character development.
Singgih Arif Kusnadi – Padepokan Wargo Budoyo	Cultural community leader	Contributed historical documentation and insights on the continuity of culture and Islamic values across generations.
Agus Prasetyo Putro – Padepokan Wargo Budoyo	Children’s dance coach and artist	Shared pedagogical insights on intergenerational teaching techniques, showing how children internalize cultural values through performance.
Handoko – Sanggar Dhom Sunthil	Arts leader and children’s mentor	Provided ethnographic data on children’s engagement with agrarian rituals and nature-based Islamic spirituality.
Supadi Haryanto – Sanggar Andong Jinawi	Artistic coordinator and family custodian	Demonstrated intergenerational transmission of cultural performances as spiritual and social education.
Gianto – Sanggar Andong Jinawi	Performing arts coach	Shared strategies for fostering creative expression among children, especially girls, within culturally sensitive contexts.
Sitras Anjilin – Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja	Artistic director	Integrated aesthetic and spiritual values in children’s arts, highlighting art as reflective and communal learning.

2.3. Data Collection

Data were collected through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. These methods were applied during the extended research period from 2018 to 2025, allowing the study to capture the evolving dynamics of cultural and spiritual practices in the Lima Gunung Community.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with cultural artists, community leaders, parents, and early childhood educators to explore how cultural rituals integrated with Islamic spirituality are transmitted and adapted into children’s arts education. The interviews focused on two key areas: (1) the ways in which local traditions are combined with Islamic practices in everyday life and rituals, and (2) how cultural actors and educators adapt these practices into pedagogical spaces, including challenges and opportunities encountered in the process.

Direct observation was carried out in early childhood centers and community-based cultural events where children engaged in artistic activities linked to local rituals. Observed activities included music, dance, and drama rooted in cultural practices, as well as children’s participation in religious rituals such as collective prayers, tahlil, and slametan. Field visits to village ceremonies between 2018 and 2025 further enriched the ethnographic data, offering insights into children’s lived experiences of cultural transposition.

Visual and textual documentation supported the data collection process. Photos, videos, and field notes captured artistic practices and ritual performances involving children and families, while curriculum materials from ECE were collected to analyze how local wisdom and Islamic values are formally integrated into learning activities. Documentation served as complementary evidence to triangulate interview and observation data, ensuring that the cultural transposition process was represented both narratively and visually.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed using a Grounded Theory approach, consisting of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Cho & Lee, 2014; Sosa-Díaz & Valverde-Berrocoso, 2022). This approach was chosen because it allows for the systematic construction of categories and concepts grounded in the empirical realities of

the Lima Gunung Community, ensuring that the resulting interpretations remain closely tied to participants' lived experiences.

In the initial stage, raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation were segmented and labeled to identify recurring concepts. This process aimed to organize fragmented data and highlight emerging themes such as cultural ritual transposition, integration of Islamic spirituality in learning, and the roles of community actors in transmitting values.

At the next stage, relationships between categories were identified and connected. For example, the link between cultural rituals and Islamic values was examined in relation to children's participation in arts education. This step helped to clarify how cultural and spiritual practices mutually reinforce one another in shaping pedagogical experiences.

The final stage involved constructing a central narrative that explains the overall process of cultural transposition into early childhood education. A unifying storyline was developed to show how rituals and values from the Lima Gunung Community are transformed into meaningful pedagogical practices in ECE settings.

To strengthen validity, data triangulation was applied by comparing findings across different sources and methods. Insights from interviews were cross-checked with field observations and documentation records, ensuring consistency and credibility. This triangulated process provided a reliable basis for interpreting the cultural and Islamic dimensions of early childhood arts education in the community (Walsh, 2013).

### 3. Result

This section presents the findings of the research based on data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation conducted between 2018 and 2025 in the Lima Gunung Community. The results are presented thematically according to the main focus of the study, namely the transposition of Islamic and local cultural traditions into early childhood arts education. Analysis of qualitative data from key informants—including artists, early childhood educators, parents, and children—shows that cultural rituals imbued with Islamic spiritual values are not only preserved within the community but are also pedagogically transformed into children's learning experiences. This process is embodied through artistic activities such as music, dance, drama, and visual arts, enabling children to internalize spiritual and collective values within the framework of formal education.

#### 3.1. Cultural Transposition in Javanese-Islamic Syncretism within Early Childhood Arts Education in the Lima Gunung Community

The findings indicate that the integration of local cultural rituals and Islamic values in early childhood arts education within the Lima Gunung Community unfolds organically and contextually. Islamic spiritual values are not transmitted abstractly, but rather through tangible experiences rooted in local traditions such as *tahlilan*, *slametan*, and other forms of collective prayer. This cultural transposition revitalizes arts education as a medium for shaping children's spiritual and social character, grounded in local wisdom and Islamic values.

Through participatory observation and documentation, several annual rituals—including *Nyadran Kali*, *Sungkem Tlompak*, and *Suranan*—were identified as integral to early childhood arts activities. In practice, children are not merely spectators of ritual processions but are actively engaged through painting, dancing, singing, and crafting activities that embody the spiritual elements of these rituals. The following table summarizes the relationship between types of rituals, their embedded Islamic spiritual values, and the forms of arts-based activities developed in early childhood education within the Lima Gunung Community on table 3.

Field findings demonstrate that children in the Lima Gunung Community acquire arts education not primarily through formal institutions but through active participation in cultural rituals rich in spiritual and aesthetic values. Seven key rituals were observed: *Sungkem Tlompak*, *Merti Dusun Gejayan*, *Nyadran Kali Warangan*, *Tapak Jaran Sembrani*, *Tumpeng Jangka*, *Jaran Papat*, and *Suran Tutup Ngisor*. Each ritual embodies a distinctive form of syncretism between



Islamic traditions and Javanese spirituality, in which artistic expression, social values, and divine teachings converge within holistic cultural events.

Table 3. Integration of Cultural Rituals and Arts Education in the Lima Gunung Community

Ritual Type	Key Elements	Spiritual-Islamic Values	Pedagogical Potentials
<i>Sungkem Tlompak</i>	Pilgrimage to sacred spring, incense, flower offering, face-washing	Prayer, purification, humility	Sensory and reflective learning; embodiment of prayer in nature
<i>Merti Dusun</i>	Grave cleaning, <i>tumpeng</i> meal, wayang performance	Gratitude, ancestral respect, community harmony	Artistic expression, social bonding, storytelling rooted in Islamic-Javanese ethics
<i>Nyadran Kali</i>	Communal feast, grave visit, traditional dance	Thankfulness for water, environmental care, remembrance	Cultural literacy through performance and collective rituals
<i>Tapak Jaran Sembrani</i>	<i>Boreh</i> ritual, flower scattering, sacred dance	Healing, environmental spirituality, sacred space	Environmental awareness and symbolic thinking in early learning
<i>Tumpeng Jangka</i>	Procession with food offerings, collective prayer	Gratitude, communal supplication, hope	Collective creativity, art-ritual integration, parental involvement
<i>Jaran Papat</i>	Sacred dance with <i>sesaji</i> , strict rules, trance	Protection, balance, cosmic order ( <i>Kiblat Papat</i> )	Discipline in performance, sacred storytelling, moral instruction
<i>Suran/Suronan</i>	<i>Yasinan</i> , communal feast, <i>Kembar Mayang</i> dance, wayang	Rejection of harm, self-purification, submission to God	Deep engagement in religious-symbolic arts, rhythm of Islamic calendar

For instance, during the *Sungkem Tlompak* ritual, children join the procession from Keditan Village to the Tlompak spring, carrying flowers, clay jars, and miniature *gunungan* while collectively chanting prayers for safety and blessings. Although meanings are not verbally explained, children grasp spiritual lessons through embodied practices: touching water as a symbol of purification, scattering flowers as respect for nature, and marching in formation as a sign of social discipline. Syncretism is evident in the blended use of Arabic and Javanese prayers, as well as offerings combined with *tahlilan*.

Similarly, *Merti Dusun Gejayan* highlights intergenerational learning. Children participate in arranging *tumpeng*, cleaning ancestral graves, and preparing communal meals prior to *wayang kulit* performances. According to Singgih Arif Kusnadi, “children learn courtesy by arranging *tumpeng* and listening to the Ramayana as a symbol of moral struggle.” The narratives in *wayang* carry Islamic ethical values conveyed through Javanese aesthetics. Children also engage in playful performances (*dolanan*) accompanied by traditional gamelan, reinforcing cultural literacy.

The *Nyadran Kali Warangan* ritual functions as both ecological and spiritual learning. Children take roles as food carriers, flower bearers, and participants in the communal feast, while observing the Soreng dance performance that dramatizes human inner struggles. Observations show children reconstructing Soreng movements in play, indicating internalization of symbolic gestures. Prayers invoke God through local appellations—*Pangeran*, *Sang Hyang Wisesa*, and *Gusti Allah*—reflecting a blend of Islamic monotheism and Javanese cosmology.

Other rituals, such as *Tapak Jaran Sembrani*, *Tumpeng Jangka*, *Jaran Papat*, and *Suran Tutup Ngisor*, similarly demonstrate how children engage in ritualized learning that fuses Islamic spirituality with cultural artistry. Across these practices, children are not passive observers but active participants who experience Islamic values such as gratitude, humility, perseverance, and social harmony through embodied cultural practices. Within the framework of *funds of knowledge*, these experiences constitute culturally grounded early education, while Vygotsky’s *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD) is evident in children’s learning through guided participation by artists, parents, and community elders as cultural educators.

These rituals do not merely preserve tradition but create authentic, reflective spaces of spiritual education rooted in locality. This form of cultural transposition illustrates how Islam

enriches, rather than erases, cultural practices, allowing children to develop both cultural identity and spiritual understanding through arts, embodiment, and communal participation. Islamic education here is experienced contextually—as lived practice rather than verbal dogma—aligned with the principle of *ta'dib*, the cultivation of character through experience and example.

### *3.2. Spaces for the Formation of Aesthetics, Sociality, and Cognitive Awareness of Children through Participation in Javanese–Islamic Rituals*

Children's participation in Javanese–Islamic rituals organized by the Lima Gunung community not only introduces them to spiritual and symbolic dimensions but also contributes to the holistic formation of their character, aesthetic sensibilities, and cognitive patterns. Each ritual observed in this study functions as a transformative arena in which children engage in integrative and multimodal learning, combining visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and affective elements. Performance venues, studio courtyards, riverbanks, and village squares alternately transform into classrooms without walls, where children's interactions with adults, the environment, and religious symbols become part of the internalization of values and modes of thinking. For instance, during the *Sungkem Tlompak* ritual, as children scatter flowers and cleanse their faces with sacred water, they engage in what may be termed a practice of spiritual aesthetics. This seemingly simple act intertwines aesthetic elements (the colors and fragrance of flowers, the sound of flowing water) with religious practices (purification, supplication for safety), thereby shaping a foundational spiritual experience that is both somatic and symbolic.

In the *Tumpeng Jangka* procession, children not only learn the ritual forms of food but also comprehend the relationship between gratitude, sharing, and symbolic order in the presentation of the *tumpeng*. Symmetrical arrangements, the use of contrasting colors, and elements of visual balance refine their aesthetic sensitivity. This aligns with theories of aesthetic development in educational psychology, which suggest that repeated experiences with patterns and symmetry strengthen children's ability to discriminate and evaluate aesthetic values reflectively.

From a social perspective, children's involvement in ritual performances—whether as gamelan players, flower bearers, procession escorts, or active spectators—enhances their sense of belonging to the community. In *Merti Dusun* and *Nyadran Kali Warangan*, children collaborate in preparing food, arranging chairs, organizing flowers, and joining parades. These practices serve as early pathways for their introduction to the values of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), collective responsibility, and social etiquette embedded in Javanese–Islamic culture. As Supadi Haryanto notes, “Children are trained not only to dance or sing, but to know when to step forward, when to remain still, when to show respect.” Cognitive development also occurs through processes of symbolization and interpretation within cultural contexts. In *Jaran Kepang Papat*, children witness how movements and performance narratives convey values such as self-control, courage, and honor. They begin to recognize that every element—masks, martial gestures, costume colors, and accompanying music—carries meaning. As explained by Suroto, a third-generation dance instructor, “Children who frequently watch *Jaran Papat* performances become more perceptive. They can say: ‘that movement expresses anger, that one expresses calm,’ even if they cannot yet explain why.”

The *Suran Tutup Ngisor* ritual further illustrates how the recitation of *Yasin*, spiritual songs, and wayang performances function as vehicles for transmitting religious stories. Children do not merely memorize verses or lyrics but also grasp the narrative contexts, such as the stories of Prophet Ibrahim, the *Wali Songo*, or wayang characters. This process builds a foundation of spiritual and cultural literacy, blending verbal memory with narrative understanding. Overall, the community's artistic educational practices do not separate aesthetics, sociality, and cognition; rather, these dimensions are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Children learn to see, hear, move, and reflect within a unified cultural experience. This model of learning exemplifies an “experiential aesthetic pedagogy,” where art and spirituality serve as vehicles for character formation and awareness. The learning that takes place is contextual, reflective, and dialogical, demonstrating that children are not merely imitating but actively reinterpreting their experiences according to their developmental capacities. Islamic values are thus transmitted not through rote memorization or lectures but through symbols, embodied actions, and shared experiences. In this

way, rituals become living pedagogical spaces that holistically shape children's aesthetic sensitivity, social awareness, and spiritual understanding.

### *3.3. Intergenerational Relations and Community-Based Arts Education: Social Structure as a Living Curriculum*

One of the key findings of this study is the role of intergenerational relations in shaping a living and dynamic ecosystem of arts education. The Lima Gunung Community demonstrates that arts learning is not confined to classrooms or written syllabi, but emerges from the web of interactions across generations—children, parents, artists, and community elders—who are engaged in everyday cultural practices. Learning spaces in this community are fluid and multisituational. Children acquire dance not from formal teachers but from local artists, such as Agus Prasetyo Putro, who employs a teaching approach grounded in direct imitation and folk narratives. Field observations show children dancing in front yards, accompanied by makeshift gamelan instruments made of bamboo and cans, as they mimic movements performed by adults. No distinction is made between rehearsal and performance; process and outcome merge within participatory communal activities.

This model reflects what Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger describe as “situated learning,” in which knowledge is transmitted through participation in meaningful social practice. Children become part of a community of practice and gain legitimacy as active members, even in small roles. For instance, they are entrusted with stage properties, arranging flowers, or singing at event openings, all of which foster confidence and a sense of ownership over artistic production.

Intergenerational interaction is also evident in narrative practices. In rituals such as *Merti Dusun* and *Tumpeng Jangka*, elders recount ancestral stories and the origins of the village orally, which are then reinterpreted by children through drawings, songs, or short dramas. This process highlights the significance of oral cultural literacy in early education. As noted by Supadi Haryanto, “When we read books to children, they may not remember. But when we tell stories while they help arrange the *gunungan*, they memorize and understand.”

In this community, artistic practice is inseparable from daily life. Sitras Anjilin, head of *Padepokan Tjipta Boedaja*, describes art as a form of life education—an approach in which spirituality, beauty, and togetherness are interwoven through repetitive and collaborative artistic activities. Children learn through the rhythms of cultural life: dancing before harvest, singing while preparing offerings, and crafting while waiting for processions. Field documentation reveals that children learn through bodily engagement, emotions, and social relations, rather than solely through explicit instruction. Parent-child relations are also transformational. Here, caregiving is not limited to biological parents but extends into a broader cultural family. Adult artists act as cultural and spiritual mentors. Children address them affectionately as *mbah*, *mas*, or *pakde*, reflecting strong emotional bonds and trust.

The social structure of this community does not only provide physical spaces for arts education but also functions as a living curriculum—offering values, norms, and practices that shape children's aesthetic and ethical habitus from an early age. This approach stands in contrast to formal institutional arts education, which tends to be fragmented, standardized, and less contextual. Thus, early childhood arts education in the Lima Gunung Community represents an alternative pedagogy rooted in local values, Islamic spirituality, and communal ethics. It demonstrates that social relations and intergenerational interaction can serve as effective media for cultivating children's artistic appreciation, character, and cultural awareness.

## **4. Discussion**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the transposition of Islamic and local cultural practices into early childhood arts education in the Lima Gunung Community makes a significant contribution to contextual, holistic, and value-based learning. These results support the funds of knowledge approach (Moll et al., 1992), which emphasizes that children's cultural and spiritual experiences within the community can serve as authentic learning capital. When children engage in artistic activities that reflect Islamic rituals and values, they not only learn about aesthetics but



also internalize the social, spiritual, and moral meanings embedded in these cultural practices. This integration also resonates with the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which underscores the importance of aligning content with pedagogical strategies appropriate for child development (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). In practice, teachers who understand local values are able to design arts activities that are not only aesthetically engaging but also meaningful for children's identity formation. Art in early childhood education has the potential to serve as a medium for reinforcing social and spiritual values (Chapman & O'Gorman, 2022).

Furthermore, this approach aligns with the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which stresses the role of social support in facilitating children's learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In this study, local cultural and Islamic practices introduced into the classroom through the arts function as a form of social scaffolding, enabling children to grasp more complex concepts through collective interaction—for example, when they dance together in the Merti Dusun procession or create visual artworks after reciting prayers. Such processes foster meaningful learning that extends beyond cognitive development to include affective and spiritual growth. The cultural transposition also underscores the significance of ethnopedagogy in early childhood education. Local wisdom has the potential to shape contextual, sustainable learning frameworks that honor children's identities (Becerra-Lubies, 2021; Sakti et al., 2024). In this research, the Lima Gunung community is not merely treated as a cultural backdrop but as a living source of knowledge that animates the learning process. Values such as gratitude, prayer, togetherness, and reverence for ancestors naturally emerge through children's participation in arts activities integrated with Islamic rituals and local culture.

The significance of these findings lies not only in the validation of theory but also in their practical implications for transforming early childhood education into a culturally grounded and spiritually enriching experience. By embedding Islamic and local cultural elements into artistic pedagogy, teachers create a dynamic interplay between tradition and creativity that nurtures children's holistic development. This model of education positions art as a dialogic space where children negotiate meaning, identity, and belonging within their cultural milieu. It encourages them to see learning as part of their lived experience rather than as an abstract or disconnected school activity. Moreover, this integrative approach enhances intergenerational knowledge transfer, as community elders, parents, and teachers collaboratively sustain and reinterpret cultural values through educational activities. Such collaboration not only strengthens children's sense of community attachment but also revitalizes cultural continuity in the face of modernization. Pedagogically, the transposition of culture and faith into early arts education challenges the conventional separation between secular knowledge and moral instruction, showing that values-based learning can coexist harmoniously with creativity and exploration. This model also contributes to the discourse on culturally responsive pedagogy, advocating for the recognition of local epistemologies as legitimate sources of curriculum development and educational innovation. In essence, the Lima Gunung model represents a transformative framework where the spiritual, aesthetic, and cognitive dimensions of learning are harmoniously interwoven, demonstrating that art education can become a vital means of sustaining moral integrity, fostering empathy, and cultivating cultural pride in young children. Such practices reaffirm the idea that education grounded in cultural and spiritual wisdom has the power to shape not only intelligent but also compassionate and culturally rooted individuals.

#### *4.1. Research Contribution*

This study offers contributions across three dimensions: theoretical, methodological, and practical. Theoretically, it expands understanding of the integration of funds of knowledge and ethnopedagogy in early childhood arts education. Prior research has often confined cultural transposition to surface-level aesthetic expression (Csinos, 2018; Szulc, 2022). This study demonstrates that when cultural transposition is consciously designed to merge Islamic values with local symbols in the curriculum, the learning process becomes deeper and more meaningful. Methodologically, the qualitative case study approach using triangulation (interviews, observation, and documentation) illustrates how cultural practices can be interpreted as

pedagogical processes rather than mere cultural artifacts. Observations of live rituals such as Nyadran Kali or Suronan provide authentic data for understanding children's learning dynamics. Practically, this research produces a model for implementing the transposition of Islamic culture into early childhood arts education that can be adapted in other community contexts. A curriculum that integrates art, Islamic values, and local culture has proven effective in fostering children's identity, spirituality, and social skills. This offers a concrete framework for developing culturally and religiously grounded early childhood curricula, echoing the emphasis on sustainable education and the preservation of cultural identity (Jagielska-Burduk et al., 2021).

#### 4.2. Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, this study focuses on a single cultural community (Lima Gunung), which possesses highly distinctive characteristics: strong spirituality, social cohesion, and deep-rooted connections to Islamic values. This specificity limits the generalizability of the findings to other communities with different social or religious structures. Second, the qualitative approach relies heavily on interpretive and narrative representation of cultural practices. While this enriches contextual understanding, it does not provide quantitative data to measure learning outcomes numerically, such as improvements in cognitive scores or specific artistic skills. Third, challenges arise from managing the diversity of interpretations surrounding cultural and religious practices. Some local spiritual practices may be perceived differently by particular groups, especially concerning questions of authenticity within Islamic teachings. This requires pedagogical sensitivity and an inclusive approach to ensure that cultural transposition does not provoke theological conflict.

#### 4.3. Suggestions

Based on the findings and limitations, several recommendations for future research can be made: (1) Replicate this model in other communities, including urban contexts and religious-cultural minorities, to examine whether the transposition model is universally applicable or context-specific; (2) Develop complementary quantitative approaches to measure children's development more objectively, for example by combining qualitative methods with tools assessing aesthetic, social, and religious growth in early childhood; (3) Design prototype curricula informed by the study's findings. Early childhood modules integrating Islamic values and local culture could serve as educational products adopted widely by schools and communities; (4) Enhance teacher training in understanding and managing cultural and religious diversity, equipping early childhood educators to facilitate cultural transposition reflectively and sensitively; and (5) Conduct longitudinal studies to trace how culturally and Islamically grounded arts education influences children's character formation over time. By expanding Islamic education to encompass not only textual knowledge but also embodied cultural experience, this study provides a relevant framework for addressing the challenges of globalization and the erosion of local identities. Culturally based arts education is not solely about aesthetics but about cultural sustainability and identity formation—two dimensions that are essential for educating children in the modern era (Overby et al., 2022).

### 5. Conclusion

This study affirms that the transposition of Islamic culture and local traditions into early childhood arts education constitutes a pedagogical strategy that not only enriches the learning process aesthetically but also strengthens children's identity formation, spiritual values, and social connectedness from an early age. Through the integration of cultural practices such as *Nyadran Kali*, *Suranan*, and *Merti Dusun*, alongside contextual art forms such as dance, painting, and drama, children gain meaningful learning experiences that are socially grounded while naturally reflecting Islamic values. The theoretical frameworks employed in this research—namely *funds of knowledge*, *pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)*, *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*, and *ethnopedagogy*—demonstrate strong coherence with educational practices in the Lima Gunung Community. These findings highlight that local culture is not merely supplementary

content but can serve as a foundational basis for designing contextual arts education rooted in children's lived experiences.

Practically, this research produces an early childhood arts curriculum model that integrates Islamic spiritual values and local culture through community-based artistic activities. Such a model can be replicated and further developed by educators, early childhood institutions, and educational stakeholders in similar contexts within Indonesia and in countries with strong religious-cultural traditions. The key recommendations emerging from this study include: (1) teacher training that equips educators to understand cultural and Islamic values contextually; (2) the development of flexible, community-based local curricula; and (3) collaborative partnerships among schools, local artists, religious leaders, and parents to support culture-based learning. For future research, it is recommended that this model of cultural transposition be tested in diverse community contexts, that longitudinal studies be conducted to examine its long-term impacts, and that complementary quantitative approaches be developed to systematically measure its effects on children's development.

## Declarations

### Author contribution statement

Bahtiar Arbi conceptualized the research framework, led the ethnographic fieldwork, conducted primary interviews, and drafted the initial manuscript. Muhammad Jazuli provided theoretical insight and scholarly review related to arts education and cultural pedagogy, and contributed to the development of the discussion section. Wadiyo was responsible for field documentation, including photo ethnography and observation log compilation, and assisted in data analysis. Agus Cahyono facilitated access to local communities, supported cultural interpretation of ritual practices, and contributed to the contextual analysis. Brian Trinanda Kusuma Adi provided methodological support in qualitative data organization, assisted in the literature review, and supported the revision of the final manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

### Funding statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study, including interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation, are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Due to ethical considerations and the involvement of children and community members, raw data is not publicly archived.

### Declaration of interests statement

All authors declare that they have no financial or personal interests that could influence the work presented in this manuscript.

### Additional information

Correspondence and material requests should be addressed to [viviangraini@fip.unp.ac.id](mailto:viviangraini@fip.unp.ac.id).

### ORCID

Bahtiar Arbi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2981-1005>  
Muhammad Jazuli  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3389-4341>  
Wadiyo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0763-5944>  
Agus Cahyono  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9572-126X>  
Brian Trinanda Kusuma Adi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0078-789X>

## References

- Altaş, E. N., Mumcuoğlu, A., Özgül-Torun, T., Demirci-Ünal, Z., & Demircan, H. Ö. (2024). Unlocking Cultural Treasures: Viewpoints of Preschool Teachers Working with Refugee Children on Funds of Knowledge. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 26(3), 28–57. <https://doi.org/10.18251/IJME.V26I3.4315>
- Antara, P. A., Wirawan, I. M. A., Ujianti, P. R., Paramita, M. V. A., Setyowahyudi, R., & Dewi, N. P. S. (2025). Integrating Balinese Gamelan Music with Sensorimotor Rhythm Intervention to Improve Brain Wave Synchrony and Language Processing in Autistic Children. *IJoLE (International Journal of Language Education)*, 8(4), 778–794. <https://doi.org/10.26858/IJoLE.V8I4.70008>
- Arbi, B. (2022). Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault dalam Perspektif Musik dan Pertunjukan: Subversi Kebudayaan Komunitas Lima Gunung Magelang. *Musikolastika: Jurnal Pertunjukan Dan Pendidikan Musik*, 4(1), 50–61. <https://doi.org/10.24036/musikolastika.v4i1.87>
- Aswoyo, J., & Sularso, S. (2020). The Concept of Panutan in Governance Festival Lima Gunung in Magelang Central Java Indonesia. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 20(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.15294/harmonia.v20i1.24818>
- Becerra-Lubies, R. (2021). Intercultural Education and Early Childhood: Strengthening Knowledge Based on Indigenous Communities and Territory. *AlterNative*, 17(2), 326–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/11771801211022328>
- Chapman, S. N., & O’Gorman, L. (2022). Transforming Learning Environments in Early Childhood Contexts Through the Arts: Responding to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 54(1), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S13158-022-00320-3/TABLES/1>
- Cho, J. Y., & Lee, E. H. (2014). Reducing Confusion about Grounded Theory and Qualitative Content Analysis: Similarities and Differences. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(32), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1028>
- Ciptandi, F., & Arumsari, A. (2024). The Existence of Aesthetic Transformation in Traditional Batik Colors Based on the Review of Memetics Theory (Case Study: Traditional Batik in Tuban, East Java, Indonesia). *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 24(1), 177–191. <https://doi.org/10.15294/HARMONIA.V24I1.43243>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches—John W. Creswell—Google Buku*. SAGE Publications, Inc. [https://books.google.co.id/books?id=4uB76IC\\_pOQC&printsec=copyright&hl=id#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?id=4uB76IC_pOQC&printsec=copyright&hl=id#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Csinos, D. M. (2018). From the Ground Up: Cultural Considerations in Research into Children’s Spirituality and Theology. *International Journal of Children’s Spirituality*, 23(1), 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364436X.2017.1394271>
- Cutcher, A., & Boyd, W. (2018). Preschool Children, Painting and Palimpsest: Collaboration as Pedagogy, Practice and Learning. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 37(1), 53–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/JADE.12113>
- Esteban-Guitart, M., Lalueza, J. L., Zhang-Yu, C., & Llopart, M. (2019). Sustaining Students’ Cultures and Identities. A Qualitative Study Based on the Funds of Knowledge and Identity Approaches. *Sustainability*, 11(12), 3400. <https://doi.org/10.3390/SU11123400>
- Gudmundsdottir, S., & Shulman, L. (1987). Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Social Studies. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 31(2), 59–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031383870310201>

- Hakkarainen, P., & Bredikyte, M. (2019). The Zone of Proximal Development in Play and Learning. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 4, 2–11.
- Haralovich, V. (2023). Using Aesthetic Experiences to Teach Social–Emotional Learning in an Art Classroom. *Art Education*, 76(5), 16–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2023.2226566>
- Horton, M. (2022). Funds of Knowledge at San Basilio de Palenque: A Path for Preserving its Identity. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 24(3), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.18251/IJME.V24I3.3293>
- Jagielska-Burduk, A., Pszczyński, M., & Stec, P. (2021). Cultural Heritage Education in UNESCO Cultural Conventions. *Sustainability*, 13(6), 3548. <https://doi.org/10.3390/SU13063548>
- John-Steiner, V., & Mahn, H. (1996). Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian framework. *Educational Psychologist*, 31(3), 191–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.1996.9653266>
- Jones-Amin, H., Tan, H., & Tee, A. (2006). Gamelan: Can a Conservation-Conceived Protocol Protect it Spiritually and Physically in a Museum? *Studies in Conservation*, 51(sup2), 138–143. <https://doi.org/10.1179/SIC.2006.51.SUPPLEMENT-2.138>
- Kang, R. (2023). A Study on Early Childhood Art Education Focusing on Aesthetic Experience. *Transactions on Comparative Education*, 5(8), 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.23977/TRANSE.2023.050808>
- Kearney, E., McIntosh, L., Perry, B., Dockett, S., & Clayton, K. (2014). Building Positive Relationships with Indigenous Children, Families and Communities: Learning at the Cultural Interface. *Critical Studies in Education*, 55(3), 338–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2014.914963>
- Meeken, L. (2013). *Art Education and the Encouragement of Affective and Cognitive Empathy in Early Childhood* [Virginia Commonwealth University]. <https://doi.org/10.25772/H2BQ-NQ88>
- Mellone, M., Ramploud, A., & Carotenuto, G. (2021). An Experience of Cultural Transposition of the El'konin-Davydov Curriculum. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 106(3), 379–396. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10649-020-09942-7>
- Moll, L. C., Cathy, A., Neff, D., & Gonzale, N. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534>
- Nisa, K., Novitawati, N., & Sakerani, S. (2024). Implementation of an Integrative Holistic Program in Early Childhood Education (Multi Site Study at the Pembina Inti State Kindergarten in Central Banjarmasin and Pembina East Banjarmasin State Kindergarten 2). *Formosa Journal of Applied Sciences*, 3(4), 1301–1310. <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjas.v3i4.8816>
- Nutbrown, C. (2013). Conceptualising Arts-Based Learning in the Early Years. *Research Papers in Education*, 28(2), 239–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2011.580365>
- Overby, A., Constance, J., & Quenzer, B. (2022). Reimagining Art Education: Moving Toward Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in the Arts With Funds of Knowledge and Lived Experiences. *Art Education*, 75(1), 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2021.1984759>
- Paranti, L., Putri, R. P., & Pebrianti, S. I. (2019). The Geculan Bocah Dance Performance As A Creative Space for Children. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 19(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.15294/HARMONIA.V19I1.23617>



- Pürgstaller, E. (2021). Assessment of Creativity in Dance in Children: Development and Validation of a Test Instrument. *Creativity Research Journal*, 33(1), 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2020.1817694>
- Robinson, L. R., Bitsko, R. H., Thompson, R. A., Dworkin, P. H., McCabe, M. A., Peacock, G., & Thorpe, P. G. (2019). CDC Grand Rounds: Addressing Health Disparities in Early Childhood. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, 66(29), 769–772. <https://doi.org/10.15585/MMWR.MM6629A1>
- Sakti, S. A., Endraswara, S., & Rohman, A. (2024). Revitalizing local wisdom within character education through ethnopedagogy approach: A case study on a preschool in Yogyakarta. *Heliyon*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e31370>
- Shrestha, R. K., L'Espoir Decosta, J. N. P., & Whitford, M. (2025). Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Socio-Cultural Values for Sustainable Tourism Development: Insights from Indigenous Newars of Nepal. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 33(1), 143–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2024.2316298>
- Snyder, C. (2012). A Case Study of a Case Study: Analysis of a Robust Qualitative Research Methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(13), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1791>
- Sosa-Díaz, M. J., & Valverde-Berrocoso, J. (2022). Grounded Theory as a Research Methodology in Educational Technology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221133228>
- Stimac, Z. (2022). Indigenous Peoples through the Lens of UNESCO. *Religions*, 13(10), 957. <https://doi.org/10.3390/REL13100957>
- Subrahmanian, P., Singh, S., & Kothari, A. (2024). Programmatic and Legal Preparedness of India on Early Childhood Development. *Preventive Medicine: Research & Reviews*, 1(4), 207–213. [https://doi.org/10.4103/PMRR.PMRR\\_39\\_23](https://doi.org/10.4103/PMRR.PMRR_39_23)
- Suprihatin, E. W., & Pratamawati, D. (2019). Conservation Strategy in Preserving The Local Image Existence of Wayang Topeng. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 19(2), 179–184. <https://doi.org/10.15294/HARMONIA.V19I2.24005>
- Szulc, Ł. (2022). Culture is Transnational. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 26(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779221131349>
- Tian, T., & Isa, Z. B. M. (2024). Exploration and Practice of Aesthetic Education in Early Childhood Education Activities. *Journal of Digitainability, Realism & Mastery (DREAM)*, 3(09), 61–74. <https://doi.org/10.56982/dream.v3i09.259>
- UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4>
- Walsh, K. (2013). When I Say ... Triangulation. *Medical Education*, 47(9), 866–866. <https://doi.org/10.1111/MEDU.12241>
- Yazzie-Mintz, T., LeClair-Diaz, A., & Yazzie-Mintz, E. (2024). Community-Based Inquiry from within Indigenous Early Learning Communities of Practice: Introduction to the Special Issue. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 47(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.17953/A3.1606>