

Responsive Management of Islamic Education to Local Linguistics: Challenges and Innovations in School Management Practices (Case Study in Gorontalo Regency)

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Article History	ABSTRACT
Received 20-10-2023 Accepted: 13-11-2023 Published: 15-12-2023	<p>Background: Islamic education in Gorontalo Regency operates within a rich multilingual context, yet it remains insufficiently responsive to local linguistic resources, particularly the Gorontalo language. Although the local language holds significant potential to enhance students' understanding of Islamic values and engagement, its integration into school management is hindered by a lack of formal policies, academic stigma, and limited supporting resources.</p> <p>Purpose: This study aims to examine how Islamic education management responds to local linguistic contexts and formulate an integrative management model that harmonizes Islamic values with local language practices.</p> <p>Method: Employing a qualitative-descriptive approach with a constructivist design, the research was conducted in Gorontalo Regency through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Data were collected from 20 informants, including madrasah principals, teachers, Ministry of Religious Affairs officials, and customary leaders.</p> <p>Results and Discussion: Findings reveal that 92% of respondents recognize the importance of the Gorontalo language, only 46% of institutions have implemented it in formal policies, and only 27% of teachers have received relevant training. The local language proves effective in teaching moral character (76%) and religious communication (82%), yet faces structural barriers such as the absence of regulatory support, academic marginalization of local languages, and a scarcity of bilingual teaching materials. Support from customary and religious leaders significantly strengthens cultural legitimacy. Moreover, using the local language demonstrably enhances student participation, comprehension of Islamic values, and religious behavior.</p> <p>Conclusions and Implications: Synthesizing empirical findings with theoretical frameworks—Funds of Knowledge, sociolinguistics, Contextual Teaching and</p>

Learning, and Fazlur Rahman's thought—this study proposes a conceptual model: "Locally Linguistically Responsive Islamic Education Management." The model comprises four pillars: institutional policy, contextual learning management, culturally grounded teacher capacity building, and socio-religious collaboration. It bridges the universality of Islamic values with local cultural specificity, contributing to both the preservation of indigenous languages and the contextual strengthening of Islamic identity. The study recommends that Islamic education adopt inclusive, context-sensitive management approaches to foster meaningful and sustainable learning.

Keywords: *Islamic Education; Local Linguistics; Contextual Management; Gorontalo; Language Culture.*

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Pendidikan Islam di Kabupaten Gorontalo berada dalam konteks multilingual yang kaya, namun belum sepenuhnya responsif terhadap linguistik lokal, khususnya Bahasa Gorontalo. Meski bahasa daerah memiliki potensi besar dalam memperkuat pemahaman nilai-nilai Islam dan keterlibatan siswa, integrasinya dalam manajemen sekolah masih terhambat oleh minimnya regulasi, stigma akademik, serta keterbatasan sumber daya.

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji sejauh mana manajemen pendidikan Islam merespons linguistik lokal dan merumuskan model manajemen yang integratif antara nilai Islam dan konteks bahasa daerah.

Metode: Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan desain konstruktif, penelitian dilakukan di Kabupaten Gorontalo melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Data dikumpulkan dari 20 informan, termasuk kepala madrasah, guru, pejabat Kemenag, dan tokoh adat.

Hasil dan Pembahasan: Temuan menunjukkan bahwa 92% responden menyadari pentingnya Bahasa Gorontalo, namun hanya 46% lembaga yang mengimplementasikannya dalam kebijakan, dan hanya 27% guru yang pernah mengikuti pelatihan terkait. Bahasa lokal efektif digunakan dalam pembelajaran akhlak (76%) dan komunikasi keagamaan (82%), tetapi terkendala oleh ketiadaan regulasi formal, stigma terhadap bahasa daerah di ruang akademik, serta minimnya bahan ajar dwibahasa. Dukungan tokoh adat dan agama menjadi faktor penguat legitimasi kultural. Penerapan bahasa lokal terbukti meningkatkan partisipasi siswa, pemahaman nilai Islam, dan perilaku religius secara signifikan.

Kesimpulan dan Implikasi: Berdasarkan sintesis temuan dan teori Funds of Knowledge, sosiolinguistik, Contextual Teaching and Learning, serta pemikiran Fazlur Rahman, dirumuskan model "Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Responsif Linguistik Lokal" yang mencakup empat pilar: kebijakan kelembagaan, manajemen pembelajaran kontekstual, penguatan SDM berbasis pedagogi budaya, dan kolaborasi sosial-religius. Model ini menjembatani universalitas Islam dengan kekhasan lokal, sekaligus mendukung pelestarian bahasa daerah dan penguatan identitas keislaman kontekstual. Implikasinya, pendidikan Islam perlu mengadopsi pendekatan manajerial yang inklusif dan berbasis konteks lokal.

Kata Kunci *Pendidikan Islam; Linguistik Lokal; Manajemen Kontekstual; Gorontalo; Budaya Bahasa.*



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia plays an essential role in shaping society's character, morals, and religious identity.[1] In Gorontalo Province, the tradition of Islamic education has developed strongly through formal institutions such as madrasahs and Islamic schools, as well as non-formal institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, majelis taklim (Islamic study groups), and traditional institutions that serve as centers for strengthening Islamic values among the people of Gorontalo,

the majority of whom are Muslim.[2] However, in addition to being a space for the transmission of religious teachings, Gorontalo also has a rich culture, customs, and linguistics, primarily through the Gorontalo language, which not only functions as a means of communication but also as a vehicle for the inheritance of traditional values, social ethics, and a philosophy of life that is in harmony with Islamic teachings.[3]

This wealth is expressed in fifteen forms of oral literature that are alive in Gorontalo society, such as lumadu (proverbs), tuja'i (traditional poetry), pantungi (rhyming verses), tanggomo (elegant poetry), wulito (genealogical stories), hungguli (folk tales), leningo (poetry of advice), taleningo (rhyming advice poetry), mala-mala (invitation poetry), tinilo (praise songs), pale bohu (transitional poetry), pilu (fairy tales), lohidu (reply rhymes), bunito (mantras), and bungga (motivational poetry).[4] This oral literature can be grouped into four categories: (1) traditional ceremonial poetry, (2) philosophical/worldview poetry, (3) artistic poetry, and (4) oral historical documentation and fairy tales. These fifteen forms contain moral and spiritual values that reflect the harmony between customs and sharia, thus potentially becoming a rich pedagogical resource in Islamic education. However, this potential has not been optimally utilized in educational management practices.[5]

The integration of local languages and education management systems in madrasahs or Islamic schools is still sporadic, dependent on the personal initiative of teachers or principals. It has not been internalized into formal policies or institutional curricula.[6] This indicates a lack of synchronization between the normative-universal orientation of Islamic education and the needs of education based on local context and multilingualism. In fact, contemporary pedagogical theories such as culturally responsive teaching by Gay (2018) and funds of knowledge by Ladson-Billings (2021) emphasize that the effectiveness of learning is highly dependent on the connection between teaching materials and the socio-linguistic context of the students.[7], [8] In other words, when Islamic education ignores the local language and literature of Gorontalo, it risks creating a gap between the values taught and the students' real lives, making the internalization of Islamic teachings abstract and meaningless. Therefore, the responsiveness of educational management to local linguistics is not merely a cultural choice but an urgent pedagogical and spiritual necessity.[9]

Within a theoretical framework, the concept of funds of knowledge (FoK) introduced by Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) is relevant in explaining how community knowledge resources and cultural practices can be integrated into the education system. Esteban-Guitart (2024) expands this concept into funds of knowledge and identity (FoK/I), emphasizing that students' experiences, languages, and cultural identities are social capital that can enrich the learning process. Recent research shows that applying FoK/I in multilingual environments increases student engagement, motivation, and learning meaning concerning the values taught (Subero, 2024). (Subero, 2024).[10], [11], [12] In the context of Gorontalo, the Gorontalo language and cultural practices, such as hulontalo and tuturangga, can be considered forms of knowledge that strengthen the internalization of Islamic values and a sense of religious togetherness in schools.

In addition, sociocultural theory rooted in Vygotsky's thinking also supports a contextual approach to education. Lee (2020) explains that the learning process and social interaction in schools are spaces for negotiating meaning, where language acts as a tool for cultural mediation. This approach is further strengthened when combined with sociolinguistics, which highlights how language variation, linguistic ideology, and social identity shape communication dynamics in educational spaces. In Islamic education, this approach emphasizes that linguistic diversity, such as the Gorontalo language, is not an obstacle but a source of symbolic wealth that can strengthen management processes, institutional communication, and meaningful learning.[13], [14]

Meanwhile, in the tradition of modern Islamic educational thought, a view emphasizes the importance of contextualizing Islamic values to remain relevant to social and cultural developments. Dasep Supriatna, through the concept of double movement, proposes the need for

integration between revelatory texts and social reality as the basis for curriculum renewal and educational management.[15] This approach was further developed by thinkers such as Taufik (2020), Murdianto (2024), and Hidayah (2024), who emphasized the importance of Islamic education management that is adaptive to digital dynamics and cultural locality.[16], [17], [18] Similar findings were expressed by Lahmar (2020), who stated that Islamic educational institutions that integrate religious values with local community participation can improve managerial effectiveness and the social relevance of education. Therefore, Islamic education management responsive to the linguistic and cultural context of the local community is not merely a technical innovation, but an epistemological necessity in realizing Islamic education that is rahmatan lil-'alamin.[19]

The contextual approach is also supported by the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model, which emphasizes the connection between learning content and students' real lives.[20] In the context of Islamic education, the application of CTL has been proven to increase motivation and understanding of Islamic values when the material is linked to students' socio-cultural reality.[21] In fact, the Direct-Contextual Learning (DCL) model developed by Dhikrul Hakim (2022) shows that a combination of direct instruction and exploration of the local context can deepen the internalization of religious values in a multicultural environment. This approach provides a strong conceptual basis for this study in formulating local language-based Islamic education management, as both emphasize the integration of learning experiences and the context of the student community.[22]

Although the relevant literature is extensive, there are still three crucial gaps. First, empirically, there has not been much research that examines explicitly how Islamic education management practices accommodate local linguistic potential in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. Second, theoretically, no conceptual model integrates the theories of funds of knowledge and identity, sociolinguistics, CTL, and Islamic education management into a single coherent framework. Third, regarding policy, there is no clear regulatory support to encourage the use of regional languages in management and learning in Islamic educational institutions. These gaps are a strong reason for the need for research that describes the phenomenon and constructs an Islamic education management model responsive to the local linguistic and cultural context, such as the Gorontalo language.[23], [24], [25]

This study attempts to bridge this gap by formulating a conceptual framework that places the responsiveness of Islamic education management to local languages as a key variable that influences the effectiveness of learning and the internalization of Islamic values. Conceptually, this responsiveness is manifested through institutional policies, organizational practices, and learning strategies that utilize local languages in the communication and instruction processes. Students' motivational factors and linguistic identity are assumed to play a role as mediating variables that strengthen this relationship. At the same time, the support of local government policies is seen as a moderating factor that can enhance the effectiveness of their implementation. Thus, the proposed model positions Islamic education management that is responsive to local linguistics as an integrative strategy between the spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions in the implementation of Islamic education.[26]

Based on this framework, this study aims to examine the relationship between the responsiveness of Islamic education management to local linguistics and the effectiveness of internalizing Islamic values in madrasahs or Islamic-based schools in Gorontalo. The hypotheses constructed include: (1) there is a significant positive influence between the responsiveness of Islamic education management to the local linguistic context and student engagement in Islamic learning; (2) there is a significant positive influence between this responsiveness and the internalization of Islamic values by students; (3) motivation and linguistic identity act as mediating

variables; and (4) regional policy support strengthens the relationship between the responsiveness of Islamic education management and Islamic learning outcomes.

Based on this theoretical foundation, this study aims to identify forms of Islamic education management responsiveness to the local linguistic context of Gorontalo and formulate an integrative and innovative Islamic education management model by using the Gorontalo language as a learning and institutional communication strategy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic education in Indonesia serves as a vehicle for transmitting religious values and as an integral part of the national education system that must respond to local, national, and global challenges. In the regional context, linguistic diversity is one of the fundamental challenges Islamic educational institutions face, especially in areas such as Gorontalo Regency. The Gorontalo language, a regional language still actively used in everyday communication, is an essential element in the learning process and social interaction in the school environment. However, in Islamic education management, the response to the existence and role of local languages is often not optimal. This creates a gap between the principles of inclusive education and the reality of implementation in the field.^[27]

School management in Islamic education covers administrative and curricular aspects and includes cultural and linguistic dimensions. According to Mulyasa (2013), school-based management (SBM) emphasizes autonomy, participation, and accountability, allowing schools to design educational policies according to the local context. In this framework, responsiveness to local linguistics is not merely an option but a strategic necessity to ensure the effectiveness of learning, the strengthening of cultural identity, and the sustainability of local values in the formal education system.^[28]

Islamic education management refers to planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating educational activities based on Islamic values, aiming to shape individuals who are faithful, pious, and noble in character (Arifin, 2012). In this context, management is not only technical and administrative in nature but also reflects Islam's epistemological and ontological vision of humanity and knowledge.^[29]

Local linguistics refers to the language system used by a particular community in everyday life, including vocabulary, grammatical structure, and distinctive communicative practices. In the context of Gorontalo Regency, local linguistics is mainly represented by the Gorontalo language, which has a unique structure and cultural nuances and forms part of the ethnic identity of the local community.^[30]

Responsiveness to local linguistics in the management of Islamic education means the ability of educational institutions to integrate, appreciate, and utilize local languages as pedagogical and cultural resources in the learning process and school management. This responsiveness includes using local languages as a medium of instruction, teaching materials, or a means of internal communication and acknowledging the cultural values inherent in those languages.^[31]

Several theories provide a strong foundation for this study. First, Cummins' (2000) Theory of Multilingual Education emphasizes the importance of recognizing the mother tongue in the learning process. According to Cummins, using the first language as a bridge to mastering a second language (e.g., Indonesian or Arabic) improves academic understanding and strengthens students' identity and self-esteem. In the context of Islamic education, this is relevant because many students

in the Gorontalo region are more fluent in Gorontalo than in Indonesian or Arabic, so neglecting the local language can hinder access to knowledge and religious values.[32]

Second, the Culture-Based Management Theory by Breyne et al. (2021) suggests that organizations, including schools, must understand and integrate local cultural values into their management systems.[33] In the context of Islamic education, Gorontalo cultural values reflected in the local language can be the foundation for building a conducive, participatory school climate rooted in the community's social reality. Third, the Islamic Approach to Cultural Diversity also supports integrating local languages in education. The Qur'an emphasizes that linguistic and ethnic diversity is a sign of Allah's power (QS. Ar-Rum: 22). Therefore, preserving and developing local languages is a pedagogical act and a form of worship and appreciation of sunnatullah.[34]

Several studies have touched on aspects related to Islamic education management and linguistic diversity, although they have not specifically examined the context of Gorontalo. Research by Rahman (2018) in South Sulawesi found that madrasas integrating local languages into extracurricular activities can increase student participation and parental involvement. Although not used as the primary language of instruction, the presence of local languages creates a sense of ownership and emotional affiliation with educational institutions.[35] On the other hand, a study by Husna (2020) in Aceh shows that resistance to the use of local languages in Islamic education often stems from the assumption that Arabic and Indonesian are more "sacred" or "modern." As a result, regional languages are considered an obstacle to understanding religious texts, when they can be a tool in contextualizing Islamic teachings.[36]

Research by Nurdin (2021) on madrasah management in Southeast Sulawesi revealed that madrasah principals who have cultural awareness tend to be more innovative in designing curricula that are responsive to the local context, including the use of analogies and regional proverbs in teaching faith and morals.[37] However, these studies have not explicitly linked school management practices, language policies, and implementation challenges in the Gorontalo region. In fact, the Gorontalo Regency has unique characteristics: a Muslim majority population, a strong Gorontalo ethnic identity, and regional policies that are beginning to encourage the revitalization of regional languages. This study aims to fill this gap.

From the above literature review, it appears that responsiveness to local linguistics in managing Islamic education is still an area that has not been explored empirically, especially in school management. Most studies focus on curricular or pedagogical aspects, while managerial dimensions such as school policy, teacher training, stakeholder involvement, and program evaluation have not received adequate attention. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how Islamic school management in Gorontalo Regency responds to the existence of local linguistics in its management practices. Through a case study approach, this research will reveal structural challenges (e.g., lack of supportive regional regulations), cultural challenges (stigma against regional languages), and local innovations that emerge from the bottom up (bottom-up initiatives) to integrate the Gorontalo language into the Islamic education ecosystem. This study's findings are expected to provide empirical contributions and enrich the theoretical discourse on inclusive, contextual, and locally-based Islamic education management. In the long term, the results of this study can be used as a reference for regional and national education policies in developing an education system that upholds linguistic diversity as part of the nation's intellectual wealth.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a constructive qualitative research design that aims to identify, describe, and construct a conceptual model of Islamic education

management responsive to Gorontalo's local linguistic context. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the social, cultural, and linguistic realities that influence managerial practices in Islamic educational institutions and construct new models based on empirical field findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tracy, 2020). The constructive model is considered relevant because the research is not only exploratory or descriptive, but also seeks to produce a conceptual design that can be applied contextually in a multilingual Islamic educational environment.[38], [39]

A qualitative approach was chosen to explore the deep meaning of Islamic education practitioners regarding integrating local languages in management, learning, and institutional communication processes. A constructive research design was applied to develop a new conceptual model by systematically analyzing the field's best practices (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The constructive process was carried out through three main stages: (1) exploration of the phenomenon, (2) conceptualization of empirical findings into theoretical categories, and (3) formulation of a conceptual model of Islamic education management based on local linguistics.[40]

This research was conducted in Gorontalo Regency, Gorontalo Province, which was purposively selected because this region represents a Muslim community with a rich culture and linguistics that are still alive, but are facing the challenges of language modernization. The selection of this location was also based on its relevance as an area that maintains Islamic education practices based on local values. It was also a dynamic example of the relationship between religion, culture, and language in the context of contemporary education. The research subjects consisted of four groups of informants, namely: 5 madrasah principals or Islamic boarding school leaders, 8 Islamic Education teachers, 3 Ministry of Religious Affairs officials, and four local traditional leaders who play a direct role in policies and practices of Islamic education based on Gorontalo's local cultural wisdom from a linguistic perspective. Thus, the total number of informants in this study was 20 people. This composition was selected purposively to obtain a representation of views from institutional elements, practitioners, the government, and indigenous communities, thereby enabling a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The number of informants was determined based on the data saturation principle, which is when the data obtained has shown repetition of meaning and no longer produces new information.[41] This principle ensures that the number of participants is not determined based on quantity but rather on the depth and completeness of information relevant to the study's focus.

Data was collected using three main techniques: (a) In-depth interviews were used to explore informants' views, perceptions, and experiences regarding integrating the Gorontalo language into Islamic education management practices. The interviews were semi-structured to balance the direction of the research questions and the informants' spontaneity. (b) Participatory observation was conducted in selected madrasahs and Islamic schools to understand the actual practices of institutional communication, the use of local languages in learning, and patterns of social interaction in the educational environment. (c) Document analysis included a review of policy documents, curricula, school work plans, and learning products related to the use of local languages and Islamic values. Triangulation techniques ensured data validity by comparing results from various sources and methods.[42]

The main instrument in this study was the researcher himself (human instrument), who acted as the data collector, analyst, and interpreter. The researcher used interview guides, observation sheets, and document analysis lists developed based on the theory of funds of knowledge, sociolinguistic approach, and CTL model to maintain consistency and reliability.[43] All field data were recorded through field notes and recorded with the informants' consent, then transcribed verbatim for analysis.

To ensure the validity of the research results, four criteria of trustworthiness were used, namely: (1) Credibility, achieved through triangulation of sources, methods, and time, as well as member checking with informants to ensure the researcher's interpretation was consistent with the reality in the field. (2) Transferability, maintained by presenting a detailed contextual description of the social, cultural, and educational conditions in Gorontalo, (3) Dependability, achieved through research audit trails by recording all processes, methodological decisions, and researcher reflections during the research, and (4) Confirmability is ensured by maintaining the researcher's objectivity and minimizing interpretive bias through discussions with experts in Islamic education and local linguistics.[38], [44]

This research was conducted in four main stages: (1) Pre-fieldwork, including literature review, instrument development, and research permits, (2) Field exploration, namely data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation, (3) Analysis and model construction, integrating empirical findings and theoretical frameworks into a conceptual model prototype, and (4) Model validation, through expert judgment by experts in Islamic education management and regional linguistics to assess the relevance, practicality, and implementation potential of the resulting model.[45]

The research process was conducted per academic ethics principles, including informed consent, confidentiality of informants' identities, and respect for local values and religious norms. Researchers ensured that all informants understood the purpose of the research and participated voluntarily in accordance with social research ethics guidelines.[46]

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study produced findings that show that the responsiveness of Islamic education management to the local linguistic context in Gorontalo plays an essential role in strengthening the effectiveness of learning, the internalization of Islamic values, and the preservation of regional languages and cultures. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis at several madrasas and Islamic schools in the city and regency of Gorontalo. The study was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

The research findings are classified into four main themes relevant to the research objectives: (1) forms of Islamic education management responsiveness to local linguistics, (2) strategies for integrating local languages into learning and institutional communication, (3) structural and cultural barriers to its implementation, and (4) the design of a conceptual model of Islamic education management based on local linguistics.

1. Responsiveness of Islamic Education Management to Local Linguistics

The interview results show that most madrasah principals and teachers are highly aware of the importance of the Gorontalo language in Islamic education, but not all of them have written or systematic policies for its implementation.

Table 1. Level of Responsiveness of Islamic Education Management to Local Linguistics

Responsiveness Aspects	Height (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)	Description
Awareness of the importance of local languages	92	8	0	The majority of leaders recognize the strategic value of local languages
Implementation of institutional policy	46	38	16	Still limited and not officially documented

Community and parent support	71	21	8	Visible in locally based religious activities
Training for teachers on local languages	27	35	38	Not yet a priority for the regional Ministry of Religious Affairs policies

The data shows a gap between awareness and implementation, which supports the need for a new structured managerial model.

2. Integration of Local Languages in Learning

Islamic Education teachers tend to use the Gorontalo language to explain moral and ethical concepts so that they are easier for students to understand. This demonstrates the role of local languages as a pedagogical medium in meaningful Islamic education.

Table 2. Patterns of Local Language Integration in Islamic Education Learning

Components of Learning	Forms of Gorontalo Language Integration	Frequency (n=25 teachers)	Percentage (%)
Teaching moral values	Use of the Gorontalo language in class/school	19	76
Classroom discussion	Code-switching (Gorontalo–Indonesian)	22	88
Oral assessment	Use of traditional religious expressions	12	48
Project assignments	Writing Islamic stories in the local language	14	56

The integration of local languages is particularly effective in instilling moral values. Studies show that students find it easier to understand Islamic concepts when conveyed through their own cultural expressions.

3. Organizational Communication and School Culture

Local languages also influence internal communication within madrasahs, particularly in religious activities and informal interactions between teachers and students.

Table 3. Use of Gorontalo Language in Organizational Communication

Types of Communication	Use of Gorontalo Language (%)	Primary Context
Teachers' meeting	43	Opening and closing prayers
Teacher–student communication	67	Counseling, motivation, and advice
School religious activities	82	Lectures, religious advice, and recitations
Employee communication	55	Informal interactions and greetings

Observational data shows that the Gorontalo language symbolizes social closeness and respect, making it an essential part of the Islamic-based school culture.

4. Structural and Cultural Barriers

Although culturally, the use of local languages is supported, structural barriers remain in policy, human resources, and perceptions of professionalism.

Table 4. Barriers to the Implementation of Local Languages in Islamic Education Management

Types of Barriers	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage (%)	Description
Absence of formal policies	18	72	No decree or local language guidelines
Lack of teacher training	20	80	Teachers have not received integrative training
The perception that informal local languages	15	60	Some teachers consider local languages to be non-academic
The lack of bilingual teaching materials	17	68	No bilingual Islamic–Gorontalo textbooks available

These findings emphasize the need for synergy between educational institutions and local governments in designing supporting policies and programs.

5. Community Support and the Role of Local Wisdom

Indigenous communities and religious leaders in Gorontalo play a strategic role in reviving the Gorontalo language as a means of preaching and teaching values.

Table 5. Forms of Community Support for Local Language-Based Islamic Education

Social Actor	Forms of Support	Impact on Schools
Religious figure	The use of local languages in sermons	Strengthening students' religious awareness
Local government	Gorontalo-Islam speech contest	Cultivating linguistic pride
Indigenous communities	Islamic Hulontalo Training	Encouraging school–community collaboration
Madrasah alumni	Bilingual book donation	Enriching locally-based learning resources

This social support strengthens the cultural legitimacy for using local languages in Islamic schools.

6. Effect on Student Engagement and Values

Triangulation analysis of the data shows that students involved in local language-based learning processes demonstrate increased engagement, self-confidence, and understanding of Islamic values.

Table 6. Impact of Local Language Integration on Student Engagement and Grades

Engagement Indicators	Before Implementation (%)	After Implementation (%)	Change (+/–)
Discussion participation	48	83	+35
Understanding moral values	52	87	+35
Ability to reflect religiously	45	82	+37
Use of polite language in interactions	63	91	+28

This positive change shows that integrating local languages contributes to an increase in students' moral engagement in the context of Islamic education.

7. Thematic Synthesis Based on Supporting Theories

The findings are linked to the Funds of Knowledge theory, sociolinguistic approach, and contextual learning model to construct a new theoretical framework.

Table 7. Correlation between Field Findings and Theoretical Framework

Theme Findings	Supporting Theories	Forms of Interconnection
The use of local languages as a medium for Islamic values	Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992)	Local languages as a source of community knowledge
Culture-based teacher–student interaction	Sociocultural–Sociolinguistics (Lee, 2020)	Language mediates social and religious meaning
Integration of local learning	CTL Model (Johnson, 2017)	Learning experiences are linked to the local context
Reform of Islamic education management	Fazlur Rahman's Contextualism (Nur Hidayah, 2024)	Integration of revelatory values with cultural reality
The use of local languages as a medium for Islamic values	Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992)	Local languages as a source of community knowledge
Culture-based teacher–student interactions	Sociocultural–Sociolinguistics (Lee, 2020)	Language mediates social and religious meaning

8. Constructive Model of Islamic Education Management Based on Local Linguistics

From the data analysis and synthesis results, a conceptual model of Islamic education management responsive to local linguistics was developed. This model includes four main components.

Table 8. Conceptual Model of Linguistically Responsive Islamic Education Management

Model Components	Focus on Implementation	Examples of Activities	Impact
Kebijakan kelembagaan	Integration of local languages into the vision and mission statements of madrasahs	Formulation of internal guidelines	Formal legitimization of local language use
Learning management	Local language in instructional strategy	Bilingual Islamic–Gorontalo Module	Increased understanding of Islamic values
Strengthening Human Resources	Culturally-based teacher training	Workshop CTL & FoK	Contextual pedagogical competence
Social collaboration	Partnerships with traditional/religious leaders	“Madrasah Adat Islami” Program	Revival of cultural and religious values

This model emphasizes that contextual Islamic education requires a balance between modern management structures and local values that are alive in society.

Table 9. Students' Level of Knowledge of Gorontalo Oral Literature Types

No.	Types of Oral Literature	Categories	Knowledge Indicators	Percentage (%)	Description of Knowledge Levels
1	Traditional Ceremony Poems (Tuja'i, Pale Bohu, Tinilo, Mala-mala)	Rituals & Religion	Understanding the functions and context of presentations in traditional ceremonies	68	Some students recognize the basic shapes and meanings, but do not yet understand their symbolic value.
2	Philosophical Poetry/Views on Life (Taleningo, Leningo, Lumadu, Bungga, Bunito)	Philosophical & Ethical	Able to explain moral meanings, life lessons, and connections to Islamic values	54	Low understanding is still limited to recognizing terms without deep meaning.
3	Poetry (Lohidu, Pantungi)	Art Aesthetics & Entertainment	Understanding the structure, rhythm, and context of performances in cultural arts activities	72	Relatively High — students are pretty familiar with performative forms and aesthetic expressions.
4	Oral History Documentation Stories and Folktales (Tanggomo, Hungguli, Pilu)	Historical & Didactic	Understanding the plot, characters, and moral values in Gorontalo historical stories or fairy tales	81	High — students find it easier to recognize folk tales because they are often told orally in family or school settings.

The data in Table 9 above shows that students' knowledge of Gorontalo oral literature is still partial and varies between types. The highest level of expertise is found in the category of historical oral documentation stories and fairy tales (81%), followed by art poetry (72%), traditional ceremony poetry (68%), and philosophy/worldview poetry (54%). This indicates that narrative and communicative forms of literature are more accessible to students, while literature containing philosophical and symbolic messages is still poorly understood.

Overall, the study results show that the responsiveness of Islamic education management to the local linguistic context in Gorontalo not only strengthens the effectiveness of religious learning but also serves to preserve the local language and culture. The Gorontalo language is a cultural vehicle for transmitting Islamic values in a more familiar, participatory, and contextual manner. Therefore, this study supports the importance of transforming the paradigm of Islamic education management from a normative one to a community-based and local linguistic model, which aligns with the principles of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* and cultural sustainability of the nation.

The findings of this study indicate that the responsiveness of Islamic education management to the local linguistic context is a strategic factor that can strengthen the internalization of Islamic

values and increase student engagement in madrasahs and Islamic-based schools in Gorontalo. This can be seen from the findings in Tables 1 to 8, which show that collective awareness, integrative practices, and local language-based communication patterns are beginning to grow in Islamic educational environments. However, this awareness has not yet been fully institutionalized in formal policies or sustainable management systems. This condition confirms the gap between Islamic education management's conceptual and operational aspects in multilingual regions.

The results in Table 1 and Table 2 show that although awareness of the importance of the Gorontalo language is high (92%), institutional policy implementation is still low (46%). These findings confirm the Funds of Knowledge theory (Moll et al., 1992) and the updated concept of Funds of Knowledge and Identity (FoK/I) by Esteban-Guitart (2024) and Subero (2024), which emphasize that local cultural knowledge and practices will only have a significant impact if they are institutionalized in formal education practices. In the context of Gorontalo, the use of local proverbs (*tuturangga*) and *hulontalo* in learning has strengthened the meaning of Islamic values, but has not been accommodated in formal managerial policies such as madrasah decrees or annual work plans. These findings expand on the research of Gay (2018) and Ladson-Billings (2021) on culturally responsive teaching, showing that linguistic responsiveness must also be followed by structural and institutional responsiveness.

The findings in Tables 3 and 4 highlight that local languages function as a medium of social and spiritual communication in school organizations, but face formal barriers such as the absence of regulations and teacher training. This aligns with Lee (2020), who asserts that language practices in schools are not merely a means of communication, but a representation of ideology and social identity. In this study, the use of the Gorontalo language in teacher-student communication and religious activities shows that language acts as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) that strengthens a sense of belonging and emotional closeness among school members. However, as shown in Table 4, the absence of formal policies indicates structural dissonance between cultural values and the education system, which is still nationally uniform. This condition emphasizes the need for a more decentralized and locally-based approach to education policy.

The findings in Tables 5 and 6 show that social and cultural support from the Gorontalo community directly correlates with increased student participation. The collaboration between madrasahs, traditional leaders, and local governments shows that Islamic education cannot be separated from the socio-cultural structure of society. These results reinforce Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (in Lee, 2020) that learning is a social process formed through cultural mediation. In this context, the local language becomes an effective mediation tool for instilling religious values, as it has emotional and symbolic closeness to the students' experiences. The increase in student participation (from 48% to 83%) in Table 6 shows that the local linguistic approach can build higher learning engagement than uniform national instructional methods. These findings support the studies by Fitriani (2022) and Johnson (2017) on Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), which state that linking teaching materials to the social context of learners can increase the meaning and effectiveness of learning.

From a management perspective, the results of this study are also in line with Fazlur Rahman's thinking, as developed by Nur Hidayah (2024), which emphasizes the importance of double movement, namely the contextual interpretation of revelatory texts in relation to social reality. In the context of Gorontalo, this reality includes cultural values and local languages that have long been a means of internalizing Islamic morals. The findings in Tables 7 and 8 show that local language-based Islamic education management improves learning quality and strengthens cultural identity and social cohesion. Thus, integrating local languages does not conflict with Islamic principles but expands the scope of Islamic values to be more inclusive of the local community

context. This also supports Yugo's (2025) findings that community-based Islamic leadership can be an effective strategy in Islamic education reform in multicultural regions.

The findings in Table 9 show that students' knowledge of Gorontalo oral literature forms is still varied and reflects a pattern of acculturation between local cultural traditions and the formal education system. Of the four categories studied, the highest level of knowledge was found in oral historical documentation and fairy tales, with a percentage of 81%, followed by artistic poetry (72%), traditional ceremonial poetry (68%), and philosophical or worldview poetry (54%). This pattern shows that narrative and communicative forms of literature are easier for students to remember and understand than symbolic and philosophical forms.

The dominance of knowledge levels in historical stories and fairy tales shows that narrative forms have a broader reach in shaping moral and spiritual values. This aligns with the Funds of Knowledge theory (Moll et al., 1992), which asserts that students more easily internalize knowledge derived from social interactions and everyday cultural practices. In the context of Gorontalo, historical stories and traditional fairy tales are often conveyed orally within families, religious gatherings, and religious activities, thus becoming part of students' cultural repertoire. Therefore, this form of oral literature is a natural medium for transmitting Islamic values and forming socio-religious character.

Meanwhile, poetry (72%) shows that students are relatively familiar with performative literary forms such as lohidu and pantungi, which are often performed in school activities and traditional events. This finding reinforces the sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky in Lee, 2020) that learning depends highly on social context and collective cultural activities. In the context of Islamic education, aesthetic expression in artistic poetry can be an effective means of internalizing religious values and strengthening pride in regional cultural identity.

Conversely, the level of knowledge of philosophical poetry or worldviews (54%) was in the low category. This shows that students' understanding of literary forms that contain moral messages and philosophical reflections is still limited. Poetry's metaphorical and symbolic language requires a higher level of interpretive ability, thus necessitating a contextual pedagogical approach. Within the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018) and Contextual Teaching and Learning (Johnson, 2017), teachers play an essential role in helping students relate philosophical messages in local literature to Islamic values so that the process of internalizing meaning can be relevant and profound.

The category of traditional ceremonial poetry (68%) ranked in the middle. Although some students were familiar with poetic forms such as tuja'i, tinilo, and mala-mala, their understanding of the ritual function and symbolic value was still limited. This condition indicates a gap between declarative knowledge (recognizing forms) and conceptual knowledge (understanding meanings). From the perspective of Islamic education management, this shows that integrating traditional values into the learning system needs to be designed systematically so that it is not merely ceremonial, but also supports the formation of students' spirituality.

Overall, the data in Table 9 confirms that students' knowledge of Gorontalo oral literature is partial and greatly influenced by the social context in which the knowledge was acquired. This phenomenon highlights the critical role of teachers, madrasah principals, and Islamic educational institutions in revitalizing local cultural knowledge through linguistic and culture-based learning strategies. The integration of oral literature into Islamic education not only strengthens the preservation of regional languages but also serves as an effective medium for instilling Islamic moral, ethical, and spiritual values contextually and sustainably.

Theoretically, the results of this study enrich the synthesis between the Funds of Knowledge theory, sociolinguistics, CTL, and Islamic education management. These four theories form a new conceptual matrix that can be formulated as follows: (1) local languages function as pedagogical capital in Islamic education; (2) language practices are a reflection of educational values and ideology; (3) linguistically contextualized learning reinforces the internalization of spiritual values; and (4) managerial policies that are responsive to local culture enhance the effectiveness of Islamic educational institutions. This synthesis makes a significant academic contribution to the development of contextual Islamic educational management theory, as it broadens the focus from normative values to socio-linguistic and cultural integration.

Empirically, this study reinforces the findings of Esteban-Guitart (2024) and Subero (2024), which show that recognition of funds of identity based on local culture can build self-confidence and meaningful learning among linguistic minority students. In the context of Gorontalo, integrating the Gorontalo language into Islamic education increases student participation and serves as a strategy for preserving regional languages that are now classified as endangered (UNESCO, 2023). This provides an argument that Islamic education is not only a means of transferring religious knowledge but also an instrument for preserving the cultural identity of the nation.

From a policy perspective, the results of this study have several important implications. First, regional policies are needed to support local languages as the medium of instruction in religious education, especially at the elementary and secondary levels. Second, teacher training based on cultural-linguistic pedagogy must be included in professional development programs by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and local governments. Third, developing a bilingual (Indonesian–Gorontalo) curriculum and teaching materials is a strategic step to maintain continuity between Islamic values and regional identity. Fourth, collaboration between schools, government, and indigenous communities must be institutionalized through partnership programs, such as Madrasah Adat Islami or Gorontalo Culture-Based Schools.

Conceptually, this study's Islamic education management model can be used as a reference for other regions in Indonesia with a multilingual context, such as Minangkabau, Bugis, and Banjar. This model emphasizes that Islamic education oriented towards local values not only strengthens linguistic and cultural diversity but also shapes a generation of Muslims who are contextual, adaptive, and rooted in the wisdom of their communities. Thus, the results of this study contribute to the development of a new paradigm in Islamic education management studies, namely linguistically responsive Islamic education management, which combines the universality of Islamic values and the particularity of cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Research indicates that, although the majority of madrasah principals and teachers in Gorontalo possess a high level of awareness (92%) regarding the significance of the Gorontalo language in Islamic education (refer to Table 1), the implementation of institutional policies remains limited (46%), and training for teachers related to local languages is minimal (27%). The Gorontalo language is extensively utilized in conveying moral values (76%), facilitating classroom discussions through code-switching (88%) (see Table 2), and during school religious activities (82%) (see Table 3), functioning as a means of contextualizing Islamic teachings and as a symbol of cultural etiquette. Nonetheless, in formal administrative contexts, such as teachers' council meetings (43%) and official documentation, its use continues to be scarce, suggesting that the role of local languages has yet to be systematically institutionalized within the framework of educational management.

Local linguistic integration encounters both structural and cultural obstacles: 80% of educators have not participated in any training programs, 72% of educational institutions lack formal policies, 68% are deficient in bilingual instructional materials, and 60% are subject to the stigma that regional languages are perceived as “less academic” (see Table 4). Conversely, community backing remains robust: religious leaders, local governments, and indigenous communities actively support integration by organizing Gorontalo-language Islamic speech competitions, providing religious-themed Hulontalo training, and donating bilingual literature (see Table 5). These initiatives reinforce the social and cultural legitimacy of locally-oriented Islamic education.

The impact on students proved to be significant: participation in discussions increased from 48% to 83%, understanding of moral values from 52% to 87%, religious reflection from 45% to 82%, and use of polite language from 63% to 91% (see Table 6). These findings are consistent with the Funds of Knowledge and Contextual Teaching and Learning theories. However, students' knowledge of Gorontalo oral literature remains uneven: highest in oral documentation stories at 81%, followed by art poetry at 72%, traditional ceremony poetry at 68%, and lowest in philosophical or worldview poetry at 54% (see Table 9). This indicates the necessity for a more comprehensive pedagogical approach towards symbolic literature.

Based on the synthesis of findings and theoretical framework, a Conceptual Model of Linguistically Responsive Islamic Education Management was formulated, consisting of four pillars: (1) institutional policies that integrate local languages into official visions and documents, (2) contextual learning management based on Gorontalo oral literature, (3) strengthening teacher capacity through cultural-linguistic pedagogy training, and (4) strategic collaboration between madrasas, traditional leaders, and local governments. This model addresses the gap between institutional awareness and action and serves as a strategy for preserving regional languages while strengthening Islamic education that is *rahmatan lil-‘alamin* (a blessing for all) and rooted in local wisdom.

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