



Sustainable Local Wisdom-Based Learning at Pesantren: An Integrative Model Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates an integrative innovation model bridging local wisdom curricula with Sustainable Development principles in Islamic boarding school (pesantren) education in Indonesia. Grounded in a qualitative ethnographic approach, this research was conducted across five pesantren: Walisongo (North Lampung), Al-Kayyis (Banten), Al-Mahalli (Yogyakarta), Al-Hasan (Ponorogo), and Darul Hikam Bendo (Kediri). The forms of local wisdom examined -- including gotong royong, piil pesenggiri, agrarian culture, social ethics, and digital creativity, are analysed in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Data analysis employed Folk Development Analysis (FDA), identifying elements of local wisdom, their internalization processes, and interpretative outcomes. The findings demonstrate that these five pesantren have successfully constructed a Sustainable Local Wisdom-Based Learning (SLWBL) framework resting on three pillars: (1) strengthening local values within the formal curriculum, (2) a contextually grounded social approach responsive to students' lived realities, and (3) methodological innovations aligned with digital-era demands. The implications point toward the formation of an educationally resilient, culturally adaptive, and sustainability-oriented student character, a contribution to both national character development and the global sustainable development agenda.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are among the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, playing a crucial role in shaping the character, intelligence, and cultural identity of their students (Ramadani & Fitriisa, 2023; Taufikin, 2021; Najib & Adib, 2025). In the digital era, local wisdom, once regarded as a living symbol of ethical, linguistic, and ecological values of local communities, is increasingly being eroded by global lifestyles and cultural homogenization (Al et al., 2025). This process of erosion runs counter to the spirit of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), which calls for education that promotes cultural diversity, local knowledge systems, and values for sustainable development. *Pesantren*, as repositories of local cultural knowledge, occupy a uniquely strategic position in the global sustainability discourse.

This study aims to investigate how Islamic boarding schools incorporate local wisdom into their educational curriculum in ways that simultaneously advance sustainable development principles. It refutes the assumption that morality originates solely from religion, emphasizing that ethical behavior is a product of the interaction between education, policy, social context, and ecological consciousness, a view consistent with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) frameworks.

From the perspective of Islamic boarding school education, local wisdom refers to knowledge, cultural values, and social practices that unite communities in good ethics and morals (Tsoraya et al., 2022; Jaenullah et al., 2022). Despite this potential, many *pesantren* have not yet designed innovative curricula that explicitly integrate these local values into their pedagogical framework in a manner that responds to contemporary sustainability challenges. Several challenges remain, limited human resource capacity, inadequate methodological frameworks for curriculum development, and a lack of technology-based tools that reflect and support local cultural identities in the context of sustainable futures.

The core issue in this study is therefore not merely the general degradation of local culture, but the limited innovation and weak integration of local wisdom curricula into Islamic boarding school education vis-a-vis the global sustainability agenda. Some *pesantren* have begun addressing this challenge. Walisongo Islamic Boarding School in North Lampung has implemented a learning model based on the philosophy of *piil pesenggiri*, integrating moral education with local agricultural practices (SDG 4, SDG 11). Al-Kayyis Islamic Boarding School in Banten applies principles of cooperation in its entrepreneurship curriculum (SDG 8, SDG 17). Al-Mahalli *Pesantren* in Yogyakarta combines classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) with ecological learning through TOGA cultivation (SDG 4, SDG 13, SDG 15). Al-Hasan *Pesantren* in Ponorogo has developed AHA Studio as a creative multimedia platform (SDG 4, SDG 9). Darul Hikam *Pesantren* in Bendo integrates Javanese cultural ethics into its moral education curriculum (SDG 4, SDG 16).

Several previous research studies have addressed local values-based education; however, most are descriptive and have not explored learning innovation through the lens of sustainability frameworks. Munawaroh et al.'s research on *tahlilan* and *yasinan* practices has not discussed integration into formal learning systems (Munawaroh et al., 2024). Abrori and Hadi's research on *madrassa* curriculum remains limited to formal aspects (Abrori & Hadi, 2020). Birhan focuses on character building in public schools rather than *pesantren* (Birhan et al., 2021). Hidayah addresses tradition-religion dynamics without examining transformational learning aspects (Hidayah, 2023). No prior study has examined local wisdom across multiple *pesantren* sites through the lens of SDGs, producing the holistic integrative model that the current era demands.

The urgency of this research is threefold, first, globalization erodes the cultural identity of *santri*; second, systematic models for sustainable, locally grounded learning remain poorly documented; third, contextual approaches are urgently required to contribute to Indonesia's national SDG commitments. This research provides three innovations, (1) a multi-site comparative approach capturing geographical and cultural diversity; (2) the Folk Development Analysis (FDA) framework bridging local culture, spirituality, and learning innovation; and (3) integration of life skills, local economy, digital media, and ecological consciousness as sustainability dimensions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to examine cultural elements in five Islamic boarding schools across Indonesia. The qualitative approach enables deep understanding of the meaning, values, and cultural practices within the pesantren environment, particularly as these relate to sustainability practices.

The case study method is employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of local wisdom-based sustainable learning across diverse geographical and socio-cultural contexts, following the guidelines of Creswell (Creswell, 2018, p. 28) and Rukajat (Rukajat, 2018, p. 57) that case studies are appropriate when researchers wish to explore social processes and cultural values in complex natural contexts.

The sampling technique was purposive sampling, accounting for geographical diversity and cultural characteristics of pesantren. The five pesantren represent ecological variations of Islamic education while each demonstrating distinct sustainability-relevant practices. In Lampung, the *piil pesenggiri* philosophy emphasizes honor, dignity, and agricultural traditions. In Banten, local values of cooperation and village-based microeconomics are implemented through KUB chicken farming (SDG 8). In Yogyakarta, *ecopedagogy* is developed through TOGA-based education combining classical texts with ecological conservation (SDG 15). In Ponorogo, Reog artistic heritage is integrated with digital literacy through Studio AHA (SDG 9). In Bendo, Kediri, Javanese social ethics are internalized through character education (SDG 16).

Data collection employed three primary methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with 15 informants (comprising three participants per pesantren: one *kyai* or caregiver, one *ustadz* or religious teacher, and one *santri* or student, distributed equally across the five research sites to ensure representativeness of perspectives across institutional levels), using semi-structured, open-ended questions facilitating in-depth exploration of learning practices, cultural values, and sustainability orientations (Huberman & Saldaña, 2014, p. 30). Participant observation enabled researchers to understand daily activities within the pesantren environment (Spradley, 1979, p. 65). Documentation was conducted by examining archives, curriculum guidebooks, activity records, photographs, and student work, following Miles and Huberman's data triangulation guidelines (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 21).

Data analysis was carried out inductively using the Folk Development Analysis (FDA) approach developed by Y. Sumandyo Hadi (Hadi, 2002, p. 58). This FDA approach emphasizes analysis of integration between local culture, social systems, and educational processes, complemented in this study by cross-referencing findings with the United Nations SDG framework. The analysis steps include, (1) identification of local wisdom elements in the community around the pesantren; (2) analysis of the process of internalizing these values into the learning system, curriculum, and *santri* lives; (3) interpretation of cultural adaptation results in shaping pesantren character and institutional identity; and (4) alignment of identified practices with relevant SDG targets as analytical lens.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting the detailed findings, it is important to highlight that each pesantren develops learning innovations uniquely shaped by its local wisdom, cultural environment, and socio-economic conditions. These innovations emerge as adaptive responses to local realities while simultaneously, and often implicitly, advancing sustainable development principles.

Table 1. Local Wisdom-Based Learning Innovation and SDG Alignment

No	Pesantren	Local Wisdom Raised	Form of Learning Innovation	Relevant SDGs	Characteristics of Innovation
1	Walisongo Lampung	Piil Pesenggiri, Lampung	Integration of Lampung	SDG 4 (Quality Education);	Combining culture and agriculture into

	Utara	traditional culture, agricultural systems	cultural values in moral and agricultural life skills learning	SDG 11 (Sustainable Communities)	moral character curriculum
2	Al-Kayyis Banten	Cooperation values, village deliberation, local economy	Entrepreneurship learning based on KUB cooperative chicken farming	SDG 4; SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth); SDG 17 (Partnerships)	Integration of cultural ethics into cooperative student enterprise
3	Al-Mahalli Bantul Yogyakarta	Nature conservation, TOGA, Javanese etiquette (unggah-ungguh)	Ecopedagogy, combining yellow books with ecological practice and environmental management	SDG 4; SDG 15 (Life on Land); SDG 13 (Climate Action)	Religious texts directly linked to ecological stewardship practices
4	Al-Hasan Ponorogo	Reog local culture, artistic expression, digital literacy	Creative multimedia (AHA Studio) for cultural and digital da'wah documentation	SDG 4; SDG 9 (Industry & Innovation); SDG 11	Creative media innovation rooted in local and digital culture
5	Darul Hikam Bendo	Unggah-ungguh, andhap asor, Javanese social harmony	Character education through socio-cultural ethics in moral lessons	SDG 4; SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions)	Internalization of cultural values in moral learning and daily dormitory life

The table demonstrates that each pesantren develops learning innovations rooted in its local socio-cultural context, functioning simultaneously as an agent of cultural preservation and a contributor to sustainable development objectives. Walisongo Lampung Utara integrates piil pesenggiri and agricultural traditions (SDG 4, SDG 11), while Al-Kayyis Banten incorporates cooperation into entrepreneurship learning (SDG 8, SDG 17). Al-Mahalli connects classical Islamic texts with ecological stewardship (SDG 15, SDG 13), whereas Al-Hasan blends local Reog arts with digital literacy (SDG 9, SDG 4). Meanwhile, Darul Hikam Bendo embeds Javanese values of politeness and humility into everyday learning (SDG 16).

The Concept of Local Wisdom from the Perspective of Sustainable Islamic Boarding School Education

Based on interviews with the caretaker of Walisongo Islamic Boarding School in North Lampung, local wisdom, especially the value of piil pesenggiri, functions not only as a symbol of tradition but as a moral foundation in forming student character in ways that resonate with ESD principles.

For us, local wisdom such as piil pesenggiri is an integral part of our students' moral education. We integrate these values into daily activities, how to treat guests, conduct discussions, and respect teachers. If students understand the noble cultural values of Lampung, they will develop into individuals who uphold dignity, are courageous in their actions, and remain deeply rooted in their cultural heritage. Holistically, the moral foundation for pesantren is not only memorising holy books, but also students' ability to understand the values of the surrounding community. (K.H. Muhammad Nurullah Qomarudin, personal communication, 2025)

This orientation directly mirrors SDG Target 4.7, which calls for education that promotes global citizenship, cultural diversity, and sustainable lifestyles. The second informant, a mentor at Al-Kayyis, emphasized that local wisdom is not merely cultural heritage but a foundation for character, work ethic, and solidarity, dimensions central to SDG 8.

Here, we view local wisdom as a source of value and enthusiasm for entrepreneurial practices. We instill the values of cooperation, responsibility, and deliberation in KUB chicken farming activities. Education at the pesantren is not only through texts, but also through fieldwork rich in cultural significance. (K. Deden Hidayat, personal communication, 2025)

The third informant at Al-Mahalli articulated how local cultural practices embody ecological sustainability in ways that complement Qur'anic education, exemplifying SDG 15 and SDG 13.

At this pesantren, we view local culture not merely as tradition, but as an integral part of a spiritual and ecological education process. We integrate concepts of etiquette and environmental stewardship into the curriculum, studying Tafsir Jalalain, then providing training in managing traditional medicine (TOGA) and organic gardens. (Firdaus, personal communication, 2025)

The fourth informant, the manager of AHA Studio at Al-Hasan, demonstrated how digital innovation serves as a vehicle for cultural sustainability, operationalizing SDG 9.

We understand that local wisdom is a powerful tool for visual da'wah. At AHA Studio, we teach students to elevate local culture and transform it into a digital da'wah platform by creating documentaries and educational content. Students learn to convey Islamic values using local languages, digital media, and cultural narratives. (Muhammad Ihsan Arwani, personal communication, 2025)

The fifth informant at Darul Hikam Bendo articulated how Javanese social ethics constitute a sustainable framework for character formation consistent with SDG 16.

We interpret local wisdom as part of character education. We instill the concepts of andhap asor, tepa slira, and rukun, Javanese cultural identities, through moral education and dormitory life. When students line up for food, arrange their sandals, or greet each other, these are not routines, but part of developing manners aligned with Islamic values and Javanese culture. Becoming a good person is not only through knowledge, but also through respect and humility. (Badri, personal communication, 2025)

The Integrative Model, Sustainable Local Wisdom-Based Learning (SLWBL) in Pesantren

Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia is a legacy rooted in the cultural and social structure of society (Pasi et al., 2020; Mujahid, 2021; Yahuda et al., 2024). Pesantren are not only centers for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also play an important role in preserving local values and forming national character (Musaddad, 2023; Anta et al., 2025). In this context, local wisdom becomes the foundational element for a Sustainable Local Wisdom-Based Learning (SLWBL) model, a framework bridging cultural heritage with the imperatives of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. This integrative model is expected to serve as a strategic foundation for adaptive, transformative, and culturally rooted pesantren education (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022).

The SLWBL model rests on three main pillars, each with direct SDG resonance (Sutrisno, 2011, p. 78). The first pillar is the strengthening of local values in education, integrating local culture and traditions as an integral part of the educational process (SDG 4.7). Walisongo Islamic Boarding School implements piil pesenggiri values, courage, self-respect, and honor, through cultural activities and dialogue, producing students who are morally grounded and culturally proud.

The second pillar is a contextual approach based on the social reality of students (Sutrisno, 2011,

p. 79). Learning is not only normative and theoretical, but contextualised to the needs and challenges of students' environments. At Al-Kayyis Islamic Boarding School in Banten, values of cooperation (gotong royong) are integrated into entrepreneurship programs. Students build businesses collectively, upholding a collaborative work ethic, contributing to SDG 8 and SDG 17.

The third pillar is adaptive methodological innovation (Sutrisno, 2011, p. 80). At Al-Hasan Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo, AHA Studio combines multimedia technology with local cultural values, honing 21st-century digital skills (SDG 9). Al-Mahalli develops ecopedagogy rooted in local agrarian culture, teaching environmental management and organic farming as part of learning that links religious teachings with ecological action (SDG 15, SDG 13). Darul Hikam Bendo develops ethics-based learning encompassing Javanese manners and social harmony (SDG 16).

To develop the SLWBL model systematically and sustainably, six strategic recommendations are offered. First, the capacity of teachers and administrators to document and develop local wisdom must be strengthened through training and collaboration with cultural experts (Nasution et al., 2025; Moh, 2020). Second, local values should be integrated into the formal curriculum and semester learning plans (RPS). Third, pesantren should establish partnerships with cultural institutions, universities, local governments, and the private sector (SDG 17). Fourth, documentation and publication of good practices should be promoted. Fifth, affirmative government policies are needed that specifically support local wisdom-based pesantren education. Sixth, santri must be positioned as active subjects in exploring and developing local values, to strengthen their sense of ownership and responsibility for their cultural heritage and sustainable futures.

Table 2. Integrative SLWBL Model and Recommendations Aligned with SDGs

No	Pesantren	Local Wisdom Values	Learning Model	Key Innovations & SDG Linkage	Development Recommendations
1	Walisono North Lampung	Piil pesenggiri (self-respect, courage, and politeness)	Morals and character through daily habits and social rituals	Internalization of values through cultural practices; SDG 4 target 4.7 (Education for sustainable development)	Strengthen local culture-based character curriculum integrated across all subjects
2	Al-Kayyis Banten	Mutual cooperation and village communal values (gotong royong)	Pesantren-based cooperative entrepreneurship (KUB farming)	Collaborative student business; SDG 8 (decent livelihoods); SDG 17 (local partnerships)	Expand local partnerships and cooperative work-culture training
3	Al-Mahalli Yogyakarta	Local agrarian and ecological culture; TOGA cultivation	Ecopedagogy, linking Qur'anic exegesis with environmental jurisprudence and organic farming	Kauniah verse ecological interpretation; SDG 15 (biodiversity); SDG 13 (climate literacy)	Strengthen environmental interpretation modules grounded in local ecosystem context
4	Al-Hasan Ponorogo	Local multimedia & digital culture; Reog artistic heritage	Project-based learning via creative community (AHA Studio)	AHA Studio, cultural & digital learning media; SDG 9 (innovation infrastructure)	Support digital infrastructure; develop creative production networks with external communities
5	Darul Hikam Bendo	Javanese social ethics, tepa selira, andhap asor, unggah-ungguh	Character education through pesantren activities and	Socio-ethical curriculum; SDG 16 (peaceful and inclusive communities)	Strengthen collaboration between teachers and traditional leaders for locally based

Implications of Sustainable Local Wisdom-Based Learning Innovations

The innovative practices implemented by the five pesantren demonstrate that Islamic education functions not only as a transmitter of religious values but also as an agent for cultural preservation, community empowerment, and sustainable development. The findings carry five distinct implications.

The first implication is the need to systematically integrate local wisdom values into formal pesantren curricula (Abas, 2024; Hermino & Arifin, 2020). This ensures learning is not separated from the social, cultural, and ecological realities of students, producing a generation equipped to contribute to the SDGs (Herdiyanti et al., 2025; Fahrudin & Malik, 2025). Piil pesenggiri at Walisongo has become a behavioral guideline for students, consistent with SDG 4.7.

The second implication concerns the training of religious educators to understand and develop locally contextualised, sustainability-oriented learning methods. Al-Kayyis Banten's success in integrating cooperative values into its entrepreneurship program demonstrates how character education can simultaneously advance SDG 8.

The third implication is that the AHA Studio at Al-Hasan demonstrates how pesantren can be pioneers in developing multimedia capacity (SDG 9), expanding the reach of Islamic preaching and pesantren values to the wider community. Pesantren thus become centers of knowledge and cultural production contributing to national innovation agendas.

The fourth implication concerns the ecopedagogical approach at Al-Mahalli in Yogyakarta, which models how ecological education grounded in local wisdom can cultivate ecological responsibility as an expression of Islamic values (SDG 15, SDG 13), a contribution to religious environmental ethics in the global sustainability movement.

The fifth implication underscores the importance of transforming pesantren into living social and cultural laboratories. Darul Hikam Bendo demonstrates that character education implemented through Javanese social ethics, emphasizing politeness, tolerance, and harmony, produces students who directly experience character formation through daily social interactions (SDG 16, SDG 4).

Table 3. Implications of SLWBL Innovations and SDG Alignment

No	Field	Implications	SDG Alignment
1	Pesantren Education	Contextual curriculum rooted in local wisdom; holistic character-based approach	SDG 4.7 - Promotes education for sustainable development and global citizenship
2	Character of Santri	Strengthening local values; morals, leadership, and ecological responsibility	SDG 4 - Ensures inclusive, equitable, quality education aligned with sustainability values
3	Community Relations	Social and cultural synergy; pesantren as centers of community values and development	SDG 11 & SDG 17 - Builds sustainable communities and multi-stakeholder partnerships
4	National Education	Contextual curriculum models; promotion of religious moderation and pluralism	SDG 16 - Supports peaceful, just, inclusive institutions and interreligious harmony
5	Local Culture	Preservation of traditions; reinforcement of cultural resilience and identity	SDG 11 (cultural heritage) & SDG 15 - Safeguards local ecosystems and knowledge systems

The data in the table illustrates that pesantren play a strategic role in shaping an educational ecosystem that is contextual, sustainable, and value-oriented. Through a holistic curriculum and the strengthening of santri character rooted in local values, these institutions function not only as centers

of religious learning but as producers of social, cultural, and sustainability values. Their contribution to national education is reflected in contextual curriculum models and promotion of religious moderation, while their efforts to preserve local traditions highlight their role in maintaining cultural resilience, a form of community sustainability consistent with the SDG framework.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is concluded that Sustainable Local Wisdom-Based Learning (SLWBL) in Islamic boarding schools is an educational strategy that not only strengthens the cultural identity and character of students but simultaneously advances multiple dimensions of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The five pesantren studied, Walisongo (North Lampung), Al-Kayyis (Banten), Al-Mahalli (Yogyakarta), Al-Hasan (Ponorogo), and Darul Hikam Bendo (Kediri), have developed distinct but convergent models for adapting local values, piil pesenggiri, gotong royong, agrarian culture, digital creativity, and Javanese ethics, in ways that operationalize SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 16, and SDG 17.

The SLWBL integrative model rests on three pillars: strengthening local values in the curriculum, a contextual approach to students' lived realities, and adaptive methodological innovation. The success of this model depends on internal support from pesantren, community involvement, and collaboration with external stakeholders, a multi-actor partnership framework resonant with SDG 17. Local wisdom-based learning therefore merits wider adoption as a national strategy for values-based, culturally grounded, and sustainability-oriented education.

Future researchers are encouraged to adopt quantitative or mixed-method approaches to measure the influence of SLWBL on student character development, creativity, ecological literacy, and economic competitiveness in measurable, SDG-aligned terms.

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