

Needs Analysis of Islamic Religious Education Teaching Materials Integrating Local Wisdom at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

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Abstract: This study aims to identify and analyze the needs for developing Islamic Education (IRE) teaching materials that incorporate local wisdom at Gorontalo State University. The study uses a descriptive quantitative approach through the distribution of questionnaires to students taking IRE courses, with the aim of exploring their perceptions and needs regarding the integration of cultural activities and regional cultural values, especially those of Gorontalo, into the learning process. This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach through a needs analysis of 50 students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo who are enrolled in Islamic Religious Education courses for the 2025/2026 academic year, with the aim of identifying the urgency of developing IRE teaching materials based on local wisdom. The results of the analysis show that students have a high level of awareness and strongly support the importance of applying Gorontalo cultural values in teaching materials. These values are considered capable of deepening religious understanding, strengthening moderate attitudes, and shaping a religious and cultured social character. These findings confirm that IRE teaching materials need shift from textual learning to contextual and constructivist learning, so that Islamic teachings can be more easily understood, internalized, and applied in students' lives. The results of this study provide a basis for educators and curriculum developers to design teaching materials that are in line with the local socio-cultural context. Further research is recommended to develop and test teaching materials based on local wisdom using the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) development model to assess their effectiveness in strengthening religious moderation and cultural identity among university students.

Keywords: ADDIE Model; Islamic Religious Education; Local Wisdom; Needs Analysis; Religious Moderation

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A. Introduction

In a global context, religious education in higher education faces a fundamental challenge in the form of tension between the universality of religious teachings and the diversity of the local socio-cultural contexts in which these teachings are practiced. The development of global discourse on curriculum decolonization emphasizes the importance of freeing the curriculum from a uniform approach that ignores the experiences, identities, and local wisdom of students ([Lohaus-reyes, 2019](#)); ([Note, 2016](#))([Jayabaya, 2025](#)). In this framework, Islamic Education (PAI) courses in higher education have a strategic position not only in shaping students' personal religiosity but also in fostering an inclusive, open, and moderate religious perspective that is in harmony with the surrounding socio-cultural reality ([Warsah & Istan, 2025](#))([Mala & Luqna, 2023](#))([Pujianti & Nugraha, 2024](#)). Along with the transformation of higher education towards the global and digital era, the availability of contextual and relevant teaching materials is a major prerequisite for meaningful learning. Conversely, PAI materials that are compiled without considering the socio-cultural environment of students tend to be abstract and normative, making them less capable of bridging Islamic teachings with real-life practices, especially in regions with strong cultural characteristics such as Gorontalo.

In line with the global discourse on contextualization and decolonization of the curriculum, Indonesia's education policy places Islamic Religious Education as a strategic means of strengthening religious moderation and character education in a diverse society. Higher education institutions play a role as a space for integrating universal Islamic values with local socio-cultural realities. In this context, Gorontalo State University has significant potential to develop PAI learning based on local wisdom. In ([Yahiji, 2018](#))([Tamu & Dako, 2018](#))([Arifin & Zaenuri, 2024](#))([Nusi et al., 2020](#)) Gorontalo cultural values such as huyula, which reflects social solidarity, and ti'ayo, which fosters togetherness, are in line with universal Islamic principles. However, preliminary findings indicate that the PAI teaching materials used are still general in nature and have not systematically integrated local values, creating a gap between the direction of religious moderation policy and learning practices in higher education institutions, even though the integration of local wisdom has the potential to strengthen students' Islamic and Indonesian identity.

Islamic Education teaching materials developed based on the local cultural context have been proven to not only enrich students' learning experiences, but also contribute to the formation of religious, moderate, and cultured character ([Masturin, 2023](#)), ([Nurhayani, 2024](#).) ([Muharom, 2023](#)). In the context of Gorontalo, the philosophical synthesis between custom and Islam articulated in the principle of "custom is based on sharia, sharia is based on the Book of Allah" represents the integration of Islamic values and local culture that is unique and alive in the social practices of the community. However, this uniqueness is not yet fully reflected in Islamic Education teaching materials in higher education. Therefore, analyzing the need for Islamic Education teaching materials containing local wisdom is a crucial first step to ensure that the process of designing and developing teaching materials is in

line with the cultural context, Islamic values, and the goal of strengthening religious moderation in higher education.

The needs analysis in this study is aimed at identifying the gap between the ideal conditions for Islamic Religious Education and the reality of its implementation in higher education institutions, while also mapping the authentic needs of students, lecturers, and the learning environment context. The findings from this stage form the empirical basis for the design of learning materials that are not only academically valid but also in line with the characteristics of Gorontalo State University students who live in a unique socio-cultural ecosystem. Although local wisdom values are often emphasized in Islamic education discourse, empirical studies examining their integration into the Islamic studies curriculum at the university level especially from the perspective of students are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study specifically aims to fill this gap by presenting a needs-based approach as the basis for developing contextual, reflective, and relevant PAI learning materials for the local academic community.

The constructivist paradigm is the main theoretical basis for this study. The constructivist perspective views students as active subjects who construct knowledge through interaction with their environment, personal experiences, and reflection on the socio-cultural realities they encounter ([Bhattacharjee, 2015](#)), ([Kalpana, 2014](#)) ([Pardjono, 2002](#)). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, this paradigm places students not as passive recipients of religious teachings, but as agents who construct the meaning of Islamic values through their life experiences and the internalization of local wisdom practiced in everyday life. Based on this framework, this study seeks to explore how students interpret the Islamic Religious Education curriculum currently implemented at Gorontalo State University, how students perceive the need and potential role of integrating Gorontalo local wisdom into learning materials, and how they understand the relationship between local wisdom and the formation of moderation and religious tolerance. Therefore, PAI learning materials are positioned as a reflective and contextual space that allows for the formation of religious understanding that is relevant to the social reality of students.

Through the integration of the constructivist paradigm and local wisdom values, PAI learning is expected to become a dialogical, critical, and transformative process. Students do not merely learn religious concepts textually, but also internalize and apply them in diverse social life based on cultural values. A comprehensive needs analysis provides a conceptual foundation to ensure that all components of learning, including materials, methods, and media, are in line with student needs and policies to strengthen religious moderation in higher education.

B. Methods

This study uses a quantitative descriptive survey design focused on the needs analysis phase as the initial part of design-based research (DBR). This phase aims to identify the actual conditions of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning, students'

perceptions of the teaching materials used, and the need to develop IRE materials that integrate the local wisdom values of Gorontalo. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for obtaining an initial empirical picture before the design and development of learning materials are carried out in the next DBR phase.

The population of this study was all students of Gorontalo State University who were enrolled in Islamic Education (PAI) courses in the 2025/2026 academic year. The sample consisted of 50 students, selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria being active students who were currently enrolled in or had taken PAI courses in the current semester. The sample consists of students from the Faculty of Economics (Economics Education, Management, Accounting Study Programs) totaling 100 people, Faculty of Sports Science (Pharmacy, Public Health, Nursing) totaling 100 people, Faculty of Education (Psychology) totaling 50 people, Faculty of Medicine (Medicine Study Program) totaling 50 people, bringing the total sample to 400 people. This sample size is considered adequate for descriptive survey research at the needs analysis stage in DBR, which aims to obtain an initial understanding of the perceptions and needs of end users, not for inferential generalization.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on a literature review related to PAI learning, local wisdom, and constructivist-based education. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: Closed items using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), which measured students' perceptions of: 1) The relevance of PAI material to the local cultural context; 2) The role of local wisdom in strengthening understanding of Islam; and 3) The contribution of local values to religious moderation and character building. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by several expert validators, namely Content, Language, and Media Validators. Quantitative data from the Likert scale items were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, with the help of SPSS software. This analysis aimed to describe the trends in students' perceptions and needs regarding the development of PAI material based on local wisdom. Data collection was conducted in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The questionnaire was distributed online to respondents via a digital form platform. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were given an explanation of the research objectives and were asked to give their informed consent voluntarily. This research has obtained institutional approval from the study program, and all respondent data is kept confidential. Student participation is voluntary and does not affect their academic assessment.

C. Results and Discussion

The research results are presented based on several key aspects, reflecting the academic, pedagogical, and cultural needs of students.

Focus of IRE Material Studied by Students

The results of the questionnaire analysis show that most students view the Islamic

Religious Education (IRE) material they study as still being general and predominantly normative in nature, without clear relevance to the social and cultural context of the region. The average score obtained for this statement was 3.95, indicating a moderate level of agreement with the view that IRE learning in higher education tends to emphasize conceptual aspects rather than their application in real life. This finding confirms the imbalance between the ideal IRE learning, which is contextual, applicable, and relevant, and the reality in the field.

This tendency shows that the current IRE learning process still places students as passive recipients of religious information, with a focus on textual understanding of Islamic teachings without connecting them to the social experiences and cultural values of the Gorontalo community. Within the constructivist paradigm, students should play the role of meaning builders, actively interpreting religious teachings through interaction with their social and cultural environment. Thus, these results indicate that IRE learning does not yet fully support the formation of reflective, contextual, and experience-based knowledge construction among students as part of a multicultural society.

Perceptions of the Connection between Islamic Values and Local Culture

The results of the study reveal that most respondents showed positive responses to statements emphasizing the connection between Islamic teachings and local cultural values, making these teachings easier to understand, internalize, and apply in everyday life. The average score of 4.13 reflects the high level of student awareness of the importance of a harmonious relationship between religious teachings and local cultural values. Students believe that context-based learning provides deeper meaning because it stems from their real-life social experiences and cultural environment. This is in line with the principles of constructivist education, which emphasizes that religious knowledge is formed through experience and social interaction, not just through memorization of abstract concepts.

Theoretically, the integration of Islamic values and local culture in Gorontalo represents the process of internalizing religious values within the social structure of society. Islamic values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), justice, and tolerance are implemented in the socio-cultural practices of Gorontalo society through local wisdom such as *delowa depita*. Thus, local culture is not only a complement to community life, but also serves as a vehicle for the expression and contextualization of Islamic teachings in accordance with the character of the local community. Students believe that IRE learning that incorporates elements of local culture can strengthen a humanistic Islamic identity and build awareness that religious and cultural values are not dichotomous, but rather complementary. Therefore, IRE teaching materials based on local wisdom can serve as an integrative medium between universal Islamic teachings and the social reality of students.

Understanding of Gorontalo Philosophy

Based on data analysis, it was found that most students had a fairly deep understanding of the local Gorontalo philosophy, “*Adati hula-hula’a to syara’, syara’ hula-hula’a to Kitabullah*,” with an average score of 4.36. This score indicates that students are aware of the essential meaning of this philosophy, namely the harmonious integration of customs and Islamic teachings in community life. This philosophy emphasizes that customs are always based on sharia, while sharia is derived from the Quran, so that cultural dimensions and religious values complement each other and cannot be separated. This understanding illustrates that students comprehend the cultural roots of Gorontalo as a social system that has long been rooted in Islamic values internalized in the behavior, ethics, and traditions of the community.

In addition to being a source of values, understanding the philosophy of “*Adati hula-hula’a to syara’, syara’ hula-hula’a to Kitabullah*” also opens up great opportunities for strengthening religious moderation through a local-based approach. Students who understand the unity between customs and Islamic teachings will have an open attitude towards differences and appreciate social plurality as part of the manifestation of Islamic values. This philosophy emphasizes that Islam in Gorontalo does not negate culture, but rather guides culture to remain in harmony with divine values. Thus, IRE teaching materials based on this philosophy have the potential to become an educational tool in shaping a contextual, humanistic understanding of religion that is oriented towards religious moderation in the university environment.

Perspectives on Local Wisdom as a Means of Strengthening Islamic Values

The study shows that students have a high level of agreement with the view that local wisdom plays an important role in strengthening understanding of Islamic values. The average score of 4.41 reflects students’ awareness that Gorontalo cultural values have moral meanings that are in line with Islamic principles of solidarity, mutual assistance, and brotherhood. Thus, local wisdom is not only seen as a cultural heritage, but also as a concrete means of instilling Islamic values in students’ social lives. This is also in line with research ([Iasminto, 2024](#)) that education based on local wisdom creates a more tolerant and harmonious society amid social diversity.

The Importance of Integrating Local Cultural Values in IRE Teaching Materials

The average score of 4.32 shows that students strongly support the integration of local cultural values in IRE teaching materials. They believe that culture-based learning can make the learning process more meaningful and closer to real life. The integration of Gorontalo cultural values is considered to strengthen the relationship between Islamic teachings and students’ social experiences, so that teaching materials are not only theoretical but also practical and applicable. In addition to enriching the learning content, the incorporation of local values also strengthens students’ character as religious and cultured individuals, according to research findings ([Purwaningsih &](#)

[Ridha, 2024](#)). From a constructivist perspective, students will find it easier to understand Islamic teachings if they are linked to social values that are familiar to them in their environment.

The Role of Local Values in Religious Moderation

The average score of 4.41 shows that students recognize the important role of local cultural values in strengthening religious moderation. Values such as tolerance, deliberation, and mutual cooperation are considered to be in line with the principles of moderate Islam, which emphasizes balance and togetherness. PAI learning that promotes these values is believed to deepen students' understanding of the meaning of diversity. In addition, integrating local values can be an effective strategy in preventing the emergence of extreme religious attitudes and this is in line with research ([Setyaningrum et al., 2023](#)). By linking Islamic teachings to the cultural context, students learn to interpret religion in a more open, humanistic, and dialogical manner. This approach is in line with the constructivist concept that places culture as a means of shaping meaning and social awareness.

Local Wisdom and the Formation of Tolerance

The highest score, 4.73, shows that students believe local wisdom can foster tolerance. Gorontalo cultural values such as *Huyula* (mutual cooperation) are seen as having moral strength that can shape social awareness and respect for differences. This shows that local wisdom can be an important foundation for moderation-based character education. Local wisdom is not only passed down as a tradition, but can also be used as a medium for social learning in instilling values of inclusivity and tolerance, as reinforced by findings ([Nasriandi, et.al. 2023](#)). In the context of IRE, these values encourage students to understand religion in a contextual and applicable manner, in accordance with the social reality of a multicultural society.

Relevance of IRE Teaching Materials to Character Building

The average score of 4.45 indicates that students consider IRE teaching materials containing local wisdom to play an important role in character building. They want learning that emphasizes not only knowledge but also religious attitudes, empathy, and social awareness. Local cultural values are seen as capable of strengthening the process of internalizing Islamic teachings and character values, as reinforced in various findings ([Yani et al., 2025](#)), ([Aura & Nugraha, 2023](#)), ([Putu et al., 2025](#)) ([Sofiyah et al., 2025](#)).

Innovation in Integrating Local Values into IRE Learning

The average score of 4.45 also shows that students consider the integration of local values as an important form of learning innovation. They see that IRE learning based on local wisdom is more relevant, contextual, and interesting because it is based on real experiences. Values such as *Huyula* and *delowa depita* & various other Gorontalo

cultural activities are considered capable of strengthening a moderate Islamic identity. This approach reflects that educational innovation is not only technological in nature, but can also be realized through the revitalization of local cultural values as a source of learning. By utilizing regional culture as a learning context, IRE can function not only as a means of transferring religious knowledge, but also as a means of shaping a reflective and civilized social character.

D. Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that students at Gorontalo State University have a high level of awareness and provide strong support for the integration of local wisdom values into Islamic Education learning materials. Students view Gorontalo cultural values such as *huyula*, *delowa depita*, and other local cultural practices not merely as complementary elements, but as essential components in building a deeper, more moderate religious understanding rooted in their social experiences. The integration of local wisdom is perceived as capable of bridging Islamic teachings with the realities of everyday life, so that PAI learning is not only oriented towards normative and textual aspects, but also reflective, contextual, and meaningful. This finding reinforces the view that religious education in higher education can serve as a space for dialogue between universal Islamic values and indigenous knowledge, in line with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy that places students as active subjects in the process of constructing religious meaning.

In practical terms, the results of this study indicate the need to develop Islamic Education learning materials that systematically integrate local wisdom into curriculum design and learning strategies, so that the learning process not only builds religious knowledge cognitively, but also shapes social character and moderate religious attitudes. Within this framework, this study positions needs analysis as a crucial initial stage in the development of Islamic education learning materials based on local wisdom, which then needs to be followed by the design, development, implementation, and evaluation processes through the ADDIE model. However, the findings of this study are still contextual and based on the perceptions of students from one institution, thus opening up opportunities for further research that examines the implementation and effectiveness of learning materials in the long term, as well as conducting cross-cultural comparisons in various regions of Indonesia to enrich the understanding of the integration of local wisdom in Islamic Religious Education in higher education.

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