



Contextualizing *Poda Na Lima* As An Ethnopedagogical Framework for PAI BP in Indonesian Elementary Schools

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Abstract: Efforts to strengthen character education through local wisdom have become a national priority, yet no empirical studies have developed an operational model for integrating *Poda Na Lima* into Islamic Education and Character Education (PAI BP) at the elementary level. Consequently, Mandailing cultural wisdom remains underutilized as a pedagogical foundation. This study aims to develop, implement, and evaluate an ethnopedagogical model grounded in *Poda Na Lima* for PAI BP instruction in elementary schools in Mandailing Natal Regency. Using a qualitative approach with an educational ethnography and multiple case study design, the research involved PAI BP teachers through interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of how cultural values are negotiated and internalized in classroom interactions. Findings show that integrating *Poda Na Lima* values *Paias Rohamu*, *Paias Pamatangmu*, *Paias Parabitonmu*, *Paias Bagasmu*, and *Paias Pakaranganmu* can be effectively implemented through structured habituation, spiritual reinforcement, and culturally responsive communication. The model contributes to students' religious, social, and ecological character development and supports the strengthening of Mandailing cultural identity. However, challenges persist, including the lack of standardized curriculum guidelines and limited teacher competence in ethnopedagogy. This study offers a theoretically grounded ethnopedagogical model that connects local wisdom with Islamic and character education. Practically, it provides an applicable framework that teachers and policymakers can adopt to design more contextualized and culturally relevant PAI BP learning in diverse Indonesian educational settings.

Abstrak: Upaya untuk memperkuat pendidikan karakter melalui kearifan lokal telah menjadi prioritas nasional, namun belum ada studi empiris yang mengembangkan model operasional untuk mengintegrasikan *Poda Na Lima* ke dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Pendidikan Karakter (PAI BP) di tingkat sekolah dasar. Akibatnya, kearifan budaya Mandailing masih kurang dimanfaatkan sebagai landasan pedagogis. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan, mengimplementasikan, dan mengevaluasi model etnopedagogis yang berlandaskan *Poda Na Lima* untuk pengajaran PAI BP di sekolah dasar di Kabupaten Mandailing Natal. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan etnografi pendidikan dan desain studi kasus berganda, penelitian ini melibatkan guru PAI BP melalui wawancara,

observasi partisipan, dan analisis dokumen. Pendekatan ini memungkinkan pemahaman mendalam tentang bagaimana nilai-nilai budaya dinegosiasikan dan diinternalisasi dalam interaksi di kelas. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai Poda Na Lima Paias Rohamu, Paias Pamatangmu, Paias Parabitonmu, Paias Bagasmu, dan Paias Pakaranganmu dapat diimplementasikan secara efektif melalui pembiasaan terstruktur, penguatan spiritual, dan komunikasi yang responsif secara budaya. Model ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan karakter religius, sosial, dan ekologis siswa serta mendukung penguatan identitas budaya Mandailing. Namun, tantangan masih tetap ada, termasuk kurangnya pedoman kurikulum yang terstandarisasi dan keterbatasan kompetensi guru dalam etnopedagogi. Studi ini menawarkan model etnopedagogi yang berlandaskan teori yang menghubungkan kearifan lokal dengan pendidikan Islam dan karakter. Secara praktis, model ini menyediakan kerangka kerja yang dapat diterapkan oleh guru dan pembuat kebijakan untuk merancang pembelajaran PAI BP yang lebih kontekstual dan relevan secara budaya di berbagai lingkungan pendidikan di Indonesia.

Keywords: Etnopedagogi, Education, *Poda Na Lima*, PAI BP, Elementary School, Mandailing Natal

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious and Character Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti/PAI BP*) at the elementary school level plays a crucial role in shaping students' religious character, noble morality, and strong moral and social sensitivity. In the context of national education, PAI BP is not merely responsible for transmitting religious knowledge cognitively but also for shaping students' holistic personality through the internalization of Islamic values in daily behavior. This aligns with the objectives of national education as stipulated in Law No. 20 of (Indonesia 2003) on the National Education System, which emphasizes that education must develop students' potential to become individuals who are faithful, pious, virtuous, and responsible members of society, the nation, and the state.

However, the implementation of character education within PAI BP faces complex challenges amid the rapid flow of globalization and value secularization. In an era of boundless information exchange, students are increasingly exposed to various values and cultures that are not always aligned with the nation's moral ideals. The phenomenon of value crises that manifested

in moral decadence, individualism, consumerism, and spiritual degradation has become a serious concern in the education sector. Strengthening students' character has thus become an urgent necessity, encompassing not only formal aspects but also affective and spiritual dimensions. PAI BP serves as a strategic subject in cultivating Islamic character that is moderate, tolerant, and virtuous. It not only conveys religious knowledge but also instills universal Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, diligence, and compassion.

The PAI BP learning process must be able to respond to contemporary challenges by employing contextual and grounded methods and approaches, including the integration of local wisdom values. Local values consistent with Islamic principles can serve as an effective medium for strengthening cultural identity while grounding religious teachings in everyday life. Rapid social change, digital media development, and the moral degradation observed among students indicate that formal education alone is insufficient to shape holistic character. The increasing prevalence of deviant behaviors such as drug abuse, student violence, exposure to harmful media content, and declining social empathy

reflects the weak internalization of moral values among students. In this context, it is urgent to strengthen character education through approaches that are not only cognitive but also affective and contextual that one of which is the integration of relevant local wisdom values that harmonize with Islamic teachings.

One relevant and strategic approach is the integration of local cultural values into the educational process, known as ethnopedagogy. Ethnopedagogy is a pedagogical concept that explores, utilizes, and internalizes local wisdom as the foundation of learning (Supriyadi, Warema, and Betaubun 2019). Local values rooted in customs, traditions, and cultural practices not only enrich learning content but also strengthen students' affective and spiritual dimensions. Local wisdom plays a vital role in character education because its values have been tested over time and are embedded in community life. One enduring form of local wisdom with great potential for character education is the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy of the Mandailing community. *Poda Na Lima* consists of five life principles: cleansing the heart (*Paias Rohamu*), cleansing the body (*Paias Pamatangmu*), cleansing clothing (*Paias Parabitonmu*), cleansing the house (*Paias Bagasmu*), and cleansing the environment (*Paias Pakaranganmu*) (Firmando 2021; Nuddin 2021). These values are not only cultural but also deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, as cleanliness is a central part of faith in Islam. Therefore, integrating *Poda Na Lima* values into PAI BP learning is highly relevant for strengthening students' character education.

Pedagogically, the integration of local values such as *Poda Na Lima* into PAI BP learning aligns with the ethnopedagogical approach, which emphasizes the importance of local values in shaping students' identity, morality, and spirituality. This approach makes the learning process more meaningful because it is rooted in students' social realities (Muzakkir 2021; Oktavianti and Ratnasari 2018). Similar approaches have also proven effective in other countries such

as Russia and Kazakhstan, where integrating cultural values into early education curricula has successfully fostered ethnocultural awareness among students (Fahrutdinova 2016; Neustroev, Neustroeva, and Shergina 2018).

Mandailing Natal Regency, located in North Sumatra Province, is a region rich in cultural and traditional heritage passed down through generations. One of its most prominent cultural legacies is the *Poda Na Lima*, an ethical and philosophical system that guides community life by shaping personality, social relations, and environmental interaction. In the broader Indonesian context, efforts to strengthen character education based on local values have also become a national education priority, as reflected in the *Strengthening Character Education* program and the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The inclusion of Mandailing Culture as a local content subject in elementary schools within the regency also serves as an important supporting factor. Nevertheless, the integration of local cultural values into PAI BP learning has not yet received sufficient attention in terms of curriculum development, teacher training, or the preparation of teaching materials. Therefore, this study is both timely and essential.

The purpose of this research is to examine in depth the potential of *Poda Na Lima* values as an ethnopedagogical foundation integrated into PAI BP learning at the elementary school level, particularly in Mandailing Natal Regency, as well as to explore implementation challenges and formulate solutions for strengthening local cultural values. The main objectives of this study include: (1) identifying the forms, meanings, and relevance of *Poda Na Lima* values in PAI BP learning in elementary schools in Mandailing Natal Regency; (2) describing how *Poda Na Lima* values are implemented in PAI BP learning; and (3) analyzing the driving and inhibiting factors in integrating these values to enhance students' character education.

The novelty of this study lies in its empirical and practical integration model, which operationalizes the Mandailing local philosophy *Poda Na Lima* into daily Islamic Religious and Character Education (PAI BP) practices. Unlike previous studies that merely explored the theoretical relationship between local wisdom and religious education, this research offers an implementable framework that demonstrates how *Poda Na Lima* values are internalized through habituation, spiritual reinforcement, and a communicative pedagogical approach. This integrative mechanism not only strengthens students' religious, moral, and ecological character but also provides a replicable model that can serve as a reference for other regions seeking to develop context based Islamic character education rooted in local culture. Accordingly, this research contributes significantly to the development of Islamic character education that is grounded in local culture, contextualized to the socio cultural realities of the community, and harmonized with the demands of global development.

Although efforts to strengthen character education through local values have become a national priority, and the relevance of the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy to Islamic teachings has been widely recognized, a critical research gap remains. Previous studies have tended to focus either on theoretical explorations of *Poda Na Lima* values or on Islamic Religious and Character Education (PAI BP) as a separate domain. Explicitly, no empirically tested and operational integration model has yet been developed that systematically incorporates the principles of *Poda Na Lima* into the PAI BP curriculum and instructional practices at the elementary school level, particularly in Mandailing Natal Regency. To address this gap, this study seeks to answer the central research question: How can a model for integrating *Poda Na Lima* as an ethnopedagogical foundation in PAI BP learning at elementary schools be effectively developed, implemented, and evaluated?

Accordingly, this article aims to contextualize *Poda Na Lima* as a systematic and operational Ethnopedagogical Framework for PAI BP learning in Indonesian elementary schools. The study employs ethnopedagogy as its primary theoretical lens, supported by Value Internalization Theory to explain the processes of character formation. Theoretically, this research offers a new integrative framework that connects local wisdom with PAI BP instruction and contributes to the literature on culture based character education. Practically, the findings are expected to produce an implementable design for PAI BP teachers, enabling them to develop contextual teaching materials and pedagogical strategies that significantly enhance students' religious and moral character grounded in Mandailing cultural values.

METHODS:

This study employed a qualitative approach with an educational ethnography design and multiple case studies (Sugiyono 2016). This approach was chosen to gain a holistic (emic) understanding of the cultural practices and meanings of *Poda Na Lima* in Islamic Education and Character (PAI BP) learning within primary schools. The research was conducted in three primary schools purposively selected in Mandailing Natal Regency: SDN 142 Hutabaringin, SD IT Al Munawwar, and SD IT Daarul Fadhil. The main informants comprised three PAI BP teachers, three school principals, and thirty students, while supporting informants included customary and religious leaders who hold cultural authority in the transmission of *Poda Na Lima* values. The entire fieldwork spanned four months (January–April 2025), with an intensity of a minimum of three interview sessions per main informant (60–90 minutes per session) and a minimum of five sessions of participant observation in each school to capture the learning practices and the habituation of these cultural values.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques: in depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews utilized a semi structured guide covering informants' understanding of *Poda Na Lima*, strategies for value implementation in PAI BP, and the supporting factors and barriers to integration. All interviews were recorded using digital audio devices and transcribed verbatim within a maximum of 48 hours to maintain accuracy. Participant observation used an observation sheet highlighting teacher behavior, student interaction, and learning environment conditions that reflect the values from *Paias Rohamu* to *Paias Pakaranganmu*. Field notes were documented using thick description, accompanied by photo or video documentation (with permission). Document analysis included PAI BP teaching modules/lesson plans (RPP), the local Mandailing curriculum, school disciplinary rules, and cultural artifacts, with selection criteria based on direct relevance to the integration of *Poda Na Lima* values and document authenticity.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with operational procedures including the stages of coding, categorization, and thematization. In the open coding stage, the researcher examined interview transcripts, field notes, and documents to identify initial meaning units related to cleanliness activities, honesty practices, sharing interactions, and teachers' pedagogical strategies. These initial codes were then developed into initial codes, such as "classroom cleanliness activities," "teacher demonstrating honesty," or "habituation of greetings and pleasantries." Subsequently, in the axial coding stage, these codes were grouped based on their relation to the five *Poda Na Lima* values; for instance, cleanliness activities were associated with *Paias Pamatangmu*, *Parabitonmu*, *Bagasmu*, and *Pakaranganmu*, while honesty and sharing behaviors were linked to *Paias*

Rohamu. The results were structured in a coding matrix to demonstrate the relationship between categories.

The subsequent stage was categorization, which involved developing analytical categories such as the implementation of *Paias Rohamu* in learning, student cleanliness habituation patterns, teachers' ethnopedagogical strategies, and cultural continuity in school practices. These categories were then synthesized into the main research themes, such as Integration of *Poda Na Lima* Based Ethnopedagogy in PAI BP Learning, Value Habituation as a Practice of Cultural Pedagogy, and Challenges in Synchronizing Formal Curriculum and Cultural Values. Data were subsequently presented in the form of ethnographic narratives, thematic matrices, and summary tables of findings. Conclusions were drawn simultaneously through cross verification using method triangulation (interview–observation–document), source triangulation (teachers, students, principals, customary/religious leaders), and location triangulation (three schools).

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied Lincoln & Guba's four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Guba and Lincoln define a paradigm as a basic belief system or worldview that guides researchers through every step of an investigation, from the formulation of research questions to the selection of methods (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Credibility was strengthened through triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement over four months, and peer debriefing with fellow researchers or supervisors. Transferability was ensured by presenting a thick description of the school context, Mandailing culture, and value integration practices. Dependability was secured by establishing an audit trail that documented the entire research process, including transcripts, field notes, analysis logs, and category revisions. Confirmability was maintained by creating reflexive notes and documenting analysis evidence that can

be traced back (Arikunto 2014; Moleong 2017; Riduwan 2019).

The following figure illustrates the validation framework used in this study:

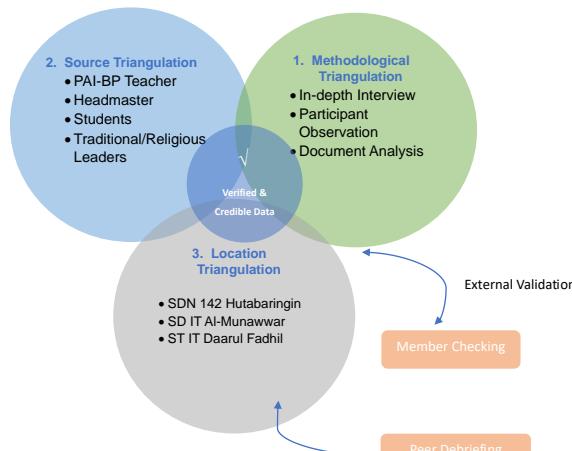


Figure 1: The Validation Framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: Ethnopedagogy as a Cultural–Educational Framework

Ethnopedagogy is an educational approach grounded in local wisdom, cultural values, and community traditions. Etymologically, the term combines *ethno* (culture/ethnicity) and *pedagogy* (education), emphasizing that education is inseparable from the value system, norms, and practices of the community. This paradigm positions local knowledge as a pedagogical resource that contextualizes learning and bridges universal values with students' lived realities. Prior studies show that ethnopedagogy strengthens identity, fosters respect for one's cultural heritage, and enhances conceptual understanding through meaningful learning experiences (Neustroev et al. 2018).

In Indonesia, ethnopedagogy aligns with current curriculum frameworks, including the Independent Curriculum, which encourages schools to integrate local content into instruction. Learning practices often involve cultural narratives, traditional rituals, local language use, and community participation (Cahyana et al. 2020). Ethnopedagogical integration thus supports character formation by embedding moral,

social, and spiritual values within culturally relevant learning activities.

The Concept and Structure of *Poda Na Lima*

Poda Na Lima is a Mandailing philosophical system functioning as moral guidance and a cultural framework for regulating personal and social behavior. The term *poda* denotes ancestral counsel or advice that serves as a moral compass across generations. The philosophy comprises five interrelated teachings: 1) *Paias Rohamu*: cleanse the heart (moral–spiritual purification), 2) *Paias Pamatangmu*: cleanse the body (personal discipline and physical hygiene), 3) *Paias Parabitonmu*: cleanse clothing (integrity, propriety, and lawful sustenance), 4) *Paias Bagasmu*: cleanse the home (family order and domestic harmony), 5) *Paias Pakaranganmu*: cleanse the environment (social responsibility and ecological care).

These five components are intended to operate holistically rather than selectively; they represent a unified system of ethical and civilizational values.

Alignment Between *Poda Na Lima* and Islamic Teachings

Each element of *Poda Na Lima* parallels Islamic moral doctrines (Alam 2011; Siregar 2022; Siregar and Harahap 2019; Siregar and Siregar 2021). 1) *Paias Rohamu* reflects *tazkiyatun nafs*, emphasizing sincerity, humility, and emotional regulation. 2) *Paias Pamatangmu* corresponds to *thaharah* (bodily purity), aligning with the prophetic teaching that cleanliness is part of faith. 3) *Paias Parabitonmu* resonates with Qur'anic commands for physical and moral purity, including lawful sustenance and modesty. 4) *Paias Bagasmu* aligns with the Islamic emphasis on familial harmony, domestic order, and cleanliness as acts of worship. 5) *Paias Pakaranganmu* supports the Islamic principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, emphasizing care for the environment and communal well being.

Thus, *Poda Na Lima* represents a localized articulation of Islamic ethics, making it a culturally resonant foundation for character formation within Islamic Religious Education.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI BP) and the Need for Contextualization

PAI BP aims to cultivate faith, noble character, and the application of Islamic teachings in everyday life. The curriculum integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains through Qur'an-Hadith, creed, morals, Islamic history, and jurisprudence (Alam and Hasibuan 2015; Nasution 2023; Salamuddin 2023). However, implementation challenges persist at the primary level, including: 1) The gap between normative teaching and students' sociocultural realities, 2) Predominance of textual and decontextualized instruction, 3) Limited local based teaching materials, 4) And insufficient teacher training in contextual pedagogy.

As a result, the values taught in class often fail to translate into behavioral internalization outside school. Integrating local wisdom such as *Poda Na Lima* is therefore strategic for making religious education more relevant, meaningful, and embedded in students' lived experience.

***Poda Na Lima* as a Foundation for Ethnopedagogical PAI BP**

As a local moral system that is consistent with Islamic principles, *Poda Na Lima* offers a culturally grounded framework for character education within PAI BP. Its emphasis on personal cleanliness, spiritual refinement, familial harmony, and environmental care provides a holistic value structure that can be naturally integrated into religious learning (Oktavia and Fadriati 2023). Because the Mandailing community recognizes these teachings as ancestral moral guidance, their use in education fosters cultural continuity, strengthens identity, and enhances students' moral internalization within both cultural and Islamic paradigms (Sibarani, Simanjuntak, and Sibarani 2021;

Siregar and Harahap 2019; Susanti 2023; Thamrin 2014).

This study offers a novel contribution by demonstrating how *Poda Na Lima* traditionally understood as a Mandailing moral philosophy operates as an ethnopedagogical mechanism that systematically aligns with Islami (Alam and Hasibuan 2015; Priyono, Sormin, and Bay 2022; Siti 2018)c character values in primary education. Unlike previous studies that discuss *Poda Na Lima* at a cultural or philosophical level, this research empirically shows how teachers, students, and the school environment operationalize its values within PAI BP learning (Riadi 2023; Suhari et al. 2019; Umam 2022). The study also reveals the integration model that connects local wisdom, Islamic moral concepts, and classroom practice, which has not been articulated in prior literature.

The findings extend ethnopedagogical theory by showing that local wisdom can function not merely as contextual material but as a structural moral framework that supports value internalization. The alignment between *Poda Na Lima* and Islamic ethics demonstrates a dual layered value system, illustrating how cultural and religious moralities reinforce each other in the character education process. This contributes to theory by clarifying the mechanisms through which local cultural systems can enhance religious education, particularly in communities with strong cultural identity.

Practically, the study underscores the need for teachers to utilize local wisdom as a pedagogical resource for contextualizing PAI BP learning. Training programs should therefore incorporate modules on ethnopedagogical strategies and local cultural literacy. At the policy level, curriculum designers and local education authorities should formalize the integration of *Poda Na Lima* into local content and PAI BP implementation, providing structured teaching materials and assessment models. Recommendations grounded in the findings include strengthening teacher competence in

contextual pedagogy, developing school community partnerships with cultural leaders, and adopting a values integration model informed by local wisdom.

Mapping *Poda Na Lima* Values in PAI BP Curriculum

The analysis of the Grade IV and VI PAI BP curriculum shows that all five *Poda Na Lima* values correspond to the learning materials on Islamic morality, purity, worship practices, and environmental responsibility. Teachers use this mapping as a reference for designing learning activities. Table 1 presents the alignment of each *Poda Na Lima* value with its learning materials and examples of classroom practices.

Mapping the *Poda Na Lima* Values in PAI BP Learning Materials. The researcher selected grades IV and VI because they have learning materials relevant to all *Poda Na Lima* values. The mapping of these learning materials is illustrated in the table below:

Table. The Mapping of These Learning Materials is Illustrated

			forgiveness and kindness.
<i>Paias</i>	Grade IV: <i>Welcoming the Age of Baligh;</i>	<i>Pamatangmu (Cleanse Your Body)</i>	Students practice ablution together, discuss puberty signs guided by Islamic law, and reflect on hygiene as part of faith.
<i>Paias</i>	Grade IV: <i>Welcoming the Age of Baligh</i>	<i>Parabitonmu (Clean Your Clothes)</i>	Teachers check uniform neatness and connect cleanliness with QS. Al Muddatsts ir: 4, discussing halal clothing sources.
<i>Paias Rohamu (Cleanse Your Heart)</i>	Grade IV: <i>The Noble Example of Asmaul Husna;</i> Grade VI: <i>Living Peacefully by Forgiving Each Other</i>	<i>Paias Bagasmu (Clean Your House)</i>	Grade IV: <i>Asmaul Husna;</i> Grade VI: <i>Caring for the Environment</i>
	Teachers begin class with motivational talks in the Mandailin g language about sincerity and patience; students share experiences of		Class cleaning rotations; students decorate “mini home corners” symbolizing cleanliness and responsibility.
		<i>Paias Pakaranganmu (Clean Your Yard/Environment)</i>	Grade VI: <i>Caring for the Environment</i>
			School greening projects, waste

ment)	segregation campaigns, and reflection sessions on human responsibility as khalifah fil ardh.
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The curriculum mapping indicates that PAI BP content provides structured opportunities to integrate cultural values into religious learning. Teachers in all three schools understood the relevance of *Poda Na Lima* and actively connected the cultural values with the Islamic topics being taught.

Classroom Implementation: Internalizing *Poda Na Lima* Values

Field observations and interviews show that the integration of *Poda Na Lima* occurs through three dominant practices: habituation, cultural-spiritual motivation, and contextual communication in Mandailing language.

Habituation Activities

Teachers consistently implemented routines that strengthened cleanliness and discipline: 1) *Paias Rohamu*: daily reflections and reminders about sincerity and forgiveness. 2) *Paias Pamatangmu*: wudhu practice, hygiene checks, and guidance on puberty. 3) *Paias Parabitonmu*: clothing checks and discussions on purity. 4) *Paias Bagasmu*: rotating cleaning duties and organizing classroom spaces. 4) *Paias Pakaranganmu*: waste segregation and school greening activities.

These routines were observed across all schools, indicating that values were internalized through repeated practice rather than formal instruction alone.

Cultural Spiritual Motivation

Teachers routinely opened lessons with short messages, stories, or proverbs delivered in Mandailing language. These motivational moments helped students

connect cultural concepts such as *poda* with Islamic moral messages. Students responded positively and recalled these messages during interviews, indicating strong emotional resonance.

Symbolic and Contextual Communication

Teachers frequently referenced local cultural symbols such as ancestral advice, river purification practices, and home-yard metaphors to explain PAI BP concepts (Tilaar 2015). These symbolic explanations made abstract Islamic values easier for students to understand (Kemendikbud 2022). For example, students linked the concept of spiritual purity with the Mandailing practice of *marsialap ari* (seeking emotional resolution).

Teachers' Role as Cultural Mediators

Across the cases, teachers positioned themselves not only as instructors but as cultural transmitters. They intentionally mediated religious content through Mandailing cultural expressions. One teacher noted:

“When teaching wudu, we also explain that it is part of *paias pamatangmu*, the advice passed down from our elders.” This mediation helped bridge Islamic teachings and cultural values, resulting in a coherent experience for students. Two contextual supports were observed: 1) Local Content: This gave teachers curricular legitimacy to integrate cultural values. 2) School Culture: Cleanliness, discipline, and community cooperation reflected *Poda Na Lima* practices, reinforcing the values outside PAI BP lessons.

Despite strong teacher initiative, three main constraints emerged: 1) No formal ethnopedagogical guidelines in the curriculum, making integration teacher dependent; and 2) Absence of *Poda Na Lima* based learning modules, requiring teachers to design materials independently. 3) Weak community support, especially in families that do not maintain cultural practices consistently. These constraints led to

variations in implementation quality across schools.

Discussion: *Poda Na Lima* as Contextual Ethnopedagogy

The findings of this study reinforce the argument that the integration of local wisdom into religious education is most effective when cultural values and religious principles are inherently aligned. In the case of Mandailing communities, *Poda Na Lima* and Islamic moral teachings intersect at multiple conceptual levels, enabling teachers to employ cultural resources as pedagogical tools without creating value dissonance. This cultural-religious convergence facilitates deep value internalization among students, confirming prior research that emphasizes the pedagogical power of culturally resonant learning environments in strengthening moral engagement (Fahrutdinova 2016; Muzakkir 2021; Oktavianti and Ratnasari 2018).

First, this study demonstrates that ethnopedagogy in Mandailing Natal operates predominantly through teacher agency rather than curricular mandates. Teachers engaged in culturally responsive practices such as using ancestral advice, proverbs, and symbolic references to contextualize concepts of purity, character, and worship. While these practices align with established ethnopedagogical frameworks, this study advances the discourse by revealing that effective ethnopedagogical implementation can emerge organically within local school cultures (Krezhevskikh and Karataeva 2022; Lestari and Bahri 2021; Parwati, Suastra, and Arnyana 2025; Rahmawati et al. 2021). This challenges the common assumption that ethnopedagogy must be structurally embedded in educational policy to be impactful. The evidence instead highlights the critical role of teacher cultural competence and pedagogical creativity in sustaining localized character education.

Second, the integration of *Poda Na Lima* contributes meaningfully to students' ethnocultural identity formation. By embedding Islamic values within familiar

Mandailing cultural symbols, teachers construct a learning environment that affirms students' dual identities as both Mandailing and Muslim. This finding extends theories of ethnocultural identity in education by illustrating a more integrated identity formation process, where cultural and religious identities are not parallel but mutually reinforcing. The internal coherence between these value systems may explain why students demonstrated high affective engagement with the material, suggesting that culturally grounded religious education can enhance moral authenticity and emotional relevance.

Third, the study offers an explicit theoretical contribution by conceptualizing *Poda Na Lima* as a dual moral system simultaneously cultural and Islamic. Unlike other local wisdom frameworks documented in Indonesian or international contexts, which typically emphasize social or ecological ethics, *Poda Na Lima* encompasses spiritual, physical, domestic, and environmental purification in a unified structure (Parwati et al. 2025; Sakti, Endraswara, and Rohman 2024; Selasih and Sudarsana 2018). This multidimensionality aligns closely with Islamic doctrines on holistic purity (*tazkiyatun nafs* and *thaharah*). The present study therefore contributes a novel conceptual lens for ethnopedagogy: *Poda Na Lima* functions not merely as cultural heritage but as a culturally embedded religious ethic that can systematically support Islamic character education.

Fourth, when viewed in a broader comparative context, the Mandailing case presents a distinctive model of grassroots ethnopedagogy.

Ethnopedagogical implementations in countries such as Russia, Kazakhstan, and several Southeast Asian regions are often state driven and policy dependent (Mubarok and Muslihah 2022; Mukhibat 2015; Sugiarto et al. 2025). In contrast, this study shows that Mandailing teachers sustain ethnopedagogical practices even in the absence of formal guidelines, reflecting strong cultural continuity and

community based pedagogical norms. This bottom up model underscores the importance of local teacher agency in cultural preservation and suggests that sustainable ethnopedagogy does not always require structural enforcement but can emerge from community values embedded in teacher identity.

Finally, the study carries important theoretical, practical, and policy implications. Theoretically, it calls for a reframing of ethnopedagogy as a pedagogical praxis rooted in cultural identity and teacher agency, rather than a mere curricular add on. Practically, the results indicate a need for capacity building programs that strengthen teachers' cultural literacy and instructional competence in integrating local wisdom (Akhmetova 2014; Fahrudinova 2016). The absence of formal teaching modules and community inconsistency presents implementation challenges that require coordinated responses. From a policy perspective, integrating ethnopedagogical guidelines into the Merdeka Curriculum and encouraging school community cultural partnerships may enhance the sustainability and consistency of local wisdom based character education. Formal recognition of *Poda Na Lima* as a culturally embedded ethical framework may further support its use as a pedagogical resource in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of *Poda Na Lima* values into Islamic Religious Education and Character Education (PAI BP) in elementary schools serves as a relevant and contextual ethnopedagogical approach that strengthens students' religious, social, and ecological character. The five core values of *Poda Na Lima* *Paias Rohamu*, *Paias Pamatangmu*, *Paias Parabitonmu*, *Paias Bagasmu*, and *Paias Pakaranganmu* were effectively actualized through structured habituation, spiritual reinforcement, and culturally grounded classroom communication. These

values are aligned with the principles of Islamic teachings, demonstrating that local wisdom can serve as an authentic foundation for holistic Islamic education.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of ethnopedagogy by offering an empirically grounded model that situates *Poda Na Lima* as a cultural source of learning values, methods, and contexts. Practically, the findings provide teachers and policymakers with a framework for designing contextual teaching strategies, learning modules, and character building activities rooted in local wisdom. The model also has broader implications for strengthening cultural identity, encouraging social participation, and promoting environmental awareness among young learners.

However, the successful implementation of this model faces several limitations, including the absence of systematic curriculum guidelines, limited teacher competence in ethnopedagogical practices, and insufficient support from families and contextual learning media. Future research should explore the development of standardized ethnopedagogy based teaching modules, conduct experimental or mixed method studies to measure the model's effectiveness, and investigate strategies to enhance collaboration among schools, families, and cultural institutions. Such efforts will ensure that PAI BP not only transmits Islamic values but also sustains cultural preservation and strengthens Indonesia's holistic character education.

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