Integration of Islamic and Local Cultural Values in Madrasah Education through the *GEMMATI* Program

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the integration of Islamic and local cultural values in the madrasah education system through the *GEMMATI* (Gerakan Membangun Madrasah Teladan Insani) program initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Blitar Regency. The academic concern underlying this research lies in the fragmentation between religious and cultural education in Indonesia, which often separates Islamic spirituality from local wisdom. This study aims to analyze how *GEMMATI* embodies the synthesis of Islamic values and Javanese cultural heritage in the formal education system. Using a qualitative library research approach, data were collected from the official *GEMMATI* document and relevant literature on Islamic education, culture, and integration theories by Kuntowijoyo and Al-Faruqi. The findings reveal that *GEMMATI* operationalizes value integration through five movements: fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, *kitab kuning* reading, practicing sunnah deeds, Qur'an memorization, and revitalizing the mother tongue. These initiatives foster religious discipline, intellectual humility, social solidarity, and cultural identity among students. Therefore, *GEMMATI* offers a model of character education that unites spirituality, knowledge, and cultural rootedness—reflecting a holistic paradigm of Islamic education that is both contextually grounded and future-oriented.

Key words: *Islamic education, cultural integration, character education, GEMMATI, local wisdom*

INTRODUCTION

Amid the wave of globalization that erodes spiritual values and local wisdom, madrasahs in Indonesia face a major challenge in maintaining both their Islamic and cultural identities. This aligns with the argument of (Endang et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2022), who state that the rapid advancement of time and technology has brought significant transformations in human life. Such changes have resulted in the emergence of various negative behaviors that threaten students' morality and social order, including drug abuse, violence, and dishonesty. (Dinarti et al., 2024)

further emphasize that ethical values such as kindness and the habit of greeting others are becoming increasingly rare in society. Moreover, the proper use of the mother tongue, such as the Javanese language, has also declined. This is evident from everyday conversations that predominantly employ the ngoko level of Javanese, neglecting the other linguistic hierarchies appropriate to social contexts (Supatra, 2017).

Beyond the influence of globalization, the fragmentation between Islamic values and local cultural traditions in Indonesian education is also rooted in the epistemological orientation of educational practices. Religious education is frequently delivered in a normative–ritual manner that prioritizes doctrinal understanding and formal worship, while local culture is often reduced to folkloric expressions or treated as an extracurricular component detached from ethical and spiritual meanings. This separation is evident, for instance, in the declining use of refined local languages such as basa krama in daily educational interactions, which reflects the erosion of cultural etiquette (unggah-ungguh) and moral sensitivity among students (Supatra, 2017). At the same time, religious learning in schools tends to emphasize cognitive mastery of Islamic teachings without sufficient contextualization within students' lived cultural realities, resulting in religious values that are perceived as abstract and formalistic rather than embodied social ethics (Endang et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2022). As a consequence, local wisdom loses its transcendental orientation, while Islamic teachings risk becoming detached from social and cultural life. This condition underscores the urgency of an integrative educational approach that systematically reconnects Islamic values with local cultural practices within the institutional framework of madrasah education.

Culturally based character education plays a crucial role in addressing the phenomenon of student demoralization. Education itself is a fundamental aspect of life that continues to evolve with the changing times (Hanifa Nur Laili & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2025; Rusmiati et al., 2023). (Kezia, 2021; Syaiful & Anam, 2024) asserts that education is central to character formation among the nation's young generation in the digital era. In a similar vein, Fahdini et al. (2021) contend that character education serves as the key to resolving the moral crisis and demoralization currently afflicting students. In this context, the GEMMATI program emerges as a strategic effort to integrate Islamic values with local cultural wisdom to cultivate students who are both virtuous and culturally grounded.

The GEMMATI Program (Gerakan Membangun Madrasah Agamis Teladan Insani-Movement for Building Exemplary and Humane Religious Madrasahs) is a strategic initiative of the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Blitar Regency aimed at strengthening students' character through the integration of Islamic values and local wisdom. The program arises from the awareness that madrasahs are not merely academic institutions but also moral, spiritual, and social

centers that balance fikr (reason) and dzikr (spirituality). GEMMATI is structured around five core movements: the habituation of fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, classical Islamic text reading, practicing sunnah acts, Qur'an memorization, and the revitalization of the mother tongue. Each movement represents a synergy between Islamic teachings and local culture—for example, the values of patience and self-control fostered through fasting, love for knowledge through kitab studies, the preservation of religious traditions such as istighotsah and tahlil, and respect for cultural identity through the use of the local language. With its curriculum-based, culture-oriented, and community-involved approach, GEMMATI serves as a strategic initiative in building students' religious, moral, and cultural character. Through a systematic and sustainable framework, the program is expected to produce madrasah graduates with strong spirituality, appreciation for local wisdom, and exemplary moral conduct amid the challenges of globalization.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of integrating Islamic and local cultural values within education, particularly in the madrasah context. (Priarni, 2019) in her study "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Budaya Islam dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam" (Integration of Islamic Cultural Values in Islamic Religious Education Learning), explains that local culture rooted in Islamic values is an inseparable part of community life and can serve as an effective medium for instilling moral and social ethics in students. She emphasizes that Islamic education (PAI) should internalize artistic and cultural elements to foster students who are moral, honest, fair, and respectful of others. This integration can be implemented through Islamic arts, religious music, and Islamized cultural traditions—such as nyadran (ancestral commemoration)—combined with doa and tahlil recitations as a medium for teaching spiritual and social values.

Simillary, (Sholeh et al., 2025) in Abdussalam: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Islam, through their article "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Islam dan Kearifan Lokal dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Berbasis Karakter" (Integration of Islamic and Local Wisdom Values in the Development of Character-Based Educational Curriculum), emphasize that combining Islamic values with local wisdom in educational curricula is a crucial strategy for shaping a morally upright generation deeply rooted in its cultural heritage. Their research demonstrates that Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation can be harmonized with local wisdom such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and musyawarah (deliberation). This synergy not only enriches the curriculum but also strengthens students' character through thematic learning, culture-based projects, and extracurricular activities like Islamic arts, gamelan, and traditional dance oriented toward Islamic values.

Both studies affirm that the integration of Islamic and local cultural values positively contributes to shaping students' character. Islamic values provide moral and spiritual foundations,

while local culture serves as the social context that reinforces the relevance of learning. In this regard, the GEMMATI program can be viewed as a strategic initiative consistent with previous research findings—harmonizing Islamic values and local culture to form madrasah students who are faithful, cultured, and possess an Indonesian identity.

A review of the existing literature reveals that numerous studies have examined either the integration of Islamic values or the reinforcement of local culture within education. Most of these focus on the application of Islamic values in character building—through religious learning, spiritual practices, or Islamic school activities—while others highlight the importance of cultural preservation as a means of reinforcing social and national identity. However, few studies have systematically investigated the integrative efforts between Islamic values and local wisdom within a structured educational policy framework.

Therefore, this study occupies a strategic position in filling the existing research gap. The analysis of the GEMMATI Program is expected to provide new insights into how Islamic values and local wisdom are conceptually, pedagogically, and practically integrated within the madrasah education context. GEMMATI is particularly compelling as it represents a concrete example of the integration of Islamic and local cultural values in formal education, where spirituality, morality, and cultural preservation are not treated as supplementary activities but are embedded within an institutionalized educational system through policies, curricula, and school culture. Consequently, this study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of character education based on Islamic and cultural values, while offering practical recommendations for strengthening madrasah education policies that are rooted in national culture and aligned with Islamic teachings.

Based on the background and gap analysis discussed above, this research aims to explore how Islamic and local cultural values are integratively implemented in madrasah education through the GEMMATI Program. Hence, the research questions are formulated as follows: (1) How is the integration of Islamic and local cultural values manifested in the GEMMATI Program? (2) What Islamic and cultural values are integrated within the program? and (3) How is the relevance of these integrations reflected in the character education of madrasah students? These questions are intended to explore both the conceptual and practical dimensions of GEMMATI implementation and assess its contribution to developing students' religious, moral, and cultural character.

Methods

This research is a library study (library research), in which all data are obtained from library sources without conducting field data collection. The purpose of library research is to collect and analyze various types of information from relevant literature, including books, scientific journals, articles, and official documents that support the focus of the study (Mestika, 2004). The research

adopts a qualitative approach, emphasizing text interpretation and the understanding of the meanings embedded in the *GEMMATI* Program document. This approach was chosen to enable a deeper exploration of the program's philosophical, theological, and cultural dimensions within the context of madrasah education.

The data sources in this study consist of two types. Primary data are derived from the official *GEMMATI* Program document issued by the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Blitar Regency. Secondary data are collected from supporting literature such as books and journal articles discussing the integration of Islamic values, knowledge, and culture in the educational context. Data collection techniques employ documentation methods, which involve systematically reviewing the *GEMMATI* text and other relevant literature. The collected data are then classified and analyzed to identify patterns and structures of the values embedded within. This process includes textual analysis and contextual interpretation, ensuring that the understanding of the document's content goes beyond the textual level by taking into account the social and cultural context in which the program is implemented.

The data analysis process involves reading, interpreting, and comprehensively understanding the meaning of the text within the madrasah community's socio-cultural context. The analysis aims to reveal the messages and values underlying the educational policy text contained in the *GEMMATI* program. Subsequently, a synthesis of integration and interconnection is conducted by linking three main dimensions: the textual (Islamic values and sources of revelation), the social reality (local culture), and the scientific rationality (education). Through this synthesis, the research seeks to demonstrate how the integration of Islamic values and local culture within *GEMMATI* contributes to the strengthening of students' character formation in madrasahs.

Result

Description of the *GEMMATI* Program

In an effort to strengthen the role of madrasahs in improving the quality of education, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) of East Java Province launched the GERAMM Program (Gerakan Ayo Membangun Madrasah / "Let's Build Madrasahs Movement"). The program aims to enhance the quality and competitiveness of madrasahs. In response to this initiative, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Blitar Regency developed an innovative program called *GEMMATI* (Gerakan Membangun Madrasah Teladan Insani / "Movement for Building Exemplary and Humane Madrasahs").

This program represents a strategic effort to address several pressing issues, including the low level of students' understanding of religious values in daily life, the declining interest in

studying classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), the waning enthusiasm for memorizing the Qur'an, and the diminishing use of the mother tongue as a means of daily communication. To overcome these challenges and to optimize the potential of madrasahs in Blitar Regency, the Ministry of Religious Affairs launched the *GEMMATI* Program with a focus on strengthening character education based on Islamic values and local wisdom.

The program is manifested in five core movements, there are (1) the habitual fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, (2) he movement to study classical Islamic texts (kitab), (3) the practice of sunnah acts (reciting Shalawat Nariyah, performing sunnah prayers, istighotsah, and tahlil), (5) the movement to produce Qur'an memorizers (hafidz/hafidzah), and (6) the movement to preserve and promote the mother tongue as a daily language of communication.

The *GEMMATI* Program is generally aimed at strengthening the distinctive Islamic character of madrasahs, positioning them not merely as academic institutions but as centers of moral and spiritual development. More specifically, it seeks to nurture students who are intellectually capable, spiritually grounded, morally exemplary, and culturally aware of their local heritage. The program is also intended to build a positive madrasah brand, particularly within the jurisdiction of the Blitar Regency Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Ultimately, madrasah graduates are expected to possess both competitive quality and the capacity to serve as inspirational figures in broader society.

To address these challenges and optimize the potential of madrasahs in Blitar Regency, the Blitar Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs launched the GEMMATI program, focusing on strengthening character education based on religious values and local wisdom. The program is manifested in several initiatives, including the habituation movement of Monday–Thursday fasting, the movement to study classical Islamic texts, the habituation of sunnah practices (reciting Sholawat Nariyah, performing sunnah prayers, istighosah, and tahlil), the movement to cultivate graduates who memorize the Qur'an, and the movement to promote the use of the mother tongue as a daily communication tool.

Table 1. *GEMMATI* Program Components (Tim Penyusun Kantor Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Blitar, 2025)

Program Focus	Objective	Activities	Indicators
Monday–Thursday Fasting Movement	To instill values of patience, self-control, and social empathy among students.	Regular fasting on Mondays and Thursdays; thematic studies on the wisdom and virtues of fasting.	Percentage of students who regularly fast; students' level of understanding of the values and wisdom of fasting.
Classical Islamic Text Reading Movement	To preserve the tradition of classical Islamic scholarship and deepen students'	Learning classical texts using sorogan or bandongan methods, book discussions, student essays or research on Islamic texts.	Level of students' comprehension of classical texts; students' ability to read and translate Arabic texts;

	understanding of religious teachings.		number of academic works produced.
Sunnah Practice Movement	To cultivate students' habit of performing sunnah practices as a means of spiritual closeness to Allah SWT.	Routine sunnah prayers (Dhuha, Rawatib), recitation of Shalawat Nariyah, collective istighotsah and tahlil on specific days.	Percentage of students regularly performing sunnah prayers; number of students who memorize Shalawat Nariyah; student participation in istighotsah and tahlil activities.
Qur'an Memorization Movement	To produce graduates who have memorized the Qur'an and possess a sound understanding of its content.	Regular tahfidz programs according to educational levels, Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir) sessions, and tilawah (recitation) training.	Number of students achieving memorization targets; students' level of comprehension of Qur'anic interpretation; student achievements in tilawah competitions.
Mother Tongue Preservation Movement	To preserve the mother tongue as a form of local wisdom and to strengthen students' cultural identity.	Use of the mother tongue in daily communication at school; inclusion of local language in the curriculum; cultural performances featuring the local language.	Frequency of mother tongue usage among students; number of literary or artistic works produced in the local language; student participation in cultural performances.

Islamic and Cultural Values Integrated in the *GEMMATI* Program

The *GEMMATI* Program (Gerakan Membangun Madrasah Teladan Insani / "Movement for Building Exemplary and Humane Madrasahs") represents a tangible effort to integrate Islamic values with local cultural traditions that have long been rooted in society. This integration is not merely normative but is manifested in daily practices, religious symbols, and social interactions within the madrasah environment. The following section outlines the core values that form the foundation of this integration.

Islamic Values in the GEMMATI Program

The Islamic values underlying the *GEMMATI* Program reflect the universal principles of Islam in shaping individuals who are faithful (iman), virtuous (akhlaq al-karimah), and knowledgeable ('ilm). These include the values of worship, piety (taqwa), adab (ethics), and brotherhood (ukhuwah).

The value of worship and piety to Allah SWT is realized through the Monday–Thursday fasting movement, Qur'an memorization (tahfidz), and the performance of sunnah practices such as shalat sunnah, istighotsah, and tahlil. These activities nurture spiritual consistency and discipline in worship.

The value of adab (ethical conduct) is cultivated through the *kitab kuning* reading movement, in which students not only study the content of classical Islamic texts (kutub al-turath), but also learn the manners of respecting teachers and peers. This value embodies the spirit of iqra' (to read, understand, and apply knowledge with proper ethics).

The value of ukhuwah (Islamic brotherhood) emerges from collective religious activities such as congregational prayers, sholawatan, and istighotsah, which foster solidarity, mutual respect, and togetherness in the practice of faith.

Cultural Values in The GEMMATI Program

The local cultural values integrated within *GEMMATI* reflect the wisdom of Javanese society and the pesantren tradition, both rich in social and spiritual significance. These include tepa selira, gotong royong, unggah-ungguh, and nguri-uri kabudayan. Tepa Selira (Empathy and Mutual Respect) is reflected in the Monday–Thursday fasting practice and social activities within the madrasah, which nurture a sense of care and compassion toward others.

Gotong Royong (Cooperation and Solidarity) is embodied in collective religious and communal activities such as istighotsah, tahlil, and madrasah clean-up initiatives, fostering collaboration and community spirit. Unggah-Ungguh (Courtesy and Politeness) is internalized through the Mother Tongue Preservation Movement, particularly by encouraging the use of basa krama (the refined level of the Javanese language) in daily interactions at school. This practice cultivates respect for teachers, parents, and peers. Nguri-uri Kabudayan (Preservation of Local Culture) is manifested through the appreciation of arts, traditions, and local language as expressions of love and pride for cultural identity.

Integration of Islamic and Cultural Values through Symbols, Practices, and Social Interactions in Madrasahs

The integration of Islamic and local cultural values in the *GEMMATI* Program is evident in three main domains: symbols, practices, and social interactions.

In symbols, the integration is visible in the use of names, acronyms, and linguistic expressions within madrasah activities that combine religious and local nuances. The acronym *GEMMATI* stands for "Gerakan Membangun Madrasah Agamis Teladan Insani" ("Movement for Building Exemplary and Humane Religious Madrasahs"), which conveys Islamic and moral values. At the same time, the acronym *GEMMATI* closely resembles the Javanese word "gemati", which means "to care for" or "to love" (Nardiati et al., 1993). This connotation of affection is also reflected in the program's logo, which features a heart-shaped design, symbolizing compassion, sincerity, and love in nurturing madrasah students.

Figure 1. *GEMMATI* Program Logo

In Practice, the integration is manifested through routine activities such as collective fasting, tahlilan, sholawatan, classical Islamic text learning, and the use of local language. These activities are not merely religious rituals but also serve as spaces for culture-based character education. In social interaction, Islamic and local cultural values reinforce one another. Students learn to interact politely (unggah-ungguh), to show mutual respect (tepa selira), and to maintain harmony with teachers and peers through collective activities infused with spiritual and cultural nuances.

Thus, the *GEMMATI* 2025 Program is not merely a religious program but also a platform for character formation based on local wisdom. The integration of Islamic values with Javanese culture revived in the madrasah context makes *GEMMATI* a model of education that not only instills religious knowledge but also builds students' cultural identity and moral integrity in a holistic manner.

Relevance of the *GEMMATI* Program to Character Strengthening

The *GEMMATI* Program (Gerakan Membangun Madrasah Agamis Teladan Insani) has a strong relevance to efforts in strengthening character education within madrasahs. In the context of national education, character development is the core of the learning process, which aims to form students who are faithful, moral, and noble in character. The *GEMMATI* Program presents a unique approach as it does not only inculcate Islamic values normatively but also actualizes them through local culture closely related to students' daily lives.

Through the Monday–Thursday fasting movement, students are trained to develop discipline, patience, and self-control, which form the foundation of resilient and independent

character. Meanwhile, the *kitab kuning* reading movement cultivates a love for knowledge, humility in learning, and respect toward teachers—moral values that are increasingly important amid today's culture of instant gratification and individualism. The sunnah practices movement, such as sholawatan, tahlilan, and istighotsah, strengthens spiritual togetherness within the madrasah environment, fostering religious, caring, and humble character.

Furthermore, the Qur'an memorization movement not only nurtures a love for the Qur'an but also builds consistency (istiqamah), meticulousness, and high integrity, as memorizing the Qur'an requires discipline and inner honesty. Meanwhile, the mother tongue preservation movement plays an important role in fostering polite, culturally rooted, and respectful character. The local language, especially basa krama (the refined form of Javanese), functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for internalizing the values of courtesy, respect toward teachers, and awareness of one's cultural roots.

Hence, *GEMMATI* serves as an integrative platform for character education that combines the spiritual (religious), social (cultural), and moral (ethical) dimensions. Islamic values provide a normative direction for forming faithful and pious individuals, while local cultural values strengthen students' emotional and contextual connection to those values. The integration of both makes the educational process not only cognitive but also affective and practical.

Overall, the *GEMMATI* Program makes a significant contribution to the formation of students who are faithful, moral, cultured, and competitive. Through the harmony between Islamic values and local wisdom, madrasahs become spaces for character education that are relevant to contemporary needs while remaining deeply rooted in the nation's spiritual and cultural identity.

Discussion

Analysis of the Meaning of Integration in the *GEMMATI* Program

In the study of the *GEMMATI* Program, the phrase "Agamis, Teladan, Insani" can be understood as a conceptual bridge connecting Islamic values with local cultural values.

First, the term "Agamis" (Religious) emphasizes that the program is based on Islamic teachings as divine revelation and the primary source of values, aligning with studies suggesting that Islamic education must integrate religious norms into character learning.

Second, the term "Teladan" (Exemplary) indicates that the program not only emphasizes cognitive mastery or religious rituals but also moral exemplarity in behavior, which in local culture is often associated with adab (ethics), politeness, and unggah-ungguh (proper manners). Research has shown that character strengthening through madrasah-based school culture heavily depends on habitual practices that reflect adab and local cultural values.

Third, the term "Insani" (Humane) refers to the humanistic dimension of education—implying that the program is oriented toward developing holistic individuals: faith and knowledge, spirituality and social awareness, integrated within the cultural context of society. This integration aligns with the idea that effective Islamic education must be socially and culturally relevant, not detached from the local context.

Furthermore, the *GEMMATI* Program can be seen as a social text symbolizing the unity of three essential domains: revelation (religion), knowledge (education), and ethics (culture). In the domain of revelation-religion, the program emphasizes habitual rituals and understanding Islamic values; in the domain of knowledge, it promotes *kitab kuning* reading and Qur'an memorization; and in the domain of ethics-culture, it elevates local wisdom such as the use of the mother tongue, social traditions, and communal culture. Studies on the integration of local culture into Islamic education indicate that values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), musyawarah (deliberation), and unggah-ungguh (courtesy) can be operationalized within the school environment to strengthen students' identity and character.

In this perspective, the phrase "Agamis, Teladan, Insani" is not merely a slogan but is constructed as an interpretative framework for analyzing how religious and local cultural values are synthesized within madrasah policies and practices through the *GEMMATI* Program. Such a framework helps explain that integration does not merely occur by adding local culture into religious programs but by positioning local culture as an organic component of character formation grounded in Islamic values, wherein revelation, knowledge, and ethics coexist and reinforce one another in the madrasah context.

GEMMATI's Relation to the Integration–Interconnection Paradigm

The integration–interconnection paradigm asserts that Islamic learning and education should not exist in a dichotomy between religion and culture but must unite the elements of revelation, intellect/knowledge, and ethics/philosophy. Within this framework, three principal dimensions are identified: Hadharah an-Nash (the civilization of revelation/text), Hadharah al-'Ilm (the civilization of knowledge), and Hadharah al-Falsafah (the civilization of philosophy/ethics), which are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. As explained by (Rahmat & M, n.d.) "Hadharah al-Nash, Hadharah al-'Ilm, and Hadharah al-Falsafah are the three main pillars that shape Islamic civilization. These three dimensions complement one another in building a holistic Islamic civilization that integrates revelation, intellect, and knowledge as guidance for human life."

In implementing programs such as *GEMMATI*, this paradigm is relevant because it allows madrasahs to move beyond the dichotomy of "religion versus culture" and become spaces that

integrate Islamic values with local culture comprehensively. This is clearly evident in every movement within *GEMMATI*, which is designed not merely as a religious activity but as a socio-cultural practice deeply rooted in Javanese communal life.

For example, the sunnah practice movement—including sholawatan, istighotsah, and tahlilan—embodies the integration of Islamic values with the religious traditions of Javanese pesantren. These activities teach Islamic spirituality (remembrance, prayer, and praise to Allah and His Messenger) while preserving the local traditions of togetherness and social solidarity. Research indicates that traditions such as tahlilan and sholawatan function as effective media for social and religious character education because they are easily accepted by the community without creating cultural resistance.(Jamaluddin & Manda, 2023)

In addition, the *kitab kuning* reading movement, involving texts such as Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim and Bidayatul Hidayah, represents a synthesis of Islamic values and local culture. Learning these books is carried out using the sorogan and bandongan methods—traditional learning systems characteristic of Javanese pesantren. These methods not only transfer religious knowledge but also inculcate values of adab, patience, and respect for teachers, which are inherited from the educational culture of Islamic learning in the Nusantara. (Winingsih et al., n.d.)

Meanwhile, the mother tongue preservation movement illustrates another aspect of integration: the local language is used as a medium for internalizing Islamic values. The use of basa krama (refined Javanese speech levels) in madrasah interactions teaches courtesy, respect for teachers, and mutual regard among peers—values consistent with Islamic teachings on adab and akhlaqul karimah. Through language, religious values are not only taught but lived in daily communication practices, making local culture a natural vessel for Islamic values.(Pratama, 2023)

Thus, the *GEMMATI* Program embodies substantial and contextual integration: Islam provides the normative foundation for moral and spiritual values, while local culture offers tangible spaces and symbols for their internalization. The two merge within the madrasah system, creating harmony between revelation, knowledge, and culture within a comprehensive framework of character education.

The Contribution of the *GEMMATI* Program to the Madrasah Education Model

The *GEMMATI* 2025 Program can serve as a model for implementing character education based on the integration of Islamic values and local culture, as it offers a policy framework that combines religious rituals, classical text learning, tahfidz programs, and the cultivation of the mother tongue into a cohesive educational ecosystem(Tim Penyusun Kantor Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Blitar, 2025)

The *GEMMATI* approach, which integrates acts of worship, intellectual development, and cultural practices within the school environment, reflects the idea that education must unite revelation and knowledge, preventing the fragmentation between religious values and academic aspects (Abidin et al., 2014). Such an approach aligns with the integralistic knowledge paradigm proposed by Kuntowijoyo, which emphasizes that science should never be detached from revelation and moral values. In his view, knowledge must be directed toward building a civilized knowledge system, rather than being merely technical or pragmatic. Kuntowijoyo refers to this process as the objectification of Islamic values in knowledge and culture—bringing Islamic principles into social and cultural life in rational and applicable forms. (A'yuni & Hijrawan, 2021).

From an epistemological perspective, Ismail R. al-Faruqi's concept of the Islamization of Knowledge and tauhidic epistemology underscores the need to ground knowledge in the framework of tauhid so that knowledge and values are inseparable. This principle supports the argument that *GEMMATI* is not merely a ritual program but also an effort to reorient curricula and educational practices toward a holistic Islamic vision (Lestari, 2020). Thus, *GEMMATI* offers an operational model for madrasahs seeking to implement holistic character education, wherein the development of morality (values), mastery of knowledge (competence), and preservation of local culture (identity) occur simultaneously and synergistically.

From the perspective of religious moderation, the integration of Islamic and local cultural values in the GEMMATI Program contributes to the development of a balanced and contextual form of religiosity. By embedding Islamic teachings within local cultural practices—such as sholawatan, tahlilan, communal rituals, and the use of refined mother tongue—religious values are internalized through familiar and socially accepted expressions. This approach prevents the emergence of rigid, text-centered religiosity on the one hand and culturally detached secularism on the other. Instead, GEMMATI fosters a form of religious character that is inclusive, humane, and culturally grounded, enabling students to practice Islam in a manner that is faithful to its normative principles while remaining responsive to local social realities. In this sense, the integration promoted by GEMMATI reflects the substantive dimension of religious moderation, where harmony between faith, culture, and social ethics becomes the foundation of character education in madrasahs.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and theoretical interpretation of the *GEMMATI* 2025 document, several key findings can be summarized as follows: (1) the form of integration between Islamic values and local culture in the *GEMMATI* Program is manifested through symbols, practices, and madrasah culture that harmoniously combine religious teachings with local wisdom; (2) the integrated values include Islamic values such as worship (ibadah), piety (taqwa), ethics (adab), and brotherhood (ukhuwah), as well as local cultural values such as tepa selira (empathy), gotong royong (mutual cooperation), unggah-ungguh (courtesy), and nguri-uri kabudayan (cultural preservation); (3) the integration of these values is highly relevant to character education, as it fosters students who are religious, virtuous, cultured, and rooted in national identity. The GEMMATI Program serves as a model for madrasah education that integrates Islamic and local cultural values in a contextual and applicable manner.

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