

## Islamic Values and Local Culture in the Javanese *Slametan* Tradition: A Social Studies Education Perspective

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the Islamic and local cultural values embedded in the Javanese *slametan* tradition from the perspective of Social Studies education, as an effort to integrate local wisdom with Islamic values in social education in Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using a library research method and thematic analysis of various literature sources related to the *slametan* tradition. The findings indicate that *slametan* represents a harmonious form of acculturation between Islamic teachings and Javanese culture. Values such as *tauhid* (oneness of God), gratitude, prayer, and solidarity derived from Islam intertwine with *rukun* (social harmony), *tepa selira* (empathy), and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) as essential elements of Javanese cultural identity. The tradition functions not only as a religious ritual but also as a medium for strengthening social solidarity and spiritual awareness within the community. In the context of Social Studies education, *slametan* is relevant as a contextual learning resource that integrates moral, social, and religious values rooted in local wisdom. Therefore, integrating Islamic and local cultural values into social education can reinforce the formation of students' moral, cultural, and social character.

**Keywords:** *slametan*, Islamic values, local culture, local wisdom, social studies education

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### Introduction

The *slametan* tradition is one of the Javanese cultural heritages that remains alive and continues to be practiced by Muslim communities to this day. This tradition integrates Islamic values with local wisdom, reflecting the way Javanese society understands religious teachings within their social and cultural contexts. Through activities such as collective prayer, the sharing of food as almsgiving, and communal gatherings, *slametan* functions as both a spiritual and social medium that reinforces values of togetherness, solidarity, and mutual cooperation in community life. In the modern context, this tradition not only represents a form of Javanese religious expression but also serves as a symbol of the harmonious integration between Islam and local culture that is inclusive and moderate in nature (Wardini et al., 2025a).

Amid the advancement of globalization and the increasingly modern transformation of educational systems, local traditions such as *slametan* face serious challenges due to a more rational societal mindset that tends to move away from traditional values. Education systems that are predominantly oriented toward cognitive achievement often place insufficient emphasis on the social and moral dimensions shaped by community culture. In fact, the values embodied in the *slametan* tradition, such as gratitude, togetherness, and prayer constitute forms of character education that are highly relevant to the social context of community life (Ramdhani & Wahidin, 2022). Therefore, integrating local wisdom into social education is an important step in strengthening the cultural and religious identity of learners.

Several previous studies have emphasized that the relevance of Islamic values and local culture plays an important role in strengthening the social morality of communities. For example, (Herlambang, 2023)

demonstrates that the *slametan* tradition functions as a medium of social interaction and strengthens relationships among community members. Moreover, *slametan* is grounded in Qur'anic teachings within Javanese Muslim society. These findings indicate that religious traditions such as *slametan* play a significant role in maintaining social unity, fostering solidarity, and instilling humanitarian values that are aligned with Islamic teachings. Similar findings were presented by (Suwandi & Dewi Yunita Sari, 2025) in their study on Islamic values in the *slametan* tradition of the Sempu Village community in Ponorogo, where this ritual serves as a means of strengthening spiritual and social awareness through collective prayer and almsgiving. Taken together, these studies show that Islam and local culture are not contradictory, but rather complement each other in shaping a religious and harmonious society.

Furthermore, Rusyaida's (Rusyaida, 2024) study on local policies and Islamic practices indicates that the integration of religion and custom (*'urf*) constitutes an important foundation for the formation of civilized social behavior within society. This perspective reinforces the view that understanding Islam within the context of local culture can create balance and value moderation in social life. The study also demonstrates that local cultural practices such as *slametan* have great potential to be developed as sources of learning for social, moral, and religious values, particularly within the context of social studies education.

Although many studies have examined the theological and social aspects of the *slametan* tradition, there remains limited research that focuses on its potential as a medium for social learning that embodies Islamic values. This gap opens space for a new approach that views *slametan* not merely as a religious ritual practice, but also as a form of social learning rich in religious and cultural values. Accordingly, this study seeks to position the *slametan* tradition as an integral part of social studies education in order to reveal its relevance to character formation and the development of societal values in contemporary contexts.

Based on this background, this study seeks to address the following question: how are Islamic values and local culture manifested in the Javanese *slametan* tradition from a social studies education perspective? Therefore, this research aims to analyze Islamic values and local culture within the Javanese *slametan* tradition from the perspective of social studies education, as an effort to integrate local wisdom with Islamic values in social education in Indonesia.

## Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at understanding and interpreting the Islamic values and local culture embedded in the Javanese *slametan* tradition. This approach is chosen because it is well suited to examining the meanings and social symbols that exist within community cultural practices in a contextual and naturalistic manner. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher can provide an in-depth explanation of the processes, meanings, and social functions of the *slametan* tradition within the framework of Islamic values internalized in community life, as well as its relevance to learning and the reinforcement of social values in the context of social studies education. This approach is widely used in socio-cultural studies because it is able to explain the meanings of phenomena based on the context of everyday life (Asmawi & Alam, 2024).

The research data were obtained through a literature study (*library research*) focusing on the exploration and analysis of various written sources relevant to the research theme. Primary data sources include classical and contemporary scholarly works that discuss the relationship between Islam and Javanese culture, while secondary data sources consist of books, journal articles, research reports, and other relevant documents. This method allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of Islamic concepts and local cultural values without direct involvement in empirical activities. In addition, the literature-based approach is effective for identifying patterns of thought and socio-cultural constructions within the Islamic context (Snyder, 2019).

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach. The stages of analysis included a comprehensive reading of all relevant literature sources, coding key concepts that emerged, grouping these codes into thematic categories, and deriving core themes that reflect Islamic values and local culture within the *slametan* tradition. Through this approach, recurring and conceptually relevant patterns of meaning can be identified, resulting in a more comprehensive interpretation. The thematic approach was selected because of its flexibility and its applicability to textual data and literature without losing their socio-cultural context.

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the analytical results, this study employed a source triangulation strategy by comparing and verifying findings across multiple literature sources in order to minimize interpretive bias. In addition, the processes of data collection and analysis were carried out systematically through detailed

documentation of research procedures, data categorization, and the development of analytic memos to establish a transparent audit trail. This process strengthens the credibility and confirmability of qualitative text-based research, enabling the findings to contribute meaningfully to the development of social studies discourse grounded in Islamic values and local culture.

## Results & Discussion

### An Overview of the Javanese *Slametan* Tradition

The *slametan* tradition is one of the strongest and most deeply rooted forms of local wisdom in Javanese society. The term *slamet* is derived from the Arabic word *salāmah*, meaning safety or well-being. In practice, *slametan* is understood as a ritual ceremony intended to seek safety, tranquility, and prosperity from God. Since the pre-Islamic period, when Javanese society adhered to animistic and dynamistic beliefs, this ceremony has functioned as both a spiritual and social medium. However, the arrival of Islam in the fifteenth century brought significant changes to its meaning and implementation. Islamic values were subsequently integrated into this tradition through a harmonious process of acculturation (Nasir, 2019).

The process of Islamization carried out by the *Walisongo* did not seek to radically eliminate local traditions, but rather to instill Islamic values within them. This cultural approach transformed the *slametan* into an effective medium of *da'wah*. Pre-existing values of prayer, gratitude, and togetherness were enriched with Islamic religious elements, such as the recitation of *tablil*, collective prayers, and the invocation of the name of Allah in every stage of the ritual (Kurniawati & Ahmadi, 2022). Consequently, *slametan* became a symbol of harmonious acculturation between Islam and Javanese culture.

In practice, *slametan* is performed at various important moments in community life, both personal and communal in nature. Its forms include *slametan* for birth (such as *mitoni* and *brokohan*), *slametan* for death (including *tablilan*, *nyewu*, and *haul*), *slametan* for harvest (*wivitan*), and *slametan* for a new house (*selametan omah anyar*). Although these rituals differ in context, the core of all such practices remains the same: collective prayer and shared meals conducted in a spirit of togetherness. The sequence of events typically begins with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an, followed by *tablil* and collective prayers, and concludes with a communal feast (*kenduri*) as an expression of gratitude and fraternity (Andana et al., 2025; Herlambang, 2023; Setiyowati & Taufiq, 2024).

In addition to functioning as a religious ritual, *slametan* also represents a form of social solidarity. Community members actively participate from the preparation to the implementation stages, including cooking, arranging the venue, and cleaning the environment, all of which are carried out through mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*). This sense of togetherness reflects the social function of *slametan* as a means of strengthening social bonds, fostering closer relationships among community members, and encouraging a spirit of mutual assistance (Herlambang, 2023). Spiritually, *slametan* also cultivates a collective awareness that true safety and well-being come only from Allah. Through prayers and the recitation of *tablil*, the community strengthens its relationship with God while simultaneously reinforcing bonds among fellow human beings. Thus, *slametan* serves as a symbol of the integration of social and spiritual dimensions within Javanese culture that remains alive and meaningful to this day.

### Islamic Values in the *Slametan* Tradition

The transformation of meaning within the *slametan* tradition demonstrates that Javanese culture is able to embrace Islamic values without losing its local identity. The first value that is clearly evident is *tawhīd*, namely the affirmation of the oneness of Allah. Through the recitation of prayers, *tablil*, and *dhikr*, the ritual emphasizes the belief that true safety and well-being come only from Allah. The phrase *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, repeatedly recited in *tablil*, is not merely a verbal expression, but a declaration of faith that strengthens the spirituality of Javanese society (Nasir, 2019). Thus, although *slametan* originates from local culture, its theological meaning has been profoundly Islamized. The ritual is no longer a form of veneration of spirits or supernatural beings as in the pre-Islamic period, but rather serves as a means of affirming the oneness of God through the practices of prayer and *tablil*.

The next value is gratitude (*shukr*), which is evident in the practice of sharing food at every *slametan* event. This communal meal is not merely a symbol of togetherness, but a tangible expression of gratitude to Allah for the blessings bestowed. In the Islamic context, sharing food represents an act of *ṣadaqah* and an expression of thankfulness for sustenance (Andana et al., 2025). According to (Kurniawati & Ahmadi, 2022), the expression of

gratitude in *slametan* also strengthens social solidarity, as the shared food serves as a means of connecting the hearts of community members. In other words, gratitude in this tradition is transformed into a socially meaningful action.

Furthermore, the values of mutual assistance and *ukhuwah* are reflected in the community's involvement in the implementation of *slametan*. All activities are carried out voluntarily, from preparing the food and arranging the venue to conducting the prayers. This value aligns with the Islamic teaching of *ta'awun 'alā al-birr wa al-taqwā*, namely mutual cooperation in goodness and piety. The spirit of *gotong royong* embodied in *slametan* serves as a medium of social education that instills the importance of cooperation, empathy, and care for others (Herlambang, 2023; Maulana, 2018).

The final prominent dimension is collective prayer and *dhikr*, which constitute the spiritual core of *slametan*. Within this atmosphere of togetherness, community members attain inner tranquility and strengthen their awareness of the greatness of Allah. The recitation of *tablil* and verses from the Holy Qur'an functions as a means of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), which not only deepens the relationship between humans and God but also reinforces social brotherhood (Setiyowati & Taufiq, 2024). Thus, the *slametan* tradition represents an integration of Islamic values and local culture that creates harmony between spirituality and social life within Javanese society.

### Javanese Local Cultural Values

Javanese local cultural values represent a worldview and a set of behavioral guidelines that emphasize balance, politeness, and harmony in everyday life, which have been passed down from generation to generation. These values serve as a foundation for speech, actions, and relationships, both among fellow human beings and between humans and God. In the social context, Javanese cultural values function not only as a code of ethics for living but also as a means of building a peaceful social order grounded in mutual respect.

One of the most important values in Javanese culture is *rukun*, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony in relationships among individuals and within the community. This value encourages people to avoid conflict, prioritize peace, and respect differences of opinion in order to create an atmosphere of tranquility and mutual appreciation (Sa'adah et al., 2025). The principle of *rukun* serves as a foundation for social stability and reflects the collective orientation of Javanese society toward harmonious living.

In addition, the value of *tepa selira* teaches the importance of respecting the rights of others, exercising self-restraint in behavior, and demonstrating empathy in social interactions. This value helps individuals understand and appreciate the feelings of others, thereby fostering more harmonious and tolerant social relationships (Widiyanti, 2024). The practice of *tepa selira* reflects the level of an individual's social morality within Javanese society. Another key value is *gotong royong*, which embodies the spirit of cooperation and solidarity in achieving common goals. In the context of addressing social problems, this value plays a crucial role in strengthening togetherness and preventing individualistic attitudes (Sa'adah et al., 2025). *Gotong royong* represents a tangible expression of social ethics that prioritize collective interests over personal ones.

Values such as *sabar* (patience) and *eling* (self-awareness) also play a significant role in Javanese culture. *Sabar* trains individuals to regulate their emotions, remain calm, and think clearly when facing challenges, while *eling* fosters self-awareness and continuous self-reflection, guiding individuals to act in accordance with moral values. The combination of these values shapes a wise personality—one that is capable of positioning oneself appropriately and remaining resilient in the face of life's challenges (Sa'adah et al., 2025). Beyond ethical values, Javanese culture is also rich in social and moral symbols that carry profound philosophical meanings.

These symbols are reflected in language, dance, architecture, and traditional attire. One example is classical Javanese batik motifs, which function not merely as decorative elements but also convey moral messages. For instance, the *kawung* motif symbolizes balance between humans and nature, reminding people to maintain harmonious relationships with the environment and with one another. Thus, cultural symbols function as a medium of moral education that instills values of simplicity, responsibility, and respect for nature and fellow human beings.

Understanding these cultural symbols plays an important role in instilling cultural identity among younger generations. By comprehending the philosophical meanings of batik motifs, architecture, and local arts, society—especially young people is encouraged to develop pride in cultural heritage and to actively participate in its

preservation amid the influences of modernization and globalization (Handayani et al., 2021). In this way, Javanese cultural values remain relevant as moral and social resources for shaping a civilized society with noble character.

Moreover, these cultural values serve as an important foundation for creating a space of dialogue between tradition and religion. The Javanese cultural emphasis on harmony, balance, and respect for others opens the way for a peaceful process of acculturation between Islam and local culture. Therefore, the following section will explain how Islamic values interact with Javanese culture, resulting in a form of religiosity that is moderate and deeply rooted in local wisdom (Widayanti & Handayani, 2024).

### The Interaction of Islamic Values and Local Culture

The encounter between Islam and Javanese culture represents one of the most harmonious examples of cultural acculturation in the Indonesian archipelago. The introduction of Islam to Java did not occur in a confrontational manner, but rather through a long process of social and cultural dialogue. Muslim traders and scholars introduced Islamic teachings through trade networks, *da'wah*, education, and social relationships in both coastal and inland areas. The approach employed was highly attuned to the local cultural context, as Islamic propagation did not disregard existing traditions, but instead sought to reinterpret them by imparting new meanings based on Islamic teachings.

The spread of Islam in Java expanded significantly during the era of the *Walisongo*, particularly through culturally integrated methods of *da'wah* developed by figures such as Sunan Kalijaga. He utilized artistic forms such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), traditional songs (*tembang*), and *gamelan* music as media to convey Islamic teachings in a subtle and socially acceptable manner. This strategy allowed the principles of *tawhīd*, moral conduct (*akhlāq*), and worship (*ibādah*) to be embedded within cultural practices without generating value conflicts. Through this process, Islam developed peacefully and shaped a distinctive form of religiosity known as *Islam Kejawen* an expression of Islam that is deeply embedded in local culture without compromising the essence of its teachings (Alif et al., 2020).

Within this acculturation process, core Islamic values such as *tawhīd*, noble character, and religious devotion did not eliminate pre-existing cultural practices, but rather enriched and reinterpreted them to align with Islamic principles. Javanese culture, which has long emphasized harmony and social ethics, thus acquired a new spiritual dimension. For instance, the *slametan* tradition, which previously focused on safety and the balance of life, has been redefined as an expression of gratitude to Allah and a collective prayer for communal well-being (Faris, 2014). In this way, Islam provides religious direction to Javanese culture, while Javanese culture offers a social framework that enables Islamic teachings to flourish within society.

Several studies indicate that the incorporation of Islamic values into Javanese culture is also evident in local arts and rituals. For example, in *wayang kulit* performances, the *punakawan* characters are often employed to convey Islamic moral messages such as honesty, patience, and sincerity in worship (Tarisya zahwa et al., 2025). Such approaches demonstrate that Islam did not arrive to eradicate culture, but rather to embed spiritual meaning within cultural expressions already familiar to the community.

Conversely, long-established traditions were not abandoned following the arrival of Islam; instead, they were revitalized with renewed spiritual significance. Practices such as *selamatan*, *kenduri*, and *ruwatan* continue to be observed, now accompanied by prayers and the recitation of *tahlil*, reflecting values of gratitude, togetherness, and faith. This illustrates the ability of Javanese society to adapt to Islamic teachings without losing its cultural identity. As a result, this process has fostered a form of religiosity that is moderate, open, and tolerant of differences (Aminim et al., 2025).

The harmony between Islam and local culture reflects a balance between universal religious values and localized social wisdom. Islam teaches principles of justice, compassion, and deliberation, while Javanese culture emphasizes *gotong royong*, *rukun*, and mutual respect. When these values converge, they give rise to a society that is firmly rooted in tradition while upholding strong religious principles (Qurroti A'yun, M Bayu Akbar Pamungkas, Intan Sintia Dewi Agustin, Imamah Zahroh, Rakhmad Galih Afandi, 2023; Taufik, 2016). This process also demonstrates that Islam is a flexible religion that respects local wisdom, provided it does not contradict the principle of *tawhīd*.

Nevertheless, this harmony is not without challenges. In the modern context, certain groups reject local traditions on the grounds that they are perceived as inconsistent with “pure” Islamic teachings. At the same time, globalization has gradually eroded national cultural identities. Therefore, strengthening an understanding of moderate and contextual Islamic values is essential to ensure that local culture does not lose its spiritual significance. In this way, Islam and Javanese culture can continue to enrich one another, fostering a religious, culturally grounded society with strong character and a commitment to humanitarian values (Fauziah, 2025).

### Relevance for Social Studies Education

Social Studies education plays an important role in helping learners understand social realities, shape moral behavior, and develop awareness to contribute positively within a diverse society. Social Studies learning not only teaches social theories but also instills moral, social, and cultural values that can be internalized in everyday life. In this context, the Javanese *slametan* tradition, which encompasses local cultural, social, and religious dimensions, holds high relevance as a contextual and meaningful learning resource for Social Studies education.

The *slametan* tradition embodies social values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and concern for others, moral values such as honesty and responsibility, as well as religious values such as prayer and gratitude. When this tradition is examined within Social Studies learning, students can better understand the relationship between social theories and cultural practices in society. Research by Annisa and Wardana (Annisa & Wardana, 2020) shows that in the community of Jlatren, Sleman, the *slametan* tradition functions not only as a religious ritual but also as a means of strengthening social solidarity and reinforcing the value of *tawhīd*. By using this tradition as a case study, learners can deepen their understanding of social interaction, morality, and religiosity within a local cultural context. The *slametan* tradition is not merely a cultural ritual activity but also serves as a medium for value-based learning that reflects the integration of Islamic teachings and Javanese local wisdom. Islamic values such as sincerity, tolerance, and responsibility that are internalized within this tradition can serve as a foundation for strengthening students' social character in Social Studies learning. This is consistent with the findings of Wardini et al. (Wardini et al., 2025b) which explain that cultural practices such as *slametan*, *sedekah bumi*, and pilgrimage (*ziarah*), when integrated with *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (ASWAJA) Islamic teachings, are able to foster community participation and strengthen both religious and social identity. Thus, these values are highly relevant for shaping students' social character through Social Studies education.

In order for the social, moral, and religious values embedded in the *slametan* tradition to be understood not merely as cultural heritage but also to be applied in concrete actions, it is necessary to integrate local wisdom into the Social Studies curriculum. This integration can be carried out through value-based learning approaches grounded in local principles such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, and gratitude. These findings are in line with the study by Rismawati (Rismawati et al., 2025), which emphasizes that the strengthening of students' social character and cultural identity can be achieved when learning is directly connected to the context of their everyday lives.

### Implications and Reflection

The Javanese *slametan* tradition demonstrates a harmony between cultural values and Islamic teachings that has the potential to serve as a medium for shaping students' cultural and spiritual identity. Values such as gratitude to God, a spirit of togetherness, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), and sincerity in sharing can be implemented in everyday life through caring attitudes toward others, cooperation within the school environment, and humility in social interactions (Mustaghfiroh & Safe'i, 2021). Thus, students do not merely understand cultural heritage as factual knowledge, but also internalize spiritual values that strengthen their character in the midst of modern life.

For Social Studies teachers, the local values embedded in the *slametan* tradition can be utilized as a form of contextual learning that connects social theory with students' cultural experiences. Teachers may apply various strategies, such as discussing cultural values, analyzing specific cases, conducting interviews with community leaders, and implementing projects focused on local culture (Afif, 2022). Through these approaches, students are encouraged to understand that social studies is not only theoretical in nature, but also highly relevant to the development of cultural awareness and social responsibility.

The integration of local values into Social Studies learning provides an opportunity for education not only to transfer knowledge but also to function as a process of character formation and cultural awareness. By understanding the values embodied in the *slametan* tradition, students can develop moderate and tolerant attitudes while remaining firmly rooted in their national cultural identity. In this way, Social Studies education contributes to the emergence of a generation that is religious, culturally grounded, and capable of adapting to global challenges without losing its social identity.

### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the *slametan* tradition reflects a harmonious balance between Islamic values and Javanese local culture. Through prayer, gratitude, and a spirit of togetherness, *slametan* embodies the values of *tawhīd*, *ukhūwah*, and gratitude, which are integrated with Javanese cultural ethics such as *rukun*, *tepa selira*, and *gotong royong*. This interaction indicates that Islam in Java has developed not through the rejection of local culture, but through a process of integration that enriches both the religious and social life of the community.

In the context of Social Studies education, the values embedded in the *slametan* tradition have strong pedagogical relevance. This tradition can serve as a contextual learning resource that integrates moral, social, and spiritual education grounded in local wisdom. Such an approach encourages learners to appreciate cultural diversity, foster social harmony, and internalize religious values in community life. Thus, the revitalization of local traditions based on Islamic values makes a significant contribution to the formation of students' social and cultural character within a pluralistic society.

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