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Integrating Islamic Values and Local Wisdom in Aceh's Education Qanuns: A Narrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Aceh holds special authority to organize education grounded in Islamic values and local culture, yet evidence on how its education qanuns translate this mandate into curriculum and classroom practice is scattered across studies. This article synthesizes recent literature on the integration of Islamic values and local wisdom in Aceh's education qanuns, with attention to primary education. Using a qualitative narrative literature review, the study analyzed Qanun Number 11 of 2014, its amendment in Qanun Number 9 of 2015, and sixteen scholarly publications issued between 2019 and 2026 that were selected purposively from Indonesian and international sources. The data were coded and organized into themes through reflexive thematic analysis. Four findings emerged. First, the qanuns allocate authority over an Islamic Aceh curriculum and local content but do not define operational standards. Second, schools implement the mandate mainly through local content subjects, habituation, and visiting dayah teachers, and they are constrained by missing technical guidelines, limited funding, and uneven teacher preparation. Third, local wisdom, particularly narit maja and school culture, serves as a practical medium for character formation, although locally grounded learning resources remain scarce. Fourth, tensions persist among regional sharia autonomy, children's rights, inclusion, and national standards. The article proposes operational technical guidelines, teacher training based on local wisdom, shared resource development, and evaluative research in primary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Aceh has special authority to organize education in line with Islamic values and local culture. Although education in the province follows the national system, the special

authority granted by Law Number 44 of 1999 and Law Number 18 of 2001 allows it to be grounded in Islamic law (Fajri et al., 2021). This authority has been elaborated through successive qanuns, from Qanun Number 23 of 2002 and Qanun Number 5 of 2008 to Qanun Number 11 of 2014 on the implementation of education, which was amended by Qanun Number 9 of 2015 (Fajri et al., 2021; Ikhwan et al., 2024).

The 2015 amendment was prompted by the redistribution of educational authority under national regional-government legislation (Pemerintah Aceh, 2015). Read together, the amended provisions of Qanun Number 11 of 2014 call for education that is *bermutu, merata, adil dan islami* (of good quality, equitable, fair, and Islamic) (Article 13(b)), refer to a *Kurikulum Aceh yang islami* (an Islamic Aceh curriculum) within the curriculum authority of the Aceh Government (Article 19(1)(d)), and list the preparation and determination of local content books among the authorities attached to learning facilities and infrastructure (Article 22(f)) (Pemerintah Aceh, 2014, 2015). Islamic values and local content are therefore written into the legal architecture of schooling in Aceh.

Yet studies repeatedly describe a gap between legal mandate and school practice. Zulkhairi and Syafari (2021) argue that guidelines for an Islamic curriculum remain insufficiently concrete, and that budget restrictions and the absence of a dedicated writing team have stalled implementation. A monitoring report cited by Fajri et al. (2021) found that only about 7% of the sampled vocational and senior high schools had attempted the curriculum introduced in 2018. At the primary level, Yani et al. (2024) report that principals and teachers in West Aceh struggle to translate the qanun's concept of Islamic education into practice, and Marwan et al. (2024) identify weak coordination, limited understanding of integrated education, missing technical guidelines, and low parental participation as persistent obstacles.

Alongside this policy literature, a second body of work examines local wisdom as the channel through which Islamic values become tangible for learners. Muna et al. (2026) describe how *narit maja*, Acehnese traditional sayings, carries Islamic adab (etiquette) into primary school routines, while Nurahmi et al. (2026) argue that educational anthropology can help schools preserve Acehnese culture without cultural homogenization. Wati et al. (2024) report comparable patterns in a Merdeka Curriculum setting in Southeast Aceh, and Ramli et al. (2025) show that universities in Aceh embed adat, oral literature, and traditional ecology under similar constraints.

These two strands have rarely been read together. Earlier reviews examined the network of Islamic education ideology in dayah (Ibda et al., 2023) and women's right to education under sharia (Ikhwan et al., 2024), but, to the author's knowledge, none

synthesizes how the education qanuns position Islamic values and local wisdom, or how that positioning reaches primary classrooms. This article addresses that gap through three research questions. First, how do the education qanuns frame the integration of Islamic values and local wisdom? Second, how is this integration carried out in curriculum and learning, especially in primary schools? Third, which obstacles, enabling factors, and tensions are reported, and what research gaps remain? The review is relevant to primary school teachers and teacher educators, who are expected to turn the wording of the qanuns into daily lessons. Their preparation matters because research on the Merdeka Curriculum likewise reports that teachers' readiness is generally positive but uneven in assessment and in adapting instruction to diverse learners (Helminsyah & Filina, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative narrative literature review combined with document analysis (Snyder, 2019). A narrative approach was chosen over a protocol-driven systematic review because the relevant evidence is heterogeneous, consisting of legal texts, small qualitative case studies, conceptual essays, and literature studies that cannot be pooled statistically. The aim is an interpretive synthesis of how integration is framed, implemented, and constrained, not an estimate of effects.

Two kinds of sources were analyzed. The primary documents were Qanun Number 11 of 2014 and Qanun Number 9 of 2015, the latter reproducing the amended articles. The secondary sources were scholarly publications retrieved in November 2026 from Garuda, Google Scholar, and publisher platforms. Searches combined Indonesian and English keywords such as *qanun pendidikan Aceh*, *kurikulum Islami*, *kearifan lokal Aceh*, *muatan lokal*, Aceh education qanun, sharia-based curriculum, and local wisdom, and backward citation tracking from key articles supplemented the keyword searches.

Publications were included when they (a) were issued between 2016 and 2026, so that the evidence reflects the current policy period; (b) examined education in Aceh with explicit attention to the qanuns, Islamic or sharia-based education, or local wisdom; (c) were peer-reviewed journal articles or refereed proceedings; and (d) reported a traceable method or data source. Opinion pieces, theses, and works without an accessible abstract or full text were excluded. The resulting corpus comprises sixteen studies published between 2019 and 2026 (Table 1). Two additional publications by the first author (Filina et al., 2023; Helminsyah & Filina, 2024), on primary science learning books and on teachers' readiness for the Merdeka Curriculum, are cited as contextual background only and were not part of

the coded corpus. Findings were extracted from full texts where accessible and from publisher abstracts otherwise.

Each study was coded for context, method, qanun referenced, and findings. Codes were grouped into themes through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), moving between regulatory text and empirical evidence. To strengthen credibility, interpretations were cross-checked among studies and against qanun provisions, bibliographic details were verified against publisher pages, and, where a source contained internal inconsistencies such as differing data-collection dates, only the consistently reported elements were used. This procedure is not a substitute for formal appraisal of bias, a limitation discussed below.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 summarizes the corpus. Four studies focus on primary schools (Muna et al., 2026; Nurahmi et al., 2026; Wati et al., 2024; Yani et al., 2024), two on dayah (Ibda et al., 2023; Nurainiah et al., 2025), two on higher education (Ramli et al., 2025; Sulaiman et al., 2023), and eight on provincial policy, curriculum systems, or rights. Almost all use qualitative, descriptive, or literature-based designs; only Marwan et al. (2024) combine methods, and none evaluates student learning outcomes with a comparative design.

Table 1. Synthesis of the Reviewed Studies

Study	Context and method	Main findings related to the qanuns
Husna (2019)	Qualitative descriptive; provincial policy under Qanun Number 9 of 2015	Solid legal basis, but stronger coordination among stakeholders is needed to reduce quality disparities
Fajri et al. (2021)	Descriptive review of regulations and prior studies	"National plus" curriculum; implemented from 2018; about 7% of sampled schools had tried it; teachers struggled to integrate values
Zulkhairi & Syafari (2021)	Qualitative; interviews with executive and legislative stakeholders	Curriculum guidelines not concrete; budget limits, leadership problems, no dedicated writing team
Ibda et al. (2023)	Systematic review; 53 of 544 Scopus articles	Ideology of Islamic education in dayah shapes teachers, curriculum, and learning; sharia values can clash with local tradition
Sulaiman et al. (2023)	Qualitative; five Islamic colleges; five leaders and 50 lecturers	Three curriculum models (integrated, separated-subject, correlated); limited collaboration with the Aceh government
Yani et al. (2024)	Descriptive qualitative; primary schools in West Aceh	Local content, habituation, and dayah teachers in schools; obstacles: untrained teachers, limited funds and materials, hours not counted

Study	Context and method	Main findings related to the qanuns
Marwan et al. (2024)	Mixed methods with SWOT analysis	Weak coordination, limited understanding, no technical guidelines, low participation; proposes a model of Islamic, national, and local values
Wati et al. (2024)	Descriptive qualitative; primary schools in Southeast Aceh	Local-wisdom-based Merdeka Curriculum strengthens skills and character; scarce local teaching materials
Husni & Pahlevi (2024)	Descriptive qualitative; interviews, observation, documents	No stand-alone sharia subject; values carried by Islamic religious education; weak enforcement; local curriculum proposed
Ikhwan et al. (2024)	Literature review; women's education under sharia	Progress alongside discrimination, violence, poverty, and low participation; inclusive curricula needed
Mukhlis et al. (2025)	Legal and policy study of sharia-based education	Tension between regional autonomy and children's rights; inclusion and multicultural content gaps
Nurainiah et al. (2025)	Qualitative; dayah curriculum and accreditation standards	Formal compliance differs from substantive innovation; weak management and teacher capacity limit progress
Ramli et al. (2025)	Qualitative; interviews and group discussions; 100 participants	Local knowledge enters through adat, oral literature, community learning; limited guidelines and training
Muntasir et al. (2025)	Library research; conceptual	Islamic politics and education jointly sustain local identity and social resilience
Muna et al. (2026)	Qualitative literature study; primary schools	Narit maja carries Islamic adab; obstacles: uneven teacher competence, scarce local resources, weak home reinforcement
Nurahmi et al. (2026)	Literature review; educational anthropology; primary schools	Cultural values strengthen identity and relevance and guard against cultural homogenization

The Qanuns: A Mandate That Allocates Authority but Leaves Content Undefined

Regarding the first research question, the qanuns place Islamic values at the base of Aceh's education system. The amended provisions call for education that is Islamic in orientation, name an Islamic Aceh curriculum, and provide for local content books (Pemerintah Aceh, 2014, 2015). However, the provisions reviewed here mainly allocate authority: they state which level of government is responsible for the curriculum, facilities, educators, and quality assurance, rather than prescribing what an Islamic or locally grounded curriculum must contain. This reading is consistent with Zulkhairi and Syafari (2021), who identify the absence of concrete guidelines as a main reason the Islamic

curriculum has stalled, and with Husna (2019), who finds that Aceh has a solid legal basis but needs stronger coordination among stakeholders.

The literature fills this definitional gap through interpretation. Fajri et al. (2021) describe a "national plus" curriculum that adds Islamic education and local content, such as Acehnese language, Aceh history, and local customs, to the national curriculum. Marwan et al. (2024) frame integrated education as a blend of Islamic, national, and Acehnese values. In higher education, Sulaiman et al. (2023) find three coexisting models of an Islamic sharia-based curriculum, namely integrated, separated-subject, and correlated, all grounded in the qanuns. The coexistence of several models suggests that, without an operational standard, each institution selects its own interpretation of "Islamic" and "integrated." Husni and Pahlevi (2024) reach a related conclusion for sharia learning: no stand-alone subject exists at any level, and sharia values are carried mainly by general Islamic religious education.

Implementation in Schools: Additive Routines Rather Than Integrated Pedagogy

For the second research question, the clearest primary-level evidence comes from Yani et al. (2024). In state primary schools in Woyla District, West Aceh, the qanun is implemented through local content subjects taught from Grade I to Grade VI, including Acehnese language, Arabic-Jawi script, Qur'an reading and writing, and tahsin and tahfiz, the last scheduled for two sessions of 35 minutes per week in each class. Pupils progress through the Iqro' levels and memorize short surahs. Schools also build habituation routines, such as greetings, handshakes, and prayers before and after lessons, together with literacy and calligraphy activities. Since 2019, a program has placed teachers from local dayah in schools to teach creed and morals, Qur'an and hadith, and Qur'an reading and writing in upper grades. Implementation follows four stages, namely planning, organizing, execution, and control, with school committees and supervisors involved.

Elsewhere the picture is similar. Wati et al. (2024) report that schools in Southeast Aceh weave local cultural values into Indonesian language, arts and culture, and project-based learning under the Merdeka Curriculum. Fajri et al. (2021) note that in many schools religious content appears only at the start of lessons and that teachers often cannot explain how to integrate values. In dayah, Nurainiah et al. (2025) distinguish formal compliance, such as complete curriculum documents, from substantive innovation in content and methods; the highest-rated dayah innovated most comprehensively, whereas a lower-rated one stayed with basic documents because of weak managerial commitment and limited teacher capacity.

Taken together, these findings suggest that integration is largely additive. Islamic and local content enter schools as separate subjects, routines, and visiting teachers, while the integration of values into everyday subject teaching depends on individual teachers who, as Yani et al. (2024) report, have received no training in local content or Islamic-value instruction.

Local Wisdom as a Medium for Islamic Values

Studies of local wisdom offer a more optimistic account. Muna et al. (2026) report that narit maja is used as a medium for inculcating moral values, and that Islamic adab built into the curriculum and school routines, with teachers as role models, is associated with greater politeness, social care, cooperation, and responsibility. Nurahmi et al. (2026) add that integrating Acehnese cultural values into primary lessons can strengthen cultural identity and make learning more relevant to pupils' lives, with educational anthropology offering a frame for contextualizing lessons. Wati et al. (2024) associate a local-wisdom-based Merdeka Curriculum with stronger academic skills, character, cultural pride, and environmental concern. At the university level, Ramli et al. (2025) show that local knowledge enters through adat modules, oral literature, community-based learning, and reflective assessment, although it is marginalized in science and technology faculties. Muntasir et al. (2025) frame the relationship conceptually: Islamic education transmits values and preserves local identity, which supports social resilience.

These positive accounts require careful reading. Several rest on literature studies or conceptual designs (Muna et al., 2026; Muntasir et al., 2025; Nurahmi et al., 2026), so reported gains in character are inferred from earlier work rather than measured directly. Local wisdom therefore appears promising as a pedagogical bridge between Islamic values and everyday learning, but the evidence for its effect on pupils remains thin.

Obstacles, Enabling Factors, and Tensions

For the third research question, obstacles recur across studies and school types (Table 2).

Table 2. Recurrent Obstacles and Enabling Factors

Category	Reported evidence	Sources
Policy guidance	No concrete guidelines or technical instructions; minimal socialization of the qanun	(Marwan et al., 2024; Yani et al., 2024; Zulkhairi & Syafari, 2021)
Resources	Limited budget; scarce local-content reading materials and learning resources	(Muna et al., 2026; Wati et al., 2024; Yani et al., 2024; Zulkhairi & Syafari, 2021)

Category	Reported evidence	Sources
Teacher capacity	No training in local content; difficulty integrating Islamic, national, and local values; few Acehnese-language teachers	(Husni & Pahlevi, 2024; Muna et al., 2026; Yani et al., 2024)
Administration	Local content hours not recorded in teacher data; no local indicators in accreditation rubrics	(Ramli et al., 2025; Yani et al., 2024)
Community	Limited parental and committee involvement; inconsistent reinforcement at home	(Marwan et al., 2024; Muna et al., 2026; Yani et al., 2024)
Enabling factors	School leadership, school–family–community partnership, teacher role modeling, curricular autonomy	(Muna et al., 2026; Ramli et al., 2025; Wati et al., 2024)

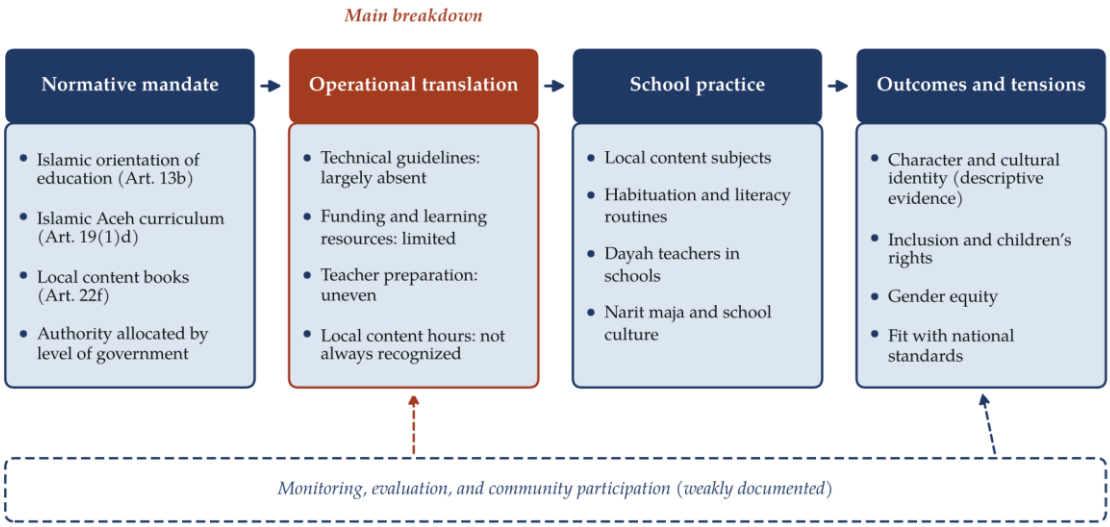
Two obstacles stand out because they connect directly to the design of the qanuns. First, the absence of technical guidelines leaves teachers to interpret the mandate alone (Marwan et al., 2024; Zulkhairi & Syafari, 2021). Second, administrative rules can undermine local content: Yani et al. (2024) report that local content subjects were not recorded in Dapodik, the national education data system, so their hours did not count toward teachers' mandatory teaching load, and Ramli et al. (2025) find accreditation rubrics without indicators for local content. Where such rules persist, a policy that encourages local content in words may discourage it in practice. Enabling factors are less documented but consistent: school leadership, partnerships among schools, families, and communities, teachers' role modeling, and faculty-level curricular autonomy (Muna et al., 2026; Ramli et al., 2025; Wati et al., 2024).

Several studies also point to tensions between regional sharia autonomy and other commitments. Mukhlis et al. (2025) examine how regional autonomy interacts with children's rights, noting that some schools do not yet meet inclusion standards and that religious materials are not sufficiently multicultural. Ikhwan et al. (2024) find that sharia can provide an environment in which women pursue education consistent with religious and cultural values, yet some enforcement is experienced as disciplining women and conflicts with their rights; they call for inclusive and relevant curricula. Ibda et al. (2023) observe that the ideology of Islamic education in dayah can collide with local tradition, and Husni and Pahlevi (2024) report that weak enforcement of the qanuns and the influence of globalization complicate the transmission of sharia values. These tensions are not arguments against integration; they show that integration needs monitoring and safeguards for inclusion.

Synthesis: From Mandate to Classroom

Figure 1 synthesizes the findings as a policy-to-practice chain. The model locates the main breakdown not at the normative level, where the qanuns are explicit about Islamic orientation and local content, but at the operational level between mandate and classroom. This explains why similar problems appear across school types and across studies: missing guidelines, limited resources, and uneven teacher preparation. It also explains why local wisdom, which teachers and communities can mobilize from their own cultural repertoire, is where the most positive reports concentrate.

For primary school teachers, the review implies three practical tasks: designing local content that is aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum (Marwan et al., 2024), developing contextual learning resources such as texts that use narit maja and Arabic-Jawi script, and strengthening home–school reinforcement of adab (Muna et al., 2026). Evidence from primary science teaching points the same way: an analysis of a third-grade science textbook found strong coverage of pedagogical content knowledge yet concluded that the book should not be teachers' only guide and that companion materials are needed (Filina et al., 2023). For teacher education programs, including primary teacher education, the repeated finding of uneven teacher competence (Muna et al., 2026; Yani et al., 2024), together with evidence that readiness for the Merdeka Curriculum is uneven in assessment and differentiation (Helminsyah & Filina, 2024), suggests that courses should prepare candidates to integrate Islamic, national, and local values in lesson design, not only to teach them as separate subjects.



Source: Author's synthesis of the reviewed studies (2026)

Figure 1. Policy-to-Practice Synthesis of Islamic and Local-Wisdom Integration in Aceh's Education Qanuns

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. The review is narrative and the corpus purposive, so relevant studies may be missing and no formal appraisal of bias was performed. Several sources are conceptual or literature-based, which limits the strength of evidence, and findings were drawn from publisher abstracts where full texts were inaccessible. The qanuns were analyzed through the amended provisions reproduced in Qanun Number 9 of 2015 and through cited secondary sources, not as consolidated texts. Finally, evidence from primary schools comes from a small number of districts, so generalization to all of Aceh should be cautious.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The reviewed literature shows that Aceh's education qanuns provide a strong normative basis for Islamic and locally grounded education: they assert an Islamic orientation, name an Islamic Aceh curriculum, and provide for local content. However, they mainly allocate authority and leave the substance of integration undefined. As a result, schools implement the mandate largely through additive means, namely local content subjects, habituation, and visiting dayah teachers, and they are constrained by missing technical guidelines, limited funding, administrative rules that do not recognize local content hours, and uneven teacher preparation. Local wisdom, especially narit maja and school culture, is the most promising medium for translating Islamic values into character formation, yet the evidence of its effects remains largely descriptive. Tensions among regional sharia autonomy, children's rights, inclusion, and national standards require continuing attention.

Suggestions

For policymakers, the priority is an operational technical guideline for the Islamic Aceh curriculum at the primary level, accompanied by recognition of local content hours in teacher administration and by funding for local learning resources. Training that prepares teachers to integrate Islamic, national, and local values should accompany the guideline, and monitoring should include safeguards for inclusion. For teacher educators, primary teacher education programs can add units on designing lessons based on narit maja and other local wisdom in line with the Merdeka Curriculum. For researchers, empirical evaluations in primary schools, comparisons across districts, and mixed-methods studies that measure learning and character outcomes are needed, as is a formal systematic

review with a registered protocol and risk-of-bias assessment once the primary evidence base has grown.

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