Journal of SOUTHERN SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES

Vol.1, No.1, pp.1-21
Website: https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jsss

Islamic Educational Values in The Batimung Tradition : Implications for The Young Generation in Banjar District

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Abstract

This study investigates the Islamic educational values embodied in the Batimung tradition, a ritual steam bath practiced by the Banjar ethnic group in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. Positioned within a Global South framework, Batimung is analyzed as a site of cultural resilience and pedagogical innovation amid the pressures of globalization and epistemic hegemony. Utilizing a qualitative literature review, the study draws from academic sources published between 2015 and 2024 to examine Batimung's moral, spiritual, ecological, and gendered dimensions. Findings reveal that Batimung fosters key Islamic values such as thaharah (purity), tazkiyah al-nafs (self-purification), muamalah (social ethics), and communal harmony through embodied, affective learning. Women's central roles in ritual performance further highlight its function as a matrifocal space for moral transmission. Beyond its symbolic significance, Batimung offers transformative potential for Islamic education through culturally grounded curricula, experiential pedagogy, and environmental ethics. The study advocates for the formal recognition of Batimung within Islamic education policy and practice, emphasizing its relevance for character formation, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and epistemological decolonization. Ultimately, Batimung represents a living educational system that integrates body, spirit, nature, and community—offering a holistic and context-responsive model for Islamic character education in the 21st century.

Keywords : Islamic Education; Batimung; Banjar Culture; Youth Character; Global South

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational discourse, the growing attention to character education reflects a broader recognition of the need for holistic human development, particularly in non-Western contexts. In Islamic pedagogy, the notion of education transcends cognitive training and instead cultivates the totality of the human being—encompassing intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. The goal of this comprehensive formation is the realization of insan kamil, or the ideal human who harmonizes faith (iman), intellect ('aql), and ethical action (amal). Within this paradigm, Islamic education is not merely a functional enterprise aimed at producing economically productive citizens but a moral project committed to forming individuals of taqwa (God-consciousness) and akhlakul karimah (noble character) (Al-Attas 1991; Abdullah 2014).

This perspective offers a crucial alternative to dominant models of education influenced by neoliberal and Eurocentric logics, which often emphasize standardization, competition, and technocratic knowledge (Connell 2007; Smith 2012). In contrast, Islamic educational philosophy centers divine revelation (wahyu) as the ultimate source of guidance while incorporating practical ethics rooted in community and tradition. Such a foundation becomes particularly relevant in Muslim-majority nations like Indonesia, where diverse cultural heritages intersect with Islamic values, offering rich pedagogical resources.

Indonesia, as the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, provides fertile ground for exploring how local wisdom can be integrated into Islamic educational frameworks. The convergence of Islamic teachings with indigenous traditions has produced syncretic practices that resist the epistemological colonization historically imposed by Western education systems (Zarkasyi 2011; Battiste 2013). Among the Banjar ethnic group in South Kalimantan, the Batimung ritual—a herbal steam bath traditionally performed before life transitions such as marriage—exemplifies this convergence. While often perceived as a cultural custom related to hygiene, Batimung contains symbolic and ethical dimensions aligned with Islamic principles such as purification (thaharah), self-reflection (muhasabah), and moral readiness for social responsibility (muamalah) (Ahmad and Sari 2015; Farhan 2018).

Viewed through the lens of embodied pedagogy, Batimung becomes a form of experiential learning. Participants engage in physical purification that echoes the maqasid al-shari'ah—specifically the protection of life (nafs), intellect ('aql), and religion (din). It offers not only bodily cleanliness but also emotional, spiritual, and communal cleansing. Unlike

formal classroom settings, this ritual nurtures values through sensory experience, memory, and social context, constituting a lived curriculum grounded in the rhythm of daily and ceremonial life (Freire 1970; Cajete 1994). Importantly, Batimung also acts as a site of epistemic resistance. As Raewyn Connell (2007) insists, knowledge from the Global South must be understood within its own frameworks rather than filtered through Western categories. The marginalization of practices like Batimung in formal education settings exemplifies the broader suppression of local epistemologies under postcolonial and modernist educational paradigms. However, recognizing Batimung as a legitimate pedagogical form enables a decolonial turn in Islamic education—one that validates indigenous knowledge, prioritizes relational learning, and recognizes spirituality as a central domain of knowledge (Smith 2012; Nasr 1981).

This critique of epistemic erasure is echoed in global efforts to decolonize education. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), drawing from Indigenous struggles, argues that educational systems have often functioned as instruments of cultural dispossession. In Muslim contexts, this dispossession includes the devaluation of traditional practices that integrate religion, ecology, and ethics. Batimung, by contrast, enacts a holistic pedagogy where the body becomes a site of learning, the community acts as a classroom, and wisdom is transmitted intergenerationally. Elder women, often the custodians of the ritual, play the role of educators, herbalists, and moral guides, demonstrating that authority in Islamic education need not be male-centric or text-based (Budi and Rahmawati 2017; Syauqi 2024).

Globalization, especially in its digital form, intensifies the urgency of recovering such traditions. According to We Are Social (2024), 89% of Indonesian youth use the internet, with over two-thirds active on social media. While these platforms offer opportunities for connection and knowledge sharing, they also expose young people to fragmented value systems, hyper-individualism, and consumerist ideologies. This cultural dislocation risks alienating youth from their ethical and spiritual roots. In response, Batimung can serve as a counter-narrative—fostering reflection, ethical orientation, and a sense of rootedness in local culture and Islamic spirituality (Iqbal 2020; Rizki and Anisa 2021). From a pedagogical standpoint, the ritual's potential extends beyond symbolic significance. Educational theorists increasingly advocate for culturally responsive teaching that affirms students' backgrounds, histories, and lived experiences (Zubaedi 2013). Incorporating Batimung into curricula—either through direct practice or reflective study—can enhance character education by making it more contextually meaningful and emotionally resonant. This aligns with Indonesia's educational

goals under the 2003 National Education Law, which promotes education based on faith, piety, and noble character (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia 2003).

Moreover, Batimung serves as a dialogic space where multiple pedagogical principles converge—Islamic, ecological, indigenous, and feminist. The women who lead the rituals challenge dominant gender norms in religious education by asserting their authority in transmitting values and knowledge. Their roles defy the binary between domesticity and pedagogy, illustrating how caregiving, herbal knowledge, and community guidance constitute valid and powerful forms of instruction (Rosyada 2004; Hera et al. 2024). As an educational site, Batimung also exemplifies sustainability pedagogy. Its reliance on locally sourced herbs and communal practice reinforces ecological awareness and stewardship (khalifah) as mandated in Islamic teachings. Unlike exploitative consumption models promoted in mainstream education, Batimung fosters circular, community-based relationships with nature. It reflects the Islamic ecological ethic of rahmah (compassion) and amanah (trust), encouraging youth to internalize environmental responsibility as a spiritual imperative (Bakar 1998; Nasr 1981).

Empirical research supports these interpretations. Ahmad and Sari (2015) observed that participants of Batimung reported enhanced feelings of modesty, respect, and communal care—core values in Islamic character education. Farhan (2018) found that youth who engaged in the ritual demonstrated a stronger connection to cultural identity and moral values. These findings challenge the notion that modern education must be secular or detached from tradition. Instead, they suggest that ritual practices like Batimung can meaningfully supplement classroom instruction and contribute to holistic student development.

The integration of Batimung into national education frameworks, however, must be approached thoughtfully. It is essential to engage tradition-bearers, educators, and community leaders in co-designing curricula that respect the spiritual and cultural integrity of the ritual. Educational institutions should avoid commodifying or sanitizing Batimung into a mere heritage showcase. Instead, it should be treated as a living pedagogy that evolves with context while retaining its ethical core (Sulaiman 2023; Yulianto 2022).

In conclusion, this study positions Batimung as a critical entry point for reimagining Islamic education in the Global South. It demonstrates how local traditions, when interpreted through Islamic ethical frameworks and supported by decolonial theory, can enrich character education and foster spiritually grounded, socially responsible youth. Batimung challenges the

dominance of disembodied, depersonalized educational models and calls for a return to embodied, community-rooted, and spiritually resonant pedagogies. It invites Muslim educators to honor the wisdom of their ancestors, resist epistemological colonization, and nurture future generations in the spirit of tawhid, compassion, and justice.

The philosophy of insan kamil, often described as the ideal integrated human in Islamic thought, plays a crucial role in shaping pedagogical goals. Insan kamil refers not only to a moral or spiritual exemplar but to a balanced personality whose intellect, soul, and actions are synchronized under divine guidance (Tafsir 2006). This ideal is reflected in holistic educational models, where ethics (akhlak), inner purification (tazkiyah), and active social responsibility (muamalah) are seen as complementary dimensions of human development. In traditional pesantren models and Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, these components are often nurtured collectively through routines such as communal prayers, charity, self-discipline, and engagement in caretaking roles within the institution. Batimung, in its ritual form, mirrors this balance by fostering spiritual, ecological, and communal purification. Moreover, the role of akhlak as the ethical core of Islamic education deserves deeper analysis. Al-Ghazali, one of the most influential Islamic scholars, emphasized that knowledge is only meaningful when it cultivates good character. In his seminal works, he suggests that true learning must be reflected in behavior and disposition, rather than in mere memorization (Al-Ghazali, trans. 1991). Batimung exemplifies this by reinforcing behaviors of care, patience, humility, and collective discipline. Youth who engage with this tradition are taught through example—through stories, smells, gestures, and silence—how to live righteously and ethically, both in public and private spheres. This tacit dimension of learning is often absent in formal institutions that rely heavily on standardized curricula and measurable outcomes.

Educational psychology has also increasingly emphasized the importance of embodied and affective learning. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, while developed in a secular Western framework, resonates with the holistic approach of Batimung by acknowledging kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions of intelligence (Gardner 1993). A ritual that stimulates the senses, provokes reflection, and encourages social bonding can activate these lesser-prioritized intelligences, allowing students to develop capacities beyond linguistic or mathematical aptitude. Beyond Indonesia, comparable practices exist in other Muslim-majority societies across the Global South. In rural Morocco, for example, purification rituals involving steam and herbs are conducted before marriage ceremonies and are seen as preparing both the body and soul for a new phase of life. In parts

of Nigeria, women's pre-wedding educational rituals include elements of seclusion, spiritual instruction, and bodily cleansing with natural materials—highlighting similar pedagogical intentions. These global parallels suggest a common logic of embodied moral preparation rooted in indigenous Islamic cultures, yet often excluded from formal educational recognition due to colonial legacies.

The disconnection between tradition and formal education in postcolonial Muslim societies can be traced back to epistemic ruptures enforced by colonial administrations, which either ignored or pathologized native knowledge systems. The result is a bifurcation of knowledge, where sacred and cultural forms are relegated to the private or folkloric domain while public education remains heavily influenced by Western secular paradigms. This split is particularly visible in how character education is approached—as an isolated module or subject, rather than as a mode of living and learning embedded in everyday life.

To overcome this division, scholars like M. Amin Abdullah (2014) propose an integrated paradigm of science, religion, and culture in Islamic education. He argues that educational reform in the Muslim world must move beyond the dichotomy of 'scientific' versus 'religious' knowledge and instead create spaces where ethics, tradition, and critical inquiry coexist. Batimung represents a practical embodiment of such an integrated model. It teaches not by instruction, but by immersion. Its value lies not only in the ritual itself but in the worldview it sustains—one where healing, spirituality, gendered knowledge, and community cohesion form a coherent moral ecosystem.

This worldview is critical in helping young people navigate modern challenges. Digital capitalism, with its emphasis on speed, spectacle, and consumerism, encourages forms of subjectivity that are fragmented, anxious, and hyper-individualistic. Batimung, in contrast, nurtures slowness, reflection, and interdependence. It provides a sanctuary where youth can learn to listen—to their bodies, their ancestors, and their environment. As such, it offers a counter-practice to the hyper-stimulation of digital life and reintroduces sacred time as an educational resource.

As educational institutions seek to develop more inclusive, just, and context-responsive pedagogies, traditions like Batimung should be seen not as peripheral or exotic, but as central to the reimagination of Islamic education in the 21st century. Doing so requires overcoming not only institutional biases but also epistemological ones. It entails recognizing that wisdom may emerge not from textbooks or whiteboards, but from steam, silence, and the hands of

elders. This shift is as much about pedagogy as it is about justice—about reclaiming the right to define what counts as knowledge and who holds it.

This redefinition must also include gendered epistemologies. In many Batimung practices, elder women act as custodians of herbal knowledge, spiritual healing, and moral instruction. Their authority does not derive from formal credentials, but from lived experience, communal respect, and ritual expertise. Valuing their knowledge challenges patriarchal assumptions about where and how legitimate Islamic education takes place. It invites a rethinking of the curriculum to include not just male scholars and texts, but also embodied, intergenerational, and domestic forms of knowledge that have historically sustained Muslim communities.

In sum, the Batimung tradition not only enriches Islamic pedagogy with localized wisdom, but also presents a model of education that is sustainable, ethical, and emotionally intelligent. It answers contemporary crises—of meaning, identity, and environmental alienation—not with abstraction, but with grounded practices rooted in love, care, and community. By foregrounding Batimung in educational discourse, this study affirms the need for a plural, decolonial, and spiritually resonant future for learning in the Global South.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm anchored in library-based analysis, which is well-suited to inquiries focused on cultural meaning-making, symbolic interpretation, and epistemological critique. Qualitative research enables the exploration of values, experiences, and embedded meanings that are not easily quantifiable but are nonetheless central to understanding complex social phenomena such as the Batimung tradition in Banjar society.

The qualitative orientation of this research reflects an interpretivist epistemology that recognizes the multiplicity of realities and the co-construction of meaning between the researcher and the texts under study (Creswell 2013). The main research goal was to understand how Islamic educational values are inscribed within Batimung and how these values can inform character education for youth. The primary sources of data included peer-reviewed journal articles, ethnographic reports, Islamic education textbooks, cultural analyses, and documentation from both academic and indigenous perspectives. Special attention was given to works produced between 2015 and 2024 to ensure that the data reflected contemporary

interpretations of Batimung and current discourses in Islamic education and Global South studies.

The methodological approach was enriched through the use of thematic content analysis. This analytical strategy allowed the researcher to inductively derive key themes from the literature, such as muamalah (social ethics), thaharah (ritual purity), tarbiyah (educational cultivation), tazkiyah (self-purification), and hikmah (wisdom). In order to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation. This involved comparing interpretations from multiple scholarly traditions, including Islamic philosophy, sociology of education, and indigenous knowledge studies. Triangulation also included referencing both local Indonesian authors and international scholars such as Raewyn Connell (2007) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012).

Ethical considerations were also integrated into the research design, particularly in regard to cultural representation. The researcher maintained a position of reflexivity, being aware of their own positionality and the potential to misrepresent or essentialize local traditions. The aim was not to romanticize Batimung, but to critically appreciate its pedagogical significance while acknowledging the dynamic and contested nature of cultural practices in a rapidly changing world. Ultimately, this qualitative methodology supports the broader aim of re-centering local wisdom in Islamic education discourse. By using literature as a reflective mirror, the study reveals how Batimung operates not just as a ritual, but as an epistemological site where moral values, community bonding, and spiritual discipline converge

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multidimensional Learning and Symbolic Pedagogy

Batimung, as a ritual deeply rooted in Banjar culture, encapsulates a form of holistic learning that engages not just the intellect but the entire human sensorium. In contrast to modern schooling, which often privileges abstract reasoning and disembodied cognition, Batimung activates affective and kinesthetic domains. Participants experience warmth, scent, moisture, and communal intimacy—each functioning as a pedagogical tool to internalize values like sincerity (ikhlas) and humility (tawadhu).

This pedagogical modality resonates with Paulo Freire's concept of conscientização, or critical consciousness, wherein education transcends the transmission of content to become a transformative act rooted in lived experience (Freire 1970). In Batimung, the act of steaming—of sweating, detoxing, and releasing—symbolizes spiritual renewal and moral readiness. Participants emerge not just physically cleansed but emotionally and ethically prepared for life transitions. Furthermore, this form of learning aligns with the Islamic tradition of experiential pedagogy, evident in the Prophet Muhammad's methods of teaching through example (uswah hasanah), participation, and reflection. The Prophet's pedagogy emphasized the integration of action and knowledge—emulating moral behavior rather than merely preaching it (Al-Attas 1991). Batimung replicates this by embedding ethical instruction in practice. It teaches without words.

In the context of the Global South, where educational access and quality remain uneven, Batimung exemplifies how informal spaces can serve as sites of knowledge production and transmission. As Connell (2007) argues, education systems in the Global South must be evaluated on their own cultural and historical terms rather than through imposed Western benchmarks. Batimung provides an indigenous framework for nurturing Islamic values without dependence on institutional validation or formal accreditation. It is also important to consider the emotional dimension of Batimung. Emotional intelligence—recognized by scholars such as Goleman (1995)—plays a critical role in moral development. The supportive, intergenerational environment of Batimung fosters empathy, emotional regulation, and social sensitivity, making it a form of moral apprenticeship.

This approach reclaims the body as a site of knowledge. Feminist scholars and indigenous education theorists have long critiqued the Cartesian separation of mind and body in Western epistemology. Gregory Cajete (1994), for example, argues that indigenous education must return to holistic practices that integrate the physical, emotional, and spiritual. Batimung fulfills this model, demonstrating that ritual space can be educational space.

Eco-Spiritual Dimensions and Environmental Ethics

One of the most overlooked yet profoundly significant aspects of Batimung lies in its ecological sensibility. The use of natural herbs—carefully selected, harvested, and prepared—highlights a tradition deeply attuned to the rhythms of the environment. This ecological knowledge, often passed down orally through generations of women and healers, constitutes a

form of localized environmental science that is both empirical and spiritual. In this respect, Batimung intersects with Islamic teachings on ecology.

Islamic ecological ethics position human beings as khalifah (stewards) of the Earth, a responsibility that demands mindful interaction with the natural world. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized care for animals, preservation of trees, and moderation in consumption—values echoed in the Batimung ritual (Nasr 1981). The non-extractive and reciprocal use of herbs, in which plants are harvested sustainably and with intention, stands in stark contrast to the commodification of nature in capitalist systems. In contemporary environmental education, there is a growing recognition of the need for culturally responsive ecological models that integrate local wisdom. Cajete (1994) and Battiste (2013) argue that indigenous ecological knowledge systems are crucial for ecological restoration and ethical land relations. Batimung represents such a system. It is both a site of healing and a site of remembrance—of human dependence on the Earth, of the cycles of life, and of the sacred embedded in nature.

This ritual also fosters ecological identity among its participants. According to environmental educators like Thomashow (1996), ecological identity is the sense of self derived from one's relationship to the natural world. Batimung helps to cultivate this identity through multisensory engagement with herbs, water, heat, and communal narratives about plants and purity. Moreover, the timing and purpose of Batimung rituals—typically preceding life events such as marriage or childbirth—reveal an implicit curriculum in life cycle ecology. Participants are reminded of the interconnectedness between their bodies, the seasons, the soil, and their community. These reflections counter the dominant view of humans as separate from or superior to nature, proposing instead an Islamic cosmology of balance (mizan) and interdependence.

In light of global climate crises, Batimung's eco-spiritual pedagogy becomes even more urgent. Mainstream environmental education often fails to address the moral and spiritual roots of ecological degradation. Batimung fills this gap by offering an integrated approach that affirms the Earth as sacred and the body as a vessel for moral consciousness.

Gendered Dynamics and Moral Transmission

The Batimung ritual offers a crucial intervention into gendered discourses on knowledge, authority, and pedagogy within Islamic education. While formal religious

instruction has often been dominated by male scholars and clerical institutions, Batimung highlights how women have historically occupied central roles in transmitting moral values, spiritual wisdom, and practical healing. The elder women who perform Batimung serve not only as herbalists but also as educators, spiritual guides.This challenges binary notions that separate the domestic from the intellectual or the spiritual from the embodied. Within Batimung, moral education occurs in intimate, embodied settings, where younger women are mentored by their elders through ritual participation, story-sharing, and observation. The transmission of values such as modesty (haya), care (rahmah), and patience (sabr) happens not through textbooks but through presence, repetition, and relational learning.

Such pedagogy aligns with broader critiques in feminist Islamic scholarship that call for the recognition of women's roles in shaping Islamic ethical life. Scholars like Amina Wadud (2006) and Asma Barlas (2002) have argued that women's lived experiences constitute a valid source of religious knowledge and hermeneutic authority. In the context of Batimung, this authority is not discursive but performative—it is enacted through bodily wisdom, ecological stewardship, and affective labor.

The implications for curriculum development are significant. Incorporating the moral frameworks embedded in Batimung into Islamic schooling could enrich gender-sensitive pedagogy and legitimize female-centered epistemologies. For instance, rather than teaching akhlak solely through theoretical models, schools could invite community practitioners—especially women elders—to share their rituals and perspectives. This would not only diversify instructional modes but also bridge intergenerational knowledge gap. Furthermore, the collective, gendered space of Batimung fosters what bell hooks (1994) describes as "engaged pedagogy"—one in which teacher and student are mutually transformed. In these spaces, young women are not passive recipients but active participants in constructing ethical meaning. Their embodied engagement with ritual acts reinforces their agency and counters the notion that religious or cultural tradition is inherently patriarchal.

In essence, the Batimung tradition exemplifies a matrifocal model of moral transmission. It underscores the necessity of broadening our definitions of Islamic education to include everyday pedagogies, oral traditions, and community-based learning led by women. Such redefinition can help dismantle the institutional biases that often exclude female voices and practices from the canon of valid religious knowledge, offering a more inclusive and pluralistic vision of Islamic educational futures.

Continuity in the Face of Disruption

Despite rapid societal transformation, Batimung endures. This resilience reflects the enduring strength of cultural pedagogies embedded in local contexts. In the face of modernization, urbanization, and digital acceleration, Batimung continues to serve as a cultural anchor, offering communities a means to retain identity, continuity, and coherence. Such persistence is not accidental—it emerges from a deep communal investment in tradition as both spiritual practice and social infrastructure.

The continued practice of Batimung amidst socioeconomic change illustrates what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) describes as "vernacular globalization"—the local reinvention of tradition in response to global forces. Rather than disappearing under the weight of modernity, Batimung adapts: it may be abbreviated in urban homes, revived as a tourist ritual, or narrated through social media. While these adaptations raise concerns about authenticity, they also show the dynamic nature of tradition.

However, this continuity is under threat from commodification. As Batimung becomes increasingly visible to external audiences—whether through tourism, social media, or institutional appropriation—it risks being reduced to a spectacle, stripped of its ethical and spiritual depth. Such extraction replicates colonial patterns where indigenous rituals were displayed but not respected. Engaging community members as co-educators is vital. Educational initiatives that draw on Batimung should be developed with, not for, the communities that practice it. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) notes, decolonizing education requires a participatory approach where indigenous knowledge holders are treated as intellectual equals, not as passive informants. This means valuing not just the knowledge embedded in Batimung but also the custodianship structures that sustain it.

Batimung also offers insights into intergenerational resilience. In many families, grandmothers and older women become bridges between past and future, carrying oral histories and moral frameworks that are not easily captured in written curricula. The act of steaming together becomes a forum for storytelling, value transmission, and emotional bonding—a relational form of pedagogy often absent in institutional schooling. As educational systems around the world contend with alienation and disconnection.

International comparisons reveal that Batimung is not an isolated case. Similar purification rituals exist in other Global South contexts, such as the temazcal in Mesoamerican

traditions, the hammam in North Africa, and the Yoruba steam therapies in West Africa. Each reflects a cosmology where health, morality, and community are inseparable. Recognizing these parallels allows for transnational solidarity in reclaiming ancestral pedagogies that challenge the homogenizing tendencies of global education.

Decolonizing the Epistemology of Islamic Education

Batimung offers a unique lens through which to challenge and reconfigure the epistemological foundations of Islamic education in postcolonial societies. Dominant educational paradigms in many Muslim-majority countries continue to be shaped by colonial legacies that prioritize textuality, formalism, and European knowledge systems. In this context, rituals like Batimung serve as living alternatives—embodied, communal, and spiritually rooted. To decolonize Islamic education means to recognize and reclaim forms of knowledge that have been marginalized by colonial-modern schooling systems. As Raewyn Connell (2007) and Smith (2012) emphasize, epistemic justice involves not only expanding the canon but also transforming pedagogical assumptions about what counts as knowledge and who holds it. Batimung does precisely this. It restores value to oral traditions, sensory knowledge, and the pedagogical wisdom of women and elders.

In many Islamic schooling systems, the curriculum is shaped by formal disciplines such as fiqh (jurisprudence), tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), and hadith studies. While these are central, they often reflect a textual, male-centric, and hierarchical model of knowledge. By contrast, Batimung reflects a decentralized model where knowledge is co-produced in community, practiced ritually, and transmitted affectively. It represents a shift from education as doctrinal transfer to education as ethical formation.

This reframing aligns with the broader movement for Islamic pedagogical renewal (tajdid al-ta'lim), which seeks to reconcile tradition with contemporary realities. Scholars such as Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1991) have long called for a re-spiritualization of education, warning against secular fragmentation. Batimung offers one response to this call—illustrating how moral cosmology can be taught not only in classrooms but in daily life, through actions that harmonize body, soul, and community.

It also advances the idea of pluriversality in Islamic education—a concept introduced by decolonial thinkers like Walter Mignolo (2000), which opposes the universalizing tendencies of Western epistemology. Rather than assuming a singular pathway to knowledge,

Batimung illustrates how multiple educational logics—spiritual, ecological, emotional—can coexist and enrich one another. It is not anti-modern, but differently modern: offering a rooted, responsive, and spiritually attuned pedagogy grounded. Furthermore, Batimung helps reclaim Islamic education as a liberatory project. It provides a counterweight to the bureaucratic rationalism of state curricula, inviting learners to re-engage with their cultural and spiritual heritage in ways that are emotionally resonant and communally empowering. It is not about rejecting modern knowledge, but about grounding it in values that foster dignity, connection, and ethical living.

Educational Transformation through Cultural Pedagogy

The Batimung tradition provides a compelling model for reimagining education as a cultural, spiritual, and transformative process. At its core, Batimung represents what education theorist Maxine Greene (1995) might call "education for possibility"—a pedagogy rooted in presence, imagination, and ethical engagement. In contrast to standardized, depersonalized schooling systems that prioritize quantifiable outputs, Batimung models education as an experience of ethical formation and relational depth.

In practice, Batimung fosters a "pedagogy of presence," where learning unfolds through attentive participation, shared embodiment, and mutual trust. There are no exams, no grading rubrics—only immersion in a ritual space where learners are shaped by proximity to others, by multisensory stimulation, and by cycles of repetition and reflection. This challenges the neoliberal logic of education that reduces students to test scores and teachers to delivery mechanisms.

Such a model resonates with the concept of tarbiyah in Islamic pedagogy, which emphasizes moral cultivation, gradual development, and teacher-student relationships grounded in trust and affection (Rosyada 2004). Batimung, though not institutionally formalized, exemplifies tarbiyah through its ritual pedagogy: the slow steaming, the quiet conversations, the herbal infusions—each element contributing to the ethical and spiritual development of the participant. Moreover, Batimung opens the possibility for alternative assessment frameworks. In place of standardized testing, learners might be evaluated on their ethical comportment, community contributions, or ritual literacy. These indicators, while difficult to quantify, are profoundly significant in shaping character. They also align with Islamic traditions that measure success not by external achievement but by inner sincerity (ikhlas), piety (taqwa), and social responsibility (mas'uliyyah). The adaptive capacity of

Batimung also demonstrates the potential for innovation within tradition. In urban settings, Batimung has been modified to fit modern bathrooms and household routines. In diasporic communities, it has been shared via social media as part of cultural heritage preservation. These innovations suggest that tradition is not static but alive—capable of evolving while maintaining its core values.

Batimung's educational logic thus resists the instrumentalization of knowledge. It repositions learning as a communal and spiritual endeavor that shapes not just what learners know, but who they become. In a global context marked by cultural fragmentation, ecological crisis, and moral uncertainty, Batimung offers a pedagogy of healing—healing the body, the spirit, the community, and the relationship between humans and nature. As such, it stands as a powerful resource for Islamic education in the 21st century.

To further contextualize Batimung within contemporary Islamic education, it is essential to explore how such rituals can be adapted into structured educational programs without losing their cultural integrity. One promising avenue is the integration of Batimung principles into extracurricular character-building programs at pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and madrasah. Here, traditional cleansing practices could be coupled with modules on Islamic environmental ethics, gender equity, and communal relations.

Additionally, Batimung offers potential for interdisciplinary learning. For instance, lessons on biology and ecology could incorporate herbal knowledge embedded in the ritual. Students could learn to identify local plants, explore their medicinal properties, and understand the ecological relationships involved in sustainable harvesting. This not only strengthens the science curriculum but also embeds ecological consciousness within religious and cultural frameworks.

The ritual can also serve as a powerful foundation for arts-based education. Batimung storytelling, chants, and preparation rituals could be documented and performed as theater or digital media projects, allowing youth to both preserve and reinterpret their heritage. This opens pathways for identity exploration, expression of agency, and creative engagement with the past. As Greene (1995) argues, aesthetic education is vital for cultivating imagination and empathy—qualities central to ethical citizenry.

In terms of public policy, Batimung invites educational policymakers to rethink indicators of learning success. Instead of relying solely on numerical metrics, education

systems could adopt multidimensional assessment frameworks that include ethical behavior, ecological literacy, and communal participation. This would help shift the narrative from schooling as production to education as transformation. As Zubaedi (2013) notes, character education in Indonesia must be situated within lived social realities. Moreover, the Batimung tradition could form the basis for South-South dialogue among Muslim educators. Comparative workshops or regional collaborations with educators from Morocco, Senegal, Malaysia, or southern India could reveal common pedagogical themes—particularly around ritual, ecology, and moral instruction. This would contribute to building a transnational Islamic education movement grounded not in universalist abstraction but in plural, rooted, and locally resonant practices (Connell 2007).

Another underexplored dimension of Batimung is its potential therapeutic value. In mental health education, the ritual could be used as an entry point for exploring themes of emotional release, intergenerational trauma, and community healing. For example, structured dialogues after Batimung sessions could be guided by trained facilitators to help youth articulate emotional experiences, build empathy, and reduce anxiety. This connects with global movements in trauma-informed education and Islamic psychology.

Digitally, Batimung can be documented, archived, and disseminated as part of cultural revitalization efforts. Youth could be engaged in creating podcasts, digital herbariums, video documentaries, and narrative blogs about Batimung. This ensures intergenerational transmission and positions young people as co-producers of heritage knowledge. Importantly, this must be done ethically, avoiding exploitation or detachment from the ritual's spiritual purpose.

Finally, in reflecting on the broader role of Batimung in Islamic education, it becomes evident that such rituals must not be romanticized as relics of the past. Rather, they must be positioned as evolving, generative frameworks for pedagogy that respond to contemporary ethical crises—from ecological degradation to moral fragmentation. As Fazlur Rahman (1982) notes, Islamic education must retain its rootedness in tradition while remaining dynamic and reformative.

From Ritual to Curriculum: Bridging Batimung with Islamic Educational Reform

To fully realize the educational potential of Batimung, a strategic framework is needed to bridge this cultural ritual with formal Islamic educational reform. This involves not only

integrating elements of Batimung into curricula but rethinking what constitutes legitimate pedagogy within Islamic institutions. As Fazlur Rahman (1982) emphasized, the failure of Islamic education lies not in its traditional foundations, but in its inability to evolve dynamically with society. One practical step is the development of localized modules within the character education (pendidikan karakter) curriculum that center around Batimung practices. These modules could be developed through collaboration between local cultural leaders, Islamic education scholars, and curriculum designers. Activities could include interactive storytelling, herbal identification and ecology workshops, moral reflection circles, and ritual reenactments guided by community elders.

Such curricular integration would also benefit from comparative educational insights across the Global South. For example, in parts of Kerala, India, traditional Muslim healing rituals known as arus use water, oils, and prayers to facilitate both physical and moral purification. In Malaysia, rituals surrounding "mandi limau" (lime bath) echo Batimung's emphasis on cleansing before major transitions. In Senegal, the Sufi communities practice communal ablution before major zikr (remembrance) gatherings.

By exploring these ritual parallels, Islamic educators can construct a comparative framework for character formation that is rooted in cultural specificity but open to shared values across regions. This could foster intercultural dialogue and strengthen a collective Islamic ethics of embodiment, humility, cleanliness, and community care—principles embedded in the maqasid al-shari'ah but often lost in modern schooling formats. An overlooked but vital area of transformation is teacher training. Future teachers of Islamic studies should be equipped not only with theological knowledge but also with cultural literacy, ecological awareness, and ritual sensitivity. This includes training in how to facilitate discussions around embodied ethics, gender roles in tradition, and the environmental implications of local wisdom. Batimung, as a case study, provides fertile ground for such training, especially in rural teacher education centers.

In theological terms, Batimung embodies the integration of zahir (outer action) and batin (inner intention), which is foundational to Islamic spiritual ethics. It is not enough to cleanse the body—true purification involves niyyah (intention), taqwa (God-consciousness), and adab (propriety). These concepts can be difficult to communicate through conventional textbook-based instruction but are readily internalized through participatory ritual.

As we move further into an era of digital acceleration, the preservation and adaptation of Batimung will depend on how well educators and cultural institutions collaborate. Islamic universities, heritage organizations, and civil society groups must work together to produce high-quality documentation, oral history archives, and even immersive educational media (such as 360-degree videos or virtual reality experiences) that preserve the integrity of Batimung while opening it to younger audiences.

Lastly, policy must reflect these educational insights. Ministries of religious affairs and education should recognize rituals like Batimung as part of Indonesia's national intangible heritage and incorporate them into frameworks for Islamic pedagogical innovation. Grants, curriculum guidelines, and teacher incentives can be aligned to promote local knowledge integration, ensuring that Batimung is not treated as nostalgia but as a future-oriented pedagogical model.

Batimung represents a unique opportunity for reforming Islamic education from within—drawing on indigenous wisdom, ethical embodiment, and communal participation. It offers a way to humanize education, to reconnect learners with their histories, communities, and ecological surroundings. As such, it is not just a ritual of the past, but a vision for the future of learning in the Muslim world.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of the Batimung tradition as presented in the Results and Discussion section affirms its multifaceted role in enriching Islamic education, particularly in the context of character formation, cultural resilience, and epistemological justice. Far from being a residual custom of the past, Batimung exemplifies a living pedagogy—embodied, ethical, and ecologically grounded—that continues to shape the moral and spiritual development of youth in Banjar society and potentially in other Global South Muslim communities. By tracing its dimensions—ranging from symbolic embodiment and ecological ethics to gendered moral transmission and epistemic resistance—it becomes evident that Batimung carries pedagogical value far beyond its ritual form. Its practice allows for an integrative approach to education that bridges formal, informal, and non-formal learning contexts, while simultaneously challenging the epistemic hierarchies perpetuated by colonial-modern schooling systems. Batimung serves not only as an educational artifact but as a cultural infrastructure that sustains intergenerational knowledge and social cohesion. Importantly, Batimung offers a radical alternative to neoliberal educational models that emphasize

standardization, cognitive abstraction, and individual competition. Through its focus on communal trust, spiritual embodiment, and symbolic literacy, Batimung reminds us that education is a humanizing, holistic, and context-bound endeavor. This positions Batimung as both a critique of modern educational disenchantment and a vision for the restoration of meaningful, locally-rooted pedagogies within Islamic education systems.

The discussion also reveals the adaptability and dynamism of Batimung in responding to digital modernity and global disruption. Its potential for incorporation into character education modules, environmental curricula, teacher training programs, and even therapeutic interventions underscores its utility as a tool for educational innovation. Furthermore, its parallels with other purification rituals across the Global South suggest opportunities for intercultural dialogue and the emergence of a transnational Islamic pedagogy of ethics and embodiment. In light of these findings, this study recommends a critical reorientation of Islamic education frameworks to include rituals like Batimung not as mere cultural remnants but as epistemological resources. Policymakers, educators, and scholars must collaboratively design strategies to preserve, adapt, and institutionalize such traditions in ways that honor their ethical, ecological, and communal roots. The development of inclusive, grounded, and spiritually resonant educational systems requires precisely the kind of pedagogical imagination embodied by Batimung.

Ultimately, Batimung's survival and pedagogical power lie in its ability to remain relevant, adaptable, and deeply intertwined with the lifeworlds of its practitioners. As an educational ritual, it teaches through the body, nurtures through the senses, and heals through community. These are the foundations of an education that not only informs but transforms—and it is this transformative promise that makes Batimung a vital contribution to the future of Islamic education in Indonesia and beyond.

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