



RECONSTRUCTING ISLAMIC EDUCATION THROUGH LOCAL SUFI WISDOM: THE GONANG MENDROFA MODEL IN PADANGSIDIMPUAN

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji rekonstruksi pemikiran pendidikan Islam berbasis kearifan lokal sufistik yang dikembangkan oleh Gonang Mendrofa melalui Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar di Padangsidimpuan. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pentingnya memahami bagaimana tradisi keagamaan lokal mampu memberikan kontribusi terhadap pendidikan Islam kontemporer, khususnya dalam penguatan spiritualitas, pembentukan karakter, dan tanggung jawab sosial masyarakat. Kajian mengenai tarekat selama ini lebih banyak menempatkan aspek spiritual sebagai praktik keagamaan, sementara dimensi pedagogis dan konstruksi pendidikan Islam yang terkandung di dalamnya masih belum banyak dikaji. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode *intellectual study* (studi pemikiran tokoh) terhadap pemikiran pendidikan Islam Gonang Mendrofa. Data penelitian diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi terhadap ajaran serta praktik pendidikan dalam Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik melalui proses reduksi, kategorisasi, interpretasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemikiran pendidikan Islam Gonang Mendrofa membentuk model pendidikan integratif yang menghubungkan *tazkiyah al-nafs* (penyucian jiwa), *riyāḍah al-jasad* (disiplin jasmani), dan *ta'dīb al-akhlāq* (pembentukan adab). Model tersebut diwujudkan melalui internalisasi 21 nilai adab, pembinaan spiritual, latihan fisik, serta penguatan kepedulian sosial. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa tradisi sufistik lokal memiliki potensi besar sebagai model pendidikan Islam kontekstual yang mampu menjawab krisis moral dan tantangan pendidikan modern.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam; Kearifan Lokal; Tasawuf; Pendidikan Karakter; Gonang Mendrofa; Tarekat

Abstract

This study explores the reconstruction of Islamic education thought through local Sufi wisdom developed by Gonang Mendrofa in the Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar, Padangsidimpuan. The study is motivated by the need to understand how local religious



traditions can contribute to contemporary Islamic education, particularly in strengthening spiritual awareness, moral character, and social responsibility amid modern challenges. Although previous studies have examined tarekat and Islamic character education separately, limited attention has been given to the integration of spiritual purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), physical discipline (*riyāḍah al-jasad*), and moral cultivation (*ta'dīb al-akhlāq*) as an educational framework. This qualitative research employed an intellectual study approach focusing on Gonang Mendrofa's educational thought. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, including educational materials of the Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar. The data were analyzed thematically and interpreted through the perspective of Islamic education and local wisdom studies. The findings reveal that Gonang Mendrofa's educational thought constructs an integrative Islamic education model combining Sufi spirituality and martial arts tradition. The model emphasizes the formation of noble character through the internalization of 21 ethical values, spiritual discipline, social compassion, and self-control. This study argues that local Sufi traditions can become a contextual educational model that bridges Islamic spirituality, cultural identity, and contemporary character education. The findings contribute to the development of Islamic education models based on local wisdom and spiritual-humanistic approaches.

Keywords: Islamic education; Sufi wisdom; local wisdom; character education; Gonang Mendrofa; tarekat

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has historically functioned not only as a mechanism for transmitting religious knowledge but also as a process of forming human beings with spiritual awareness, moral integrity, and social responsibility. In the contemporary era, Islamic education faces complex challenges caused by globalization, technological disruption, and changing social values, which have contributed to weakening moral sensitivity and spiritual attachment among younger generations. Therefore, Islamic education requires a more contextual approach that integrates religious values with cultural realities and lived experiences of Muslim communities. Recent studies emphasize that the integration of Islamic values and local wisdom provides an important foundation for developing religious character because education becomes connected with students' social and cultural environments rather than remaining purely normative and textual (Erwin et al., 2025; Zamzami et al., 2025).

Within this context, Sufi traditions and tarekat institutions represent important forms of Islamic educational practice that historically emphasize spiritual transformation, ethical discipline, and moral cultivation. Tarekat is not merely a spiritual organization oriented toward individual mystical experiences, but also functions as a social institution that develops values through continuous guidance, spiritual exercises, and ethical habituation. Research on Sufism-based character education demonstrates that spiritual



practices can contribute to strengthening religious values, tolerance, social responsibility, and moral behavior within Muslim communities (Siswanto, 2020). However, many studies on tarekat remain focused on historical development, theological dimensions, or organizational structures, while its pedagogical dimension as an Islamic educational model remains relatively underexplored.

The Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar in Padangsidempuan provides a unique example of how local Islamic traditions construct an educational system through the integration of spiritual and physical dimensions. Based on the research findings, Gonang Mendrofa developed an educational framework that combines *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), *riyāḍah al-jasad* (physical discipline), and *ta'dīb al-akhlāq* (moral cultivation). Unlike conventional educational institutions that separate intellectual learning, spiritual formation, and physical training, this institution places these dimensions within a unified process of character development. The integration of local wisdom and Islamic values has also been recognized as an important strategy for strengthening character education because cultural traditions provide contextual spaces for value internalization (Mananna et al., 2026)

Although previous studies have discussed Islamic character education, local wisdom-based education, and Sufi spirituality separately, limited research has examined how a local Sufi institution constructs an integrated Islamic educational model through spiritual discipline, martial arts practice, and ethical formation. Therefore, this study aims to reconstruct the Islamic educational thought of Gonang Mendrofa through the existence and contribution of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar in Padangsidempuan. The novelty of this research lies in proposing a local Sufi wisdom-based Islamic education model that integrates spiritual purification, physical discipline, and moral education as interconnected pedagogical processes. This perspective contributes to contemporary Islamic education studies by demonstrating that local religious traditions can serve as alternative educational resources for addressing moral challenges in modern society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Education as Holistic Human Development

Islamic education is fundamentally designed to develop human beings who possess intellectual ability, spiritual awareness, and moral responsibility. Unlike modern educational paradigms that frequently emphasize cognitive achievement, Islamic education places the formation of character (akhlāq) as an essential objective of human development. Al-Attas argues that the essence of Islamic education is the process of cultivating adab, namely the recognition and internalization of proper knowledge, values, and ethical behavior (Al-Attas, 1999). Similarly, Nata (2019) explains that Islamic



education aims to create individuals who are balanced between intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions. Recent studies indicate that Islamic education requires a holistic approach because contemporary challenges cannot be addressed only through knowledge transmission. Islamic education must integrate religious values, emotional development, and social responsibility (Aderibigbe et al., 2023). In Indonesian contexts, Islamic educational institutions increasingly adopt contextual approaches by integrating religious moderation, local culture, and character education (Abidin & Murtadlo, 2020). Therefore, Islamic education should be understood as a transformative process that shapes human identity and ethical consciousness.

Tarekat and Sufism as Educational Traditions

Sufism represents an important dimension of Islamic intellectual tradition that emphasizes purification of the soul, spiritual discipline, and ethical transformation. Historically, tarekat developed not only as spiritual organizations but also as educational institutions that transmit values through teacher-student relationships, spiritual practices, and moral training. According to Schimmel (2001), Sufi education focuses on transforming human consciousness through spiritual exercises and continuous self-discipline. In the Indonesian Muslim context, tarekat has played significant roles in religious education and social transformation. Studies show that Sufi communities contribute to strengthening religious identity, social solidarity, and moral development among their followers (Bruinessen, 2012). Recent research confirms that Sufism-based education provides an alternative model for addressing contemporary moral crises by emphasizing inner transformation rather than merely external religious knowledge (Riyadi, 2021). The educational mechanism of tarekat is based on habituation (*riyāḍah*), remembrance (*dhikr*), guidance (*irsyād*), and moral discipline. These characteristics demonstrate that tarekat possesses educational dimensions that deserve deeper investigation.

Local Wisdom-Based Islamic Education

Local wisdom has become an important perspective in contemporary Islamic education because it enables religious values to interact with cultural realities. Education that ignores local contexts often creates a gap between religious teachings and community practices. According to Tilaar (2015), local wisdom provides cultural resources that strengthen identity formation and social cohesion. In Islamic education studies, local wisdom is increasingly viewed as a pedagogical resource because it contains ethical values transmitted through traditions, rituals, and community interactions. Research by Fausi (2020) demonstrates that integrating cultural values into Islamic educational environments contributes to students' character development.



Similarly, Ibnu et al. (2022) emphasize that Islamic educational institutions must adapt to social changes while preserving contextual religious values. The Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar represents this relationship between Islam and local culture because its educational practices emerge from the interaction between spiritual teachings and local traditions.

Ta'dīb and Character Formation in Islamic Education

The concept of ta'dīb provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding Islamic character education. Al-Attas (1999) emphasizes that education is essentially the process of producing individuals who recognize the proper order of knowledge and values. Therefore, education must cultivate manners, ethics, and spiritual awareness. Character formation in Islamic education occurs through three main processes: knowledge acquisition, value internalization, and practical habituation. This perspective is consistent with research showing that Islamic educational institutions successfully develop character when moral values become embedded in institutional culture and daily practices (Lickona, 2013). Recent studies on Islamic boarding schools demonstrate that character education becomes effective when students experience direct examples, discipline, and social interaction rather than merely receiving theoretical instruction (Muhammad Riza et al., 2022). Thus, the educational thought of Gonang Mendrofa can be analyzed through the framework of ta'dīb, where spiritual practice becomes a medium for producing ethical individuals.

Integration of Spirituality, Physical Discipline, and Moral Education

A distinctive characteristic of the Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar is the integration between spiritual training and physical discipline. Islamic educational traditions historically recognize that human development involves body, soul, intellect, and morality. Therefore, physical discipline can become an educational medium for controlling desires and strengthening self-awareness. Research on embodied learning suggests that physical practices influence moral and emotional development because learning is not only cognitive but also experiential (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). In Islamic traditions, physical exercises combined with spiritual practices create a holistic process of human formation. The integration between *tazkiyah al-nafs*, *riyāḍah al-jasad*, and *ta'dīb al-akhlāq* found in Gonang Mendrofa's thought represents a unique educational model that has received limited attention in previous studies.

Research Gap and Conceptual Position

Previous studies have extensively discussed Islamic education, Sufism, character education, and local wisdom. However, these studies generally examine these dimensions separately. Research on tarekat tends to focus on historical and theological



aspects, while studies on Islamic character education mostly examine formal institutions such as schools and pesantren. The present study fills this gap by examining a local Sufi institution as an educational system that integrates spiritual purification, physical discipline, and moral cultivation. Based on the findings of the dissertation, Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar develops educational practices through the internalization of 21 adab values and spiritual discipline.

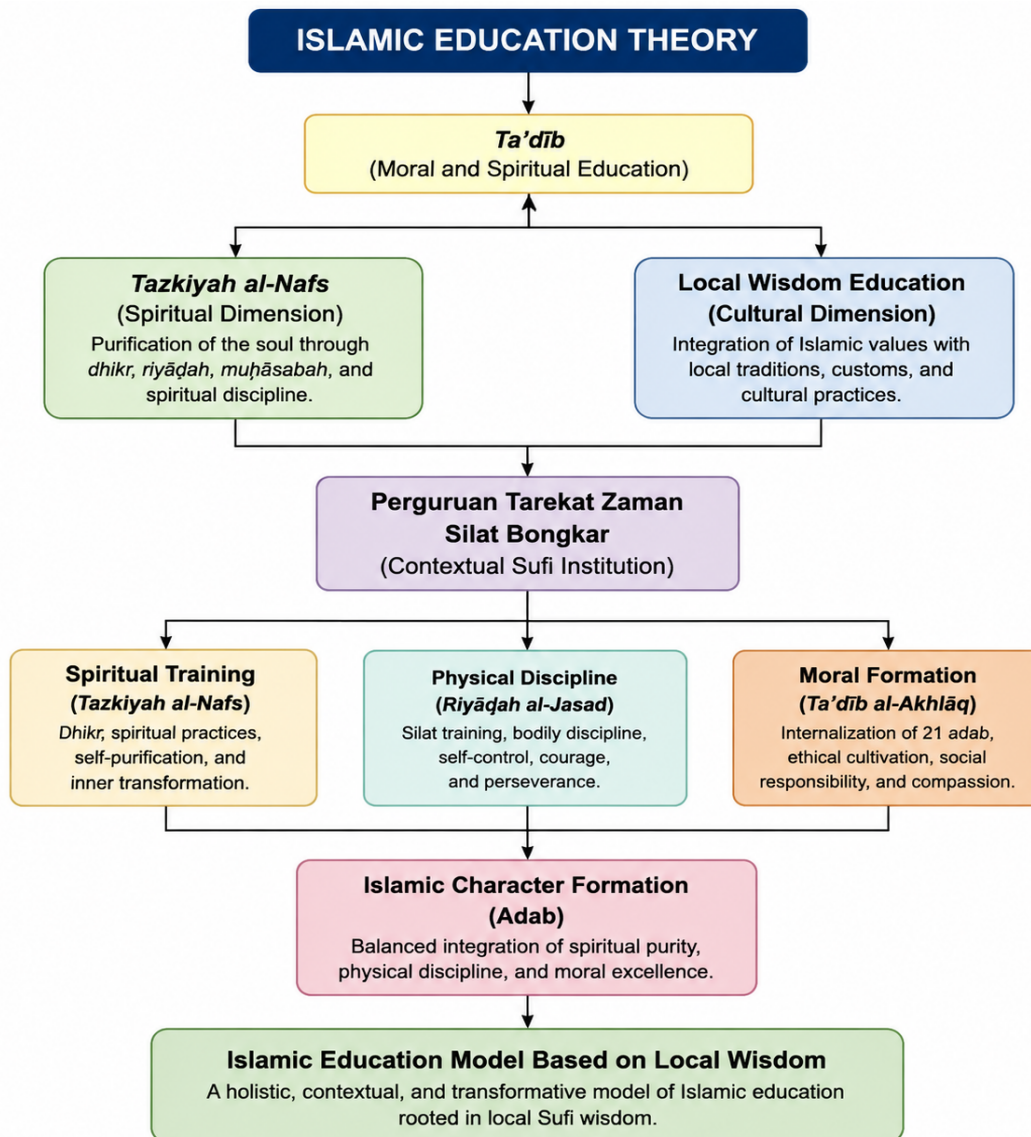


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of Islamic Education Model Based on Local Sufi Wisdom

The theoretical framework of this study is constructed through the integration of three major perspectives in Islamic education, namely the theory of ta'dīb, tazkiyah al-



nafs, and local wisdom-based Islamic education. The concept of *ta'dīb* developed by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas serves as the philosophical foundation, viewing Islamic education as a process of developing civilized human beings through the internalization of knowledge, values, and ethical conduct. This perspective is strengthened by the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* within the Sufi tradition, which explains the process of spiritual transformation through soul purification, *dhikr*, *riyāḍah*, and self-control. Meanwhile, the perspective of local wisdom-based Islamic education explains how Islamic values can be contextualized through the cultural practices of society. Within the context of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar, these three perspectives are integrated through three educational processes: spiritual training (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), physical discipline (*riyāḍah al-jasad*), and moral formation (*ta'dīb al-akhlāq*), which ultimately lead to Islamic character formation (*adab*). Therefore, this study conceptualizes Gonang Mendrofa's Islamic educational thought as a local Sufi wisdom-based Islamic education model that is holistic, contextual, and transformative, integrating spiritual values, cultural traditions, and moral development. The integration of Tarekat Zaman and Silat Bongkar functions not merely as a religious practice and martial art tradition, but also as an educational mechanism for character formation through the internalization of 21 ethical values (*adab*) in the lives of students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using an intellectual study method to reconstruct the Islamic educational thought of Gonang Mendrofa through Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar in Padangsidempuan. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aims to understand meanings, values, educational experiences, and philosophical perspectives developed within a specific religious and cultural context rather than measuring variables quantitatively (Creswell & Poth, 2023). The intellectual study approach was applied to examine the ideas, educational principles, and conceptual constructions of a religious figure through textual and empirical sources. This approach is appropriate for exploring the relationship between intellectual thought, social context, and educational practices within Islamic traditions (Furchan & Maimun, 2005). The unit of analysis in this research was the Islamic educational thought of Gonang Mendrofa, particularly the integration of Sufi spirituality, martial arts discipline, and character formation within Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar. The research location was Padangsidempuan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, where the institution operates as a local Islamic educational community.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. Primary data were obtained from interviews with Gonang Mendrofa as



the central figure and from institutional educational materials, while supporting data were gathered from students' experiences, observations of educational activities, and relevant documents. The use of multiple data sources was intended to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the educational values and practices developed within the institution. Data analysis was conducted using thematic and narrative analysis, involving data organization, coding, categorization, interpretation, and synthesis of emerging themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The analysis focused on identifying patterns related to *ta'dīb*, *tazkiyah al-nafs*, *riyāḍah al-jasad*, and local wisdom-based Islamic education. Data credibility was maintained through source and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from the main figure, students, observations, and documentary evidence (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Through this methodological framework, the study reconstructs Gonang Mendrofa's educational thought as a contextual model of Islamic education based on local Sufi wisdom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study concerning Gonang Mendrofa's Islamic educational thought through Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar in Padangsidempuan. The analysis is organized based on the main themes identified from the research data, including the institutional existence, integration of spiritual and physical education, internalization of *adab* values, and the construction of a local Sufi wisdom-based Islamic education model. The findings are interpreted through the theoretical perspectives of *ta'dīb*, *tazkiyah al-nafs*, and local wisdom-based Islamic education to understand how spiritual traditions, cultural practices, and character formation interact within an Islamic educational framework. Through this analytical approach, the study demonstrates how a local Sufi institution contributes to the development of a holistic and contextual model of Islamic education.

1. Results

The Existence of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar as an Islamic Educational Institution

The findings reveal that Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar in Padangsidempuan exists not merely as a religious organization or martial arts institution, but as a non-formal Islamic educational institution that integrates spiritual guidance and character development. The institution emerged from the Tarekat Zaman tradition and developed through the leadership of Gonang Mendrofa as the thirteenth legitimate teacher (*guru*) within the tradition. The educational system of the institution is structured through spiritual teachings, regular religious gatherings, collective remembrance (*dhikr*), spiritual training (*suluk*), and martial arts practices.



The research findings indicate that the existence of the institution is maintained through three interconnected dimensions: spiritual transmission, educational practice, and social engagement. The spiritual dimension is reflected in the teaching of Tarekat Zaman values, while the educational dimension appears through the systematic guidance of students in religious practices and ethical discipline. Meanwhile, the social dimension is demonstrated through community services, including rehabilitation activities, assistance for vulnerable groups, and social interaction with surrounding communities.

Table 1. Institutional Development and Educational Continuity of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar

Period	Evidence reported in the study	Significance for institutional existence
1998–2001	Gonang Mendrofa developed the institution in Tobotan. Prospective students were brought to his teacher in Rimbo Melintang on four successive visits for spiritual guidance.	Educational transmission involved a continuing relationship between the teacher, his predecessor, and prospective students.
1999	Religious gatherings expanded to Palopat Maria and Simaninggir. Assistant teachers, locally called <i>WD</i> , supported guidance and coordination.	Expansion was accompanied by the delegation of teaching responsibilities.
Late 1999	Activities extended to Jalan Pancing, Medan, attracting traders, entrepreneurs, retired military and police personnel, and serving personnel.	Membership extended beyond the immediate locality and included different occupational backgrounds.
2001	Religious gatherings were temporarily suspended. Gonang Mendrofa attributed this decision to concerns about public stigma associated with terrorism-related issues.	Institutional continuity included a period of interruption and adjustment to the wider social context.
2016	Religious gatherings resumed in Flamboyan, Parsalakan, Angkola Barat, with former students assisting the guidance of new members. Traditional treatment and rehabilitation-related services were also reported.	Former students contributed to institutional reactivation and the expansion of community services.
From 2025	The document reports another temporary pause in formal activities associated with Gonang Mendrofa's employment and administrative commitments.	Institutional existence should be distinguished from uninterrupted formal educational activity.



The institutional history reveals that educational continuity was maintained through teacher transmission, the participation of former students, and the delegation of guidance to assistant teachers known locally as WD. Between 1998 and 2001, prospective students were brought to Gonang Mendrofa's teacher in Rimbo Melintang on four successive visits for spiritual guidance. Religious gatherings subsequently expanded to Palopat Maria, Simaninggir, and Medan. Following a temporary suspension in 2001, activities resumed in Parsalakan in 2016 with support from former students. However, the document also records a further pause in formal activities from 2025. These developments indicate that the institution's existence involved expansion, interruption, and reactivation rather than uninterrupted organizational growth.

Figure 1: Students receiving the Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar



Figure 1.A: Students Receiving Diplomas from the Tarikat Zaman Silat Bongkar



Figure 1.B: Recitation with the community

Figures 1 document two complementary dimensions of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar's existence as a non-formal Islamic educational institution. Figure 1.A: presents students receiving the tarekat ijazah, illustrating the recognition of their participation within the institution's tradition of spiritual transmission and teacher-student relationships. Figure 1.B: documents a religious gathering with members of the surrounding community, highlighting the institution's role in providing a space for religious learning, strengthening social relationships, and discussing communal concerns. Together, these activities illustrate how the institution connects the transmission of spiritual teachings within its membership with religious engagement beyond the perguruan, supporting its educational and social presence in the Padangsidempuan area.



Integration of Spiritual Education and Physical Discipline

The second finding demonstrates that the uniqueness of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar lies in the integration between spiritual education (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) and physical discipline (*riyāḍah al-jasad*). Unlike educational practices that separate spiritual development from physical training, this institution combines tarekat teachings with Silat Bongkar as a medium for self-control, discipline, and character development. The research findings show that spiritual practices are not taught only through verbal instruction but are cultivated through continuous experience, discipline, and habituation. Students are guided to practice religious devotion, maintain ethical behavior, respect teachers, and develop responsibility toward others. At the same time, Silat Bongkar training functions as a pedagogical medium to strengthen patience, courage, discipline, and emotional control. This integration produces an educational process where physical training becomes a means of controlling personal desires, while spiritual practices strengthen inner awareness. Therefore, the relationship between tarekat and silat in this institution represents an integrated educational mechanism rather than two separate activities.

Table 2. Spiritual and Physical Practices in the Educational Process

Practice	Evidence in the document	Educational emphasis
Ritual purification	Students were required to perform ablution before dhikr and training.	Preparation for learning through bodily cleanliness and religious intention.
Teacher guidance	Gonang Mendrofa provided advice before dhikr concerning tarekat teachings and Silat Bongkar.	Clarification of the spiritual and ethical orientation of practice.
Breath-associated dhikr	Senior student Hamsar Jani described breathing and dhikr practices conducted every Thursday evening (<i>malam Jumat</i>).	Remembrance of Allah and sustained spiritual attention.
Silat practice	Gonang Mendrofa described punctuality, appropriate clothing, compliance with institutional rules, and repeated movements.	Discipline, perseverance, and restraint in the use of martial ability.
Congregational prayer and subsequent advice	Prayer was conducted before or after training; subsequent advice addressed conduct and students' spiritual experiences.	Connection between physical practice, worship, and ethical reflection.

The integration was expressed through identifiable learning routines. Students performed ablution before practice, received advice from the teacher, and participated in dhikr associated with breathing and bodily movement. Hamsar Jani, a senior student, reported that breathing and dhikr practices were conducted every Thursday evening. Gonang Mendrofa also described



punctuality, appropriate training attire, compliance with institutional rules, and repetition as elements of discipline. Congregational prayer took place before or after training, while subsequent advice connected students' experiences with ethical conduct. These accounts locate spiritual-physical integration within recurring pedagogical practices rather than only within the institution's educational philosophy.

Figure 2. Teacher-guided breathing and *Zikir* practice associated with Silat Bongkar.



Figure 2.A: Teachers Guide Students to Start Doing Good Deeds.



Figure 2.B: Recitation of Recitation of the Breath Practice of Tarekat Zaman to produce Bongkar (Silat Bongkar) in the College Field

Figures 2 illustrate the connection between teacher-guided spiritual practice and bodily activity in Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar. Figure 2.A documents the teacher guiding students as they begin their devotional practice, highlighting the teacher's role in directing participation and conveying the spiritual orientation of learning. Figure 2.B presents breathing-associated *dhikr* practice in the institution's training field, showing the bodily dimension of the practices connected with Silat Bongkar. Read alongside the interview accounts, these images support the finding that spiritual instruction and physical practice are linked through guided participation rather than taught as separate activities. They document the setting and conduct of this educational process, while its significance for discipline, spiritual awareness, and self-control is explained through participants' accounts.

Internalization of Adab Values and Character Formation among Students

The third finding reveals that the core objective of Gonang Mendrofa's educational thought is the formation of students' character through the internalization of Islamic ethical values (*adab*). The study found that the institution teaches 21 fundamental values of *adab*, including sincerity, love and compassion toward fellow human beings,



maintaining brotherhood, avoiding hatred, and strengthening responsibility as servants of Allah.

The internalization process occurs through continuous guidance, teacher modeling, religious practices, and interactions among students. The findings indicate that students experience changes not only in religious practices but also in social behavior, including increased respect, humility, discipline, and concern for others. The educational process emphasizes that moral transformation cannot be achieved only through theoretical teaching but requires continuous practice within a supportive spiritual community. Thus, the formation of character within Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar occurs through the combination of knowledge, spiritual experience, and social habituation.

Table 3. Documentary and Interview Evidence of Adab Education

Ethical dimension	Documentary or interview evidence	Finding supported
Humility and restraint	The student handbook prohibits claiming superiority, displaying knowledge arrogantly, and teaching without the teacher's permission.	Martial and spiritual knowledge are placed within explicit ethical limits.
Respectful communication	Students are instructed to lower themselves respectfully and speak gently when meeting the teacher.	Respect is expressed through everyday conduct and speech.
Brotherhood and fidelity	The handbook prohibits rivalry among students, mutual insults among teachers, and the breaking of commitments.	Adab regulates relationships within the spiritual community.
Compassionate and equitable teaching	Teachers are instructed to treat students as their own children and avoid preferential treatment of rich over poor students.	Ethical obligations apply to teachers as well as students.
Service and hospitality	Gonang Mendrofa described the teacher as a servant of "Allah's guests"; newcomers were to be served rather than left to take refreshments themselves.	Hospitality provides a practical expression of the teacher's ethical responsibility.
Reported emotional and religious changes	Student Firman described greater calmness, improved worship discipline, and reduced inclination to display strength.	Students associated participation with changes in self-control and religious practice.
Reported changes at home	Baim, identified as Gende's father, reported gentler speech, greater responsiveness to parental advice, and more regular worship.	A parent's account supports the reported extension of adab into family life.

Documentary evidence shows that adab was codified in the student handbook through 21 rules governing students' relationships with their teacher and fellow students. These rules emphasized humility, gentle speech, fidelity, and the avoidance of rivalry



and unauthorized teaching. Separate provisions required teachers to show compassion, correct students appropriately, and treat wealthy and poor students equally. Gonang Mendrofa expressed this reciprocal responsibility by describing the teacher as a servant of “Allah’s guests.” Interview accounts also connected these provisions with everyday conduct. Student Firman reported greater emotional restraint and religious discipline, while Baim, the father of a student, described gentler speech and increased responsiveness to parental advice. These accounts suggest that participants perceived adab education as extending beyond institutional activities into family and community relationships.

Figure 3. Students participating in collective work to construct the institution’s activity centre.



Figures 3. illustrate how spiritual practice and collective service form complementary aspects of education at Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar. Figure 3.B: documents students engaging in breathing-associated dhikr in the training field, representing the spiritual and bodily practices connected with Silat Bongkar. Figure 3.A: shows students working together to construct the institution’s activity centre, providing concrete evidence of cooperation and participation in maintaining their shared learning environment. Considered alongside the interview accounts, these activities demonstrate that the educational process encompasses both devotional practice and practical service (*khidmah*). The photographs thus support the finding that adab education is embedded in opportunities to practice mutual assistance and shared responsibility, while the reported effects on students’ character are established through participants’ testimonies.

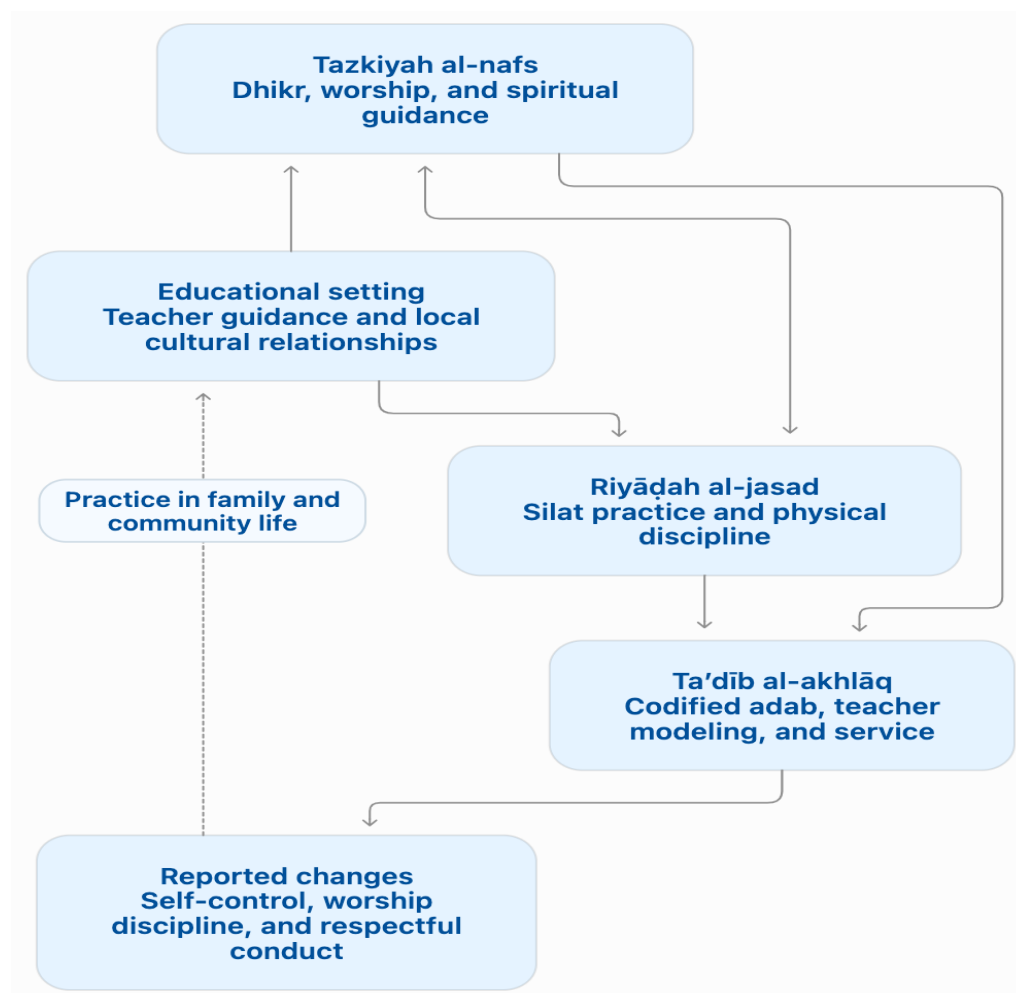


Construction of a Local Sufi Wisdom-Based Islamic Education Model

The fourth finding identifies that Gonang Mendrofa's educational thought constructs an Islamic education model based on local Sufi wisdom. This model emerges from the interaction between Islamic spiritual teachings, local cultural traditions, and community educational practices. The research findings demonstrate that the institution does not simply preserve a traditional religious practice but transforms it into an educational system that responds to contemporary moral challenges. The model is constructed through three main educational processes: (1) *Tazkiyah al-nafs*: as spiritual purification through tarekat practices; (2) *Riyāḍah al-jasad*: as physical discipline through Silat Bongkar training; (3) *Ta'dīb al-akhlāq*: as moral cultivation through the internalization of adab values.

These three processes form an integrated educational pathway that aims to produce individuals with spiritual awareness, physical discipline, and ethical responsibility. The findings support the argument that local religious traditions can function as alternative educational models that contribute to contemporary Islamic education development.

Figure 4. An Empirically Grounded Synthesis of Islamic Education Based on Local Sufi Wisdom



The model was reconstructed from the relationship between spiritual practices, bodily discipline, and codified ethical responsibilities. Its local grounding was further articulated by customary figures. Harun Siregar emphasized the principle of *pantun hangoluan*, *tois hamatean*, associating courteous conduct with the preservation of social relationships and arrogance with their deterioration. Andi Aprijal Harahap related institutional practices to *Dalihan Na Tolu*, mutual respect, and deliberation through *makkobar* or *martahi*. These accounts situate the model within the social and cultural relationships of the Padangsidempuan area. The proposed model therefore represents an analytical synthesis of locally situated educational practices; its outcomes are supported by participants' accounts rather than standardized measurements of effectiveness.

2. Discussion

Perguruan Tarekat as a Form of Non-Formal Islamic Education

The findings reveal that Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar functions as a non-formal Islamic educational institution that develops spiritual awareness, ethical values, and social responsibility. This finding broadens the understanding of Islamic education beyond schools, madrasahs, and pesantren by highlighting the educational role of religious communities and traditional Islamic organizations. A comparable study of Thoriqot Naqsyabandiyah Jabal Kubis demonstrates how spiritual practices and guidance from a *mursyid* constitute non-formal educational processes that strengthen faith, worship discipline, and moral development (Damanik et al., 2024). Religious communities can therefore provide educational spaces where knowledge, values, and character are cultivated through participation and lived experiences.

This perspective is consistent with Al-Attas's concept of Islamic education, which places the cultivation of *adab* at the center of the educational process. In their analysis of his thought, Putra et al. (2023) explain that *ta'dib* encompasses the inculcation of appropriate conduct, discipline, social responsibility, and spiritual awareness. Education consequently involves connecting knowledge with ethical conduct and recognizing the proper place of oneself in relation to others and God. Viewed through this conceptual lens, the practices within Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar can be interpreted as an educational process that integrates spiritual guidance, ethical discipline, and continuous habituation.

Related studies suggest that Islamic education grounded in Sufi traditions supports character formation through exemplary guidance, repeated spiritual practices, and participation in social life. Bassar and Hasanah (2020) describe *riyadhah* as a process of character internalization involving habituation and discipline under the guidance of a *mursyid*. Similarly, Hasibuan et al. (2025) report that Sufi-oriented character education combines religious activities with community service, linking devotion to God with responsibility toward others (Abidin & Murtadlo, 2020; Fausi, 2020). Similarly,



Aderibigbe et al. (2023). These studies support interpreting the educational practices of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar as processes through which spiritual and ethical values are embedded in everyday conduct. Therefore, the existence of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar demonstrates that local Islamic traditions can function as alternative educational institutions that preserve spiritual values while responding to contemporary moral challenges.

Integration of Spirituality and Physical Discipline in Character Education

One of the most significant findings of this study is the integration of spiritual training and physical discipline within Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar. Rather than treating spiritual awareness, moral formation, and bodily development as separate educational objectives, the institution brings them together through religious guidance and martial arts practice. This interpretation resonates with Ya'cub et al. (2025), whose conceptual study emphasizes the integration of physical and spiritual dimensions through religious habituation, exemplary guidance, and practical engagement. It is also compatible with Lakes and Hoyt's (2004) framework of martial arts education, which connects cognitive, affective, and physical self-regulation. The present findings illustrate how this integration operates within a community-based Islamic educational setting.

The concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* provides a framework for interpreting character formation as a process of inner purification and ethical self-discipline. Within this framework, practices such as *dhikr*, *muhasabah*, and *riyāḍah* can be understood as opportunities to examine intentions, restrain desires, and cultivate moral awareness. Bassar and Hasanah (2020) describe Sufi *riyāḍah* as a process of character internalization involving spiritual exercises, habituation, and guidance from an exemplary *mursyid*. Similarly, Damanik et al. (2024) identify faith reinforcement, worship discipline, and moral development as interconnected educational dimensions within a Naqsyabandiyah community. These studies support interpreting the spiritual practices of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar as educational processes directed toward ethical self-formation.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that Silat Bongkar functions as a pedagogical medium through which participants practice patience, discipline, courage, self-control, and responsibility. Evidence from school-based martial arts education provides a relevant comparison: Lakes and Hoyt (2004) found improvements in cognitive and affective self-regulation, prosocial behavior, and classroom conduct following a structured Taekwondo intervention. Although these findings cannot be directly generalized to Silat Bongkar, they support the possibility that guided physical practice contributes to development beyond technical proficiency. Building on this comparison,



the present study proposes integrated spiritual-embodied education as an interpretive framework for understanding how bodily discipline and spiritual guidance jointly contribute to ethical formation in this institution.

***Ta'dīb* and the Formation of Islamic Character**

The findings show that the central educational objective of Gonang Mendrofa's thought is the formation of students with noble character through the internalization of 21 values of *adab*. This finding highlights an understanding of Islamic education in which religious knowledge is closely connected to moral transformation. Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dīb* provides a relevant theoretical lens: education involves cultivating *adab*, including appropriate conduct, discipline, and spiritual awareness, rather than knowledge acquisition alone (Putra et al., 2023). Character formation consequently requires sustained guidance, exemplary conduct, and opportunities to practice ethical values. This interpretation is supported by Bassar and Hasanah (2020), who describe character internalization through spiritual exercises, habituation, and the exemplary guidance of a *mursyid*. Similarly, Hasibuan et al. (2025) illustrate how Sufi-oriented education connects religious practices with community service, bringing spiritual devotion into relation with social responsibility. Viewed through these perspectives, the findings suggest that the 21 values of *adab* provide an organizing foundation for the educational practices of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar, linking religious understanding with personal conduct and social attitudes. The significance of this finding lies in positioning character formation as the core of the educational process, within which spiritual experience, ethical practice, and responsibility toward others are mutually reinforcing.

Towards a Local Sufi Wisdom-Based Islamic Education Model

The most important contribution of this study is the construction of a local Sufi wisdom-based Islamic education model. Previous studies on local wisdom-based Islamic education have generally focused on curriculum development, cultural preservation, and religious moderation (Firmansyah, 2020; Ibnu et al., 2022). Meanwhile, studies on tarekat have largely emphasized historical, theological, and organizational dimensions. This study bridges these two perspectives by demonstrating that local Sufi traditions can function as educational models. The integration of Tarekat Zaman and Silat Bongkar creates an educational system where Islamic spirituality interacts with local cultural practices. Through this integration, local traditions become a medium for transmitting Islamic values and developing human character.

The model developed through the educational thought of Gonang Mendrofa consists of three interconnected dimensions:



1	First, spiritual purification (<i>tazkiyah al-nafs</i>), which develops inner awareness and religious consciousness through spiritual practices.
2	Second, physical discipline (<i>riyāḍah al-jasad</i>), which strengthens self-control, perseverance, and discipline through Silat Bongkar training.
3	Third, moral cultivation (<i>ta'dīb al-akhlāq</i>), which transforms spiritual and physical experiences into ethical behavior and social responsibility.

This model supports recent arguments that Islamic education must become more contextual by integrating universal Islamic principles with local cultural realities (Abidin & Murtaḍlo, 2020; Alkouatli et al., 2023). Therefore, the contribution of this study is the proposition that local Sufi institutions should be recognized as legitimate sources of Islamic educational innovation, particularly in developing holistic character education models.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Gonang Mendrofa's Islamic educational thought represents a contextual model of Islamic education rooted in local Sufi wisdom through the integration of spiritual, physical, and moral dimensions. The existence of Perguruan Tarekat Zaman Silat Bongkar in Padangsidempuan illustrates that a local religious institution can function not only as a spiritual community but also as a non-formal Islamic educational institution that develops human character. Through the processes of spiritual guidance, ethical habituation, and community-based learning, the institution provides an alternative educational space that connects Islamic values with social and cultural realities.

The main contribution of this study is the formulation of a Local Sufi Wisdom-Based Islamic Education Model, which integrates *tazkiyah al-nafs* (spiritual purification), *riyāḍah al-jasad* (physical discipline), and *ta'dīb al-akhlāq* (moral formation) as interconnected educational processes. This model shows that character formation in Islamic education is not achieved merely through knowledge transmission but through continuous spiritual practice, embodied discipline, and the internalization of ethical values. The integration of Tarekat Zaman and Silat Bongkar provides a distinctive example of how local traditions can become pedagogical resources for developing holistic Islamic character (*adab*).

This study contributes to the broader discourse of Islamic education by highlighting the importance of recognizing local religious traditions as sources of educational innovation. The findings suggest that Islamic education can be strengthened through approaches that integrate spirituality, culture, and moral development. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single local institution and the perspective of a specific religious tradition. Future research may expand this framework by



examining similar Sufi-based educational institutions in different cultural contexts to develop a broader understanding of local wisdom-based Islamic education models.

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