

Berzanji as Community-Based Islamic Education: Intergenerational Transmission and Cultural Preservation among the Malay Community in Bengkalis, Indonesia

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Abstract: The Berzanji tradition continues as a cultural practice among the Malay community of Air Putih Village, Bengkalis District, but its educational function faces weak intergenerational regeneration. Previous studies have emphasised religious values, da'wah, and cultural preservation, with limited attention to how Berzanji is sustained through community-based learning and intergenerational transmission. This study examines Berzanji as a medium of Community-Based Islamic Education and identifies challenges to its preservation. Using a qualitative case study, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving religious leaders, Berzanji group leaders, and community members. The findings show that Berzanji facilitates Islamic learning through collective reading of the Al-Barzanji text, explanation of religious meanings, habituation, role modelling, and communal participation, supporting the internalisation of faith, worship, morality, and social responsibility. Empirically, five women's Berzanji groups, each comprising approximately 15–20 members, were identified; they are adult groups, with no children's or youth groups. Practice and training are not conducted systematically, and government support remains limited. Regeneration is therefore the main weakness. Theoretically, the two frameworks reveal a continuity–regeneration tension: Berzanji remains a community-based learning process, but continued practice does not ensure effective transmission and regeneration. Practically, preservation requires systematic youth regeneration, training, and stronger institutional support.

Keywords: Berzanji; Community-Based Islamic Education; Islamic Religious Education; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Intergenerational Transmission.

Abstrak: Tradisi Berzanji terus berlangsung sebagai praktik budaya di kalangan masyarakat Melayu Desa Air Putih, Kabupaten Bengkalis, namun fungsi edukatifnya menghadapi kendala dalam regenerasi antargenerasi yang lemah. Penelitian terdahulu lebih menekankan pada nilai-nilai keagamaan, dakwah, dan pelestarian budaya, dengan perhatian terbatas pada bagaimana Berzanji dipertahankan melalui pembelajaran berbasis masyarakat dan pewarisan antargenerasi. Penelitian ini mengkaji Berzanji sebagai sarana Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Masyarakat serta mengidentifikasi tantangan dalam pelestariannya. Melalui metode studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan lewat observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan tokoh agama,

ketua kelompok Berzanji, dan anggota masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Berzanji memfasilitasi pembelajaran Islam melalui pembacaan bersama teks *Al-Barzanji*, penjelasan makna keagamaan, pembiasaan, keteladanan, dan partisipasi komunal, yang mendukung internalisasi iman, ibadah, akhlak, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Secara empiris, teridentifikasi lima kelompok Berzanji perempuan yang masing-masing beranggotakan sekitar 15–20 orang dewasa; tidak ditemukan adanya kelompok anak-anak maupun remaja. Praktik dan pelatihan tidak dilakukan secara sistematis, dan dukungan pemerintah masih terbatas. Oleh karena itu, regenerasi menjadi kelemahan utama. Secara teoretis, kedua kerangka kerja tersebut mengungkap adanya ketegangan antara keberlanjutan dan regenerasi: Berzanji tetap menjadi proses pembelajaran berbasis masyarakat, namun praktik yang terus berjalan tidak menjamin pewarisan dan regenerasi yang efektif. Secara praktis, upaya pelestarian memerlukan regenerasi kaum muda yang sistematis, pelatihan, serta dukungan kelembagaan yang lebih kuat.

Kata Kunci: *Berzanji; Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Masyarakat; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Warisan Budaya Takbenda; Pewarisan Antargenerasi*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education is a process of education aimed at developing individuals who possess faith (iman), piety (taqwa), noble character, and the ability to practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives¹. This process is not limited to formal educational institutions such as schools and madrasahs but also takes place within families and communities, which serve as important educational settings for transmitting Islamic values across generations². However, the continued existence of a religious tradition does not necessarily guarantee the sustainability of its educational function³. When participation and mechanisms of intergenerational transmission weaken, a tradition may remain culturally practised while its capacity to educate younger generations gradually declines. This creates an important issue in understanding religious traditions not only as cultural practices but also as mechanisms of community-based Islamic education⁴.

¹ Nurdianto Nurdianto, Tarsono Tarsono, and Hasbiyallah Hasbiyallah, “Pembiasaan Kegiatan Keberagamaan Dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa SDIT Nur El-Qolam Serang Banten,” *J-PAL: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 9, no. 2 (June 30, 2023): 129–43, <https://doi.org/10.18860/jpai.v9i2.23953>.

² Iis Nahwiyah and Fajar Syarif, “Strengthening Islamic Values Through Integration of Local Culture in Islamic Religious Education Materials,” *International Journal of Contemporary Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (July 1, 2025): 21–30, <https://doi.org/10.24239/ijcie.Vol7.Iss1.121>.

³ Sinta Kusumaningtyas, “Peran Gen Z Dalam Melestarikan Budaya Islam Lokal Di Era Digital,” *Journal of Islamic Communication Studies* 3, no. 2 (July 31, 2025): 144–57, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jicos.2025.3.2.144-157>.

⁴ Sutarto Sutarto, “Kontribusi Keluarga Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Untuk Membentuk Karakter Islami Remaja,” *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (July 2023): 67, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v8i1.6602>.

The Berzanji tradition provides an important context for examining this issue. It involves the recitation of the Kitab Al-Barzanji, a text narrating the life, virtues, and exemplary character of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Composed by Sayyid Ja'far Al-Barzanji, the text has long been practised throughout the Indonesian archipelago as part of Islamic propagation (da'wah) and religious tradition⁵. Among Malay communities, Berzanji is practised during significant religious and social occasions, including the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday (Mawlid), aqiqah ceremonies, circumcisions, weddings, and family thanksgiving gatherings⁶. Its continuity reflects the close relationship between Malay customs and Islam⁷, consistent with the Malay philosophy adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah, which positions Islamic teachings as a foundation of Malay customary life. This relationship is also supported by local government regulations concerning the preservation of Malay customs and community cultural traditions⁸.

However, the continued performance of Berzanji does not necessarily guarantee the continuity of its educational function. A religious tradition may remain visible and regularly practised while the mechanisms through which its knowledge, values, and practices are transmitted to younger generations become weaker. This raises a central question: does the continuity of Berzanji necessarily ensure the continuity of its function as a community-based Islamic educational practice? Its educational significance therefore depends not only on ritual performance but also on continued participation, learning, understanding, and reproduction across generations.

This tension is particularly visible in Air Putih Village, Bengkalis District, where Berzanji continues to be practised as part of religious and social life. Preliminary observations indicate that the tradition is regularly performed during Mawlid, weddings, circumcisions, aqiqah ceremonies, and community thanksgiving gatherings. Religious leaders, Berzanji groups, and community

⁵ Abdul Baits, "Pemikiran Sayyid Ja'far Al-Barzanji: Pengaruhnya Terhadap Tradisi Keagamaan Dan Budaya Islam Di Indonesia," *Mazalat: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (December 20, 2024): 107–18, <https://doi.org/10.64367/m-jpi.v6i1.18>.

⁶ Handoyo Handoyo, Muhammad Khoiri, and Muhammad Aldi Irfan, "Nilai - Nilai Pendidikan Islam Yang Terkandung Dalam Pembacaan Kitab Al – Barzanji Pada Tradisi Pernikahan Di Desa Pematang Duku Timur," *JURNAL PAI: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (June 7, 2023): 22–40, <https://doi.org/10.33507/pai.v2i1.1115>.

⁷ Wira Sugiarto, "Nilai Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Al-Barzanji Pada Masyarakat Desa Wonosari Kecamatan Bengkalis Kabupaten Bengkalis," *Darul Ilmi* 10, no. 02 (2022): 225–44, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24952/di.v10i2.7103>.

⁸ Pemerintah Kabupaten Bengkalis, "Perda Nomor 39 Tahun 2001 Tentang Pemberdayaan, Pelestarian Adat Istiadat Melayu Dan Pengembangan Kebiasaan-Kebiasaan Masyarakat Serta Lembaga Adat Dalam Kabupaten Bengkalis" (2001).

members remain involved in its implementation. However, participation is increasingly concentrated among older generations, while youth involvement remains limited. The growing influence of digital media, migration, modernisation, and the absence of systematic regeneration mechanisms further complicate the transmission of the tradition to younger generations. The persistence of the practice alongside declining youth participation suggests a tension between cultural continuity and educational sustainability: Berzanji remains visible as a cultural and religious practice, while raising questions about whether existing mechanisms are sufficient to sustain its educational function across generations.

Previous studies have examined the Berzanji tradition primarily from two complementary perspectives: Islamic education and cultural preservation. Educational studies have highlighted its contribution to Islamic value formation⁹, religious awareness, and character development, while preservation-oriented research has emphasised institutional roles, cultural continuity, regeneration, and the integration of Malay local wisdom into Islamic Religious Education¹⁰. However, these strands of research have largely been examined separately, leaving insufficient explanation of how the continued practice of Berzanji relates to the sustainability of its educational function across generations¹¹. In particular, the relationship between cultural continuity¹², intergenerational transmission, and the regeneration of practitioners remains underexplored.¹³

This study addresses this gap by examining Berzanji as a form of Community-Based Islamic Education while simultaneously considering its sustainability as an intangible cultural heritage practice. The Community-Based Islamic Education perspective is used to examine how community participation,

⁹ Bobby Angurah Siregar, Muhammad Taufiqurrahman Nur Siagian, and Basyarul Ulya, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Dalam Melestarikan Al-Barzanji Di Pondok Pesantren Irsyadul Islamiyah Tanjung Medan," *MODELING: Jurnal Program Studi PGMI* 11, no. 4 (December 30, 2024): 621–36, <https://doi.org/10.69896/modeling.v11i4.2784>.

¹⁰ Irlina Dewi and Yuni Dhea Utari, "The Role of Traditional Institutions in Preserving the Al-Barzanji Tradition," *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 4, no. 1 (September 30, 2024): 119–29, <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.v4i1.1897>.

¹¹ Harmaini Harmaini et al., "Integration of Bengkalis Malay Bara'an Tradition Values for Character Strengthening in Islamic Religious Education Learning," *Journal of Social Knowledge Education (JSKE)* 6, no. 1 (February 28, 2025): 135–42, <https://doi.org/10.37251/jske.v6i1.1409>.

¹² Suhernawati et al., "Integration of Aqidah-Tauhid and Islamic Character Based on Malay Local Wisdom in Islamic Religious Education," *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2024): 161–80, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v9i2.13012>.

¹³ Baits, "Pemikiran Sayyid Ja'far Al-Barzanji: Pengaruhnya Terhadap Tradisi Keagamaan Dan Budaya Islam Di Indonesia."

religious guidance, habituation, role modelling, and family involvement support the transmission and internalisation of Islamic values. The Intangible Cultural Heritage perspective is used to examine the continuity of the practice through safeguarding, transmission, and regeneration. Bringing these perspectives together enables the study to distinguish between the continuity of Berzanji as a cultural and religious practice and the continuity of the community-based mechanisms that sustain its educational function.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyse how the Berzanji tradition functions as a medium of Community-Based Islamic Education, how Islamic values are transmitted and internalised through community participation, and how intergenerational transmission and regeneration influence the sustainability of the tradition. Rather than assuming that cultural continuity automatically produces educational continuity, the study examines the conditions under which Berzanji can remain both a community-based Islamic educational practice and a living Malay cultural tradition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community-Based Islamic Education

Community-Based Islamic Education views the community as an important setting for religious learning in which Islamic values are transmitted through social interaction, participation, habituation, and exemplary practices¹⁴. Unlike formal Islamic education that is primarily organised within schools, madrasahs, or pesantren, community-based education develops through religious and social activities embedded in everyday community life¹⁵. In this perspective, learning occurs through community participation, social interaction, habituation, and exemplary practices that reinforce religious knowledge and values.

Sa'idah, Prasetya, and Sain demonstrate that local religious traditions can function as spaces for Community-Based Islamic Education because religious learning takes place through collective participation and the involvement of religious leaders, families, and community members¹⁶. The

¹⁴ Nur Izzatis Sa'idah, Benny Prasetya, and Zohaib Hassan Sain, "Community-Based Islamic Education through Local Traditions: Internalising Religious Values in the Tong Gentong Practice during Maulid Nabi," *Journal of Islamic Education Research* 7, no. 1 (January 14, 2026): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.35719/jier.v7i1.532>.

¹⁵ Zanzabila Aulia, "Integrasi Kearifan Lokal Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Idarah Tarbiyah: Journal of Management in Islamic Education* 7, no. 3 (2026): 784–95, <https://doi.org/10.32832/itjmie.v7i3.23288>.

¹⁶ Sa'idah, Prasetya, and Sain, "Community-Based Islamic Education through Local Traditions: Internalising Religious Values in the Tong Gentong Practice during Maulid Nabi."

community consequently functions not only as the social environment in which a religious tradition is practised but also as a learning community in which religious knowledge, values, and social responsibility are developed¹⁷.

This perspective is particularly relevant to Berzanji because its practice involves collective recitation, religious guidance, habituation, role modelling, and social participation. Religious leaders and Berzanji group leaders can function as facilitators who guide the practice and reinforce its religious meanings, while families and other community members contribute to the continuity of participation¹⁸. Thus, Berzanji functions as community-based religious learning through collective practice and the internalisation of Islamic values.

In this study, Community-Based Islamic Education is therefore operationalised through five interconnected dimensions: religious learning, habituation, role modelling, collective participation, and intergenerational transmission of Islamic values. These dimensions provide the basis for examining how Berzanji functions educationally within the community and whether its learning mechanisms remain sustainable across generations.

Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainability

The concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) provides a complementary perspective for understanding the continuity of Berzanji as a living cultural practice. UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage emphasises the importance of safeguarding cultural practices and the knowledge, skills, meanings, and social functions associated with them. From this perspective, safeguarding is not limited to maintaining the visible performance of a tradition but also involves ensuring that the knowledge and practices associated with the heritage remain viable within the community¹⁹.

Three concepts are particularly relevant to this study: safeguarding, transmission, and regeneration. Safeguarding refers to efforts to maintain the continuity and viability of a cultural practice within its community. Transmission concerns the process through which cultural knowledge, skills, meanings, and practices are passed from one generation to another. Regeneration extends this

¹⁷ Choirunniswah et al., "Gotong Royong Dan Musyawarah Melayu : How Malay Social System Builds Harmony And Community," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan* 4, no. 3 (January 5, 2026): 16408–10, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v4i3.4806>.

¹⁸ Tina Andriana, "Pembelajaran Pai Berbasis Kearifan Lokal," *Analisis* 2, no. 2 (June 29, 2024): 214–21, <https://doi.org/10.65311/j.analysis.v2i2.610>.

¹⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" (Paris, 2003), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000132540>.

process by emphasising the involvement of younger generations who can become new cultural bearers and sustain the practice within changing social circumstances²⁰.

This distinction is important because cultural sustainability depends not only on the continued existence of cultural bearers but also on mechanisms that enable younger generations to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and experience necessary to continue the tradition.

In the context of this study, the ICH perspective is operationalised through safeguarding, cultural bearers, community participation, transmission, regeneration, and sustainability. These dimensions provide an analytical basis for examining the intergenerational sustainability of Berzanji.

Berzanji as Islamic Educational Practice

Berzanji refers to the recitation of the Kitab Al-Barzanji, which contains narratives and expressions concerning the life, personality, and exemplary qualities of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Within Muslim communities, its recitation is commonly integrated into religious and social occasions²¹. In the Malay community, Berzanji is embedded in religious and social life²². Its continued presence demonstrates the close relationship between Islamic religious practices and Malay cultural life²³.

Previous studies indicate that Berzanji possesses an educational dimension. These studies collectively indicate that Berzanji can function beyond ritual performance by providing opportunities for religious learning and character formation.

From an educational perspective, the value of Berzanji lies not only in the textual content of Al-Barzanji but also in the way the practice is carried out. Collective recitation, repeated exposure to religious narratives, explanations provided by leaders, participation in prayer and shalawat, and interaction among community members create opportunities for habituation and role modelling²⁴.

²⁰ (UNESCO)United Nations Educational.

²¹ Abdullah Muhammad Alfatih et al., "Lalaran and Tasmi's:," *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (October 9, 2025): 395–420, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v10i2.11355>.

²² Diniyatul Azkiya et al., "Tradisi Barzanji Dalam Peningkatan Solidaritas Dan Pengaruhnya Pada Masyarakat Desa Salakbrojo," *Al-Manaj: Jurnal Program Studi Manajemen Dakwah* 2, no. 02 (December 25, 2022): 50–58, <https://doi.org/10.56874/almanaj.v2i02.1022>.

²³ Betti Fariati et al., "Peran Islam Dalam Membangun Karakter Dan Pendidikan Budaya Melayu," *Jurnal Ilmiah Global Education* 6, no. 2 (June 13, 2025): 789–97, <https://doi.org/10.55681/jige.v6i2.3801>.

²⁴ Mochamad Dzikri Rivaldi and Leli Yulifar, "Tradition And Modernity: An Ethnographic Study Of The Adaptation Of The Ciptagelar Traditional Village Community In

Through these processes, values related to aqidah, ibadah, akhlaq, and social responsibility can be encountered and reinforced within community life.

Previous Research and Research Gap

Previous research on Berzanji can broadly be grouped into two areas: studies emphasising its Islamic educational and religious functions, and studies emphasising its cultural preservation and regeneration.

The first group of studies highlights the educational potential of Berzanji²⁵, particularly its contribution to Islamic learning²⁶, religious knowledge²⁷, character formation²⁸, and devotion to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)²⁹. These studies demonstrate the educational significance of Berzanji across institutional, community, and traditional settings, but primarily focus on its educational outcomes rather than the continuity of the mechanisms through which these values are transmitted across generations.

The second group focuses on cultural continuity³⁰, emphasising the roles of traditional institutions³¹, regeneration, local meanings³², and Malay

The Era Of Globalization,” *Santhet (Jurnal Sejarah Pendidikan Dan Humaniora)* 9, no. 3 (June 11, 2025): 863–71, <https://doi.org/10.36526/santhet.v9i3.5400>.

²⁵ Misbahuddin Misbahuddin and Severo Espinosa III, “Barzanji Tradition In Muslim Society As An Manifestation of Islamic Values Faith In the Apostles For Discipline Character,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Indonesia (JPAlI)* 3, no. 4 (December 31, 2022): 91–99, <https://doi.org/10.37251/jpaii.v3i4.942>.

²⁶ Miskahuddin Miskahuddin and Zuherni Zuherni, “Efektifitas Tradisi Barzanji Terhadap Pemahaman Keagamaan Masyarakat (Studi Terhadap Masyarakat Kec. Julok Kab. Aceh Timur),” *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 23, no. 1 (April 30, 2021): 54–63, <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v23i1.3772>.

²⁷ Handoyo, Khoiri, and Aldi Irfan, “Nilai - Nilai Pendidikan Islam Yang Terkandung Dalam Pembacaan Kitab Al – Barzanji Pada Tradisi Pernikahan Di Desa Pematang Duku Timur.”

²⁸ Athoillah Athoillah, Siti Roudhatul Jannah, and M. Sayyidul Abrori, “Character Education Through Al-Barzanji: A Study of Traditional Muslim Society in Tanjung Harapan Village, Seputih Banyak, Central Lampung,” *Journal of Research in Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (May 14, 2025): 95–106, <https://doi.org/10.25217/jrie.v7i1.5683>.

²⁹ Siregar, Nur Siagian, and Ulya, “Peran Pondok Pesantren Dalam Melestarikan Al-Barzanji Di Pondok Pesantren Irsyadul Islamiyah Tanjung Medan.”

³⁰ Baits, “Pemikiran Sayyid Ja’far Al-Barzanji: Pengaruhnya Terhadap Tradisi Keagamaan Dan Budaya Islam Di Indonesia.”

³¹ Fachri Syauqi and Syamsul Arifin, “The Barzanji Ritual in the Malay Tradition of the East Coast of Sumatra: Meanings, Symbols, and Local Variations,” *Warisan: Journal of History and Cultural Heritage* 6, no. 2 (December 29, 2025): 132–39, <https://doi.org/10.34007/warisan.v6i2.2996>.

³² Harmaini et al., “Integration of Bengkalis Malay Bara’an Tradition Values for Character Strengthening in Islamic Religious Education Learning.”

local wisdom³³ in sustaining Berzanji and integrating cultural values into Islamic Religious Education³⁴. However, these studies largely examine cultural preservation and educational relevance separately, leaving the relationship between the continuity of Berzanji practice and the sustainability of its intergenerational educational transmission insufficiently explained.

Although these studies provide important foundations, they leave an analytical space concerning the relationship between continued cultural practice and intergenerational educational transmission. Studies of Berzanji as Islamic education primarily emphasise values, religious understanding, character, or religious functions. Studies of preservation, meanwhile, emphasise cultural continuity, institutional roles, and regeneration. What remains insufficiently explained is how Berzanji operates simultaneously as a community-based learning process and a cultural practice whose educational function depends on successful intergenerational transmission.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the Berzanji tradition among the Malay community of Air Putih Village through the complementary perspectives of Community-Based Islamic Education and Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The specific contribution of this study is therefore not simply to reaffirm that Berzanji contains Islamic values. Rather, it examines the continuity–regeneration relationship: how community-based learning sustains Islamic value transmission, while the effectiveness of intergenerational transmission determines whether Berzanji can remain a sustainable educational and cultural practice.

Table 1. Synthesis of Previous Research

No.	Previous Study	Main Focus	Main Finding	Remaining Gap
1	Siregar, Nur Siagian, and Ulya (2024)	Berzanji in pesantren	Berzanji supports Islamic learning, noble character, and devotion to the Prophet.	Focuses on institutional religious education rather than community-based intergenerational transmission
2	Miskahuddin	Berzanji and	Participation	Does not examine

³³ Suhenawati et al., “Integration of Aqidah-Tauhid and Islamic Character Based on Malay Local Wisdom in Islamic Religious Education.”

³⁴ Dewi and Utari, “The Role of Traditional Institutions in Preserving the Al-Barzanji Tradition.”

	and Zuherni (2021)	religious understanding	contributes to religious knowledge and awareness	mechanisms of intergenerational transmission
3	Misbahuddin and Espinosa (2022)	Religious and moral values	Berzanji contributes to religious and moral character	Emphasises values rather than sustainability of transmission
4	Handoyo, Khoiri, and Irfan (2023)	Islamic educational values in wedding tradition	Al-Barzanji contains Islamic educational values	Focuses on educational content within a specific ritual context
5	Athoillah, Jannah, and Abrori (2025)	Character education	Berzanji contributes to character formation in traditional Muslim society	Does not examine continuity between generations
6	Dewi and Utari (2024)	Cultural preservation	Traditional institutions play an important role in preservation and regeneration.	Does not integrate preservation with community-based Islamic learning
7	Baits (2024)	Thought of Sayyid Ja'far Al-Barzanji	Al-Barzanji has influenced Islamic religious and cultural traditions	Primarily historical and conceptual rather than community- based empirical analysis
8	Syauqii and Arifin (2025)	Malay Berzanji ritual	Berzanji has meanings, symbols, and local variations within Malay tradition.	Does not specifically examine educational transmission and regeneration
9	Sa'idah, Prasetya, and Sain (2026)	Community- Based Islamic Education through local tradition	Local religious traditions can function as community-based learning environments	Examines another local tradition rather than Berzanji and its regeneration

Present study	Berzanji in Air Putih Village	Community-based Islamic education and intergenerational transmission	Examines the relationship between community learning, Islamic value internalisation, safeguarding, transmission, and regeneration	Addresses the continuity–regeneration tension in Berzanji as an educational and cultural practice
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Conceptual Framework of the Research

Based on the preceding theoretical discussion and synthesis of previous research, this study conceptualises Berzanji as a practice that has two interconnected functions: an educational function within the community and a cultural function as an intangible heritage practice.

The first pathway derives from Community-Based Islamic Education. Berzanji creates a community learning environment in which religious knowledge and Islamic values are encountered through collective participation, habituation, role modelling, religious guidance, and social interaction. These processes contribute to the internalisation of Islamic values and connect religious learning with everyday community life.

The second pathway derives from the Intangible Cultural Heritage perspective. The continued practice of Berzanji represents safeguarding, but long-term sustainability requires transmission and regeneration. Transmission allows knowledge, skills, values, and meanings to move between generations, while regeneration requires younger members of the community to become active participants and future cultural bearers.

The two pathways are therefore interdependent. Community learning supports the transmission of Islamic values, while effective intergenerational transmission sustains the community of practitioners through which such learning can continue. Conversely, weak regeneration may gradually reduce the capacity of Berzanji to function as a community-based educational practice even when its ritual performance remains active.

Accordingly, the sustainability of Berzanji as both a community-based Islamic educational practice and a living cultural heritage depends not only on the continuity of its performance but also on the strength of its intergenerational transmission and regeneration mechanisms.

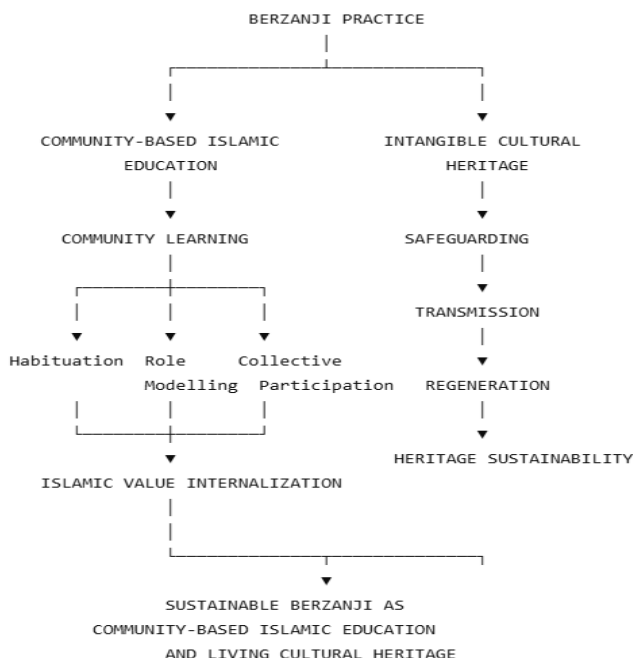


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The framework places intergenerational transmission and regeneration at the critical point between the continuity of Berzanji practice and its long-term educational and cultural sustainability. This allows the study to examine not merely whether Berzanji continues to be performed, but whether the community continues to possess effective mechanisms for learning, transmitting, and regenerating the practice across generations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the *Berzanji* tradition as a medium of *Community-Based Islamic Education* and to examine the challenges to its preservation within the Malay community of Air Putih Village, Bengkalis District, Bengkalis Regency³⁵. This approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of the meanings, values, and processes through which Islamic values are internalised naturally within community life through the *Berzanji* tradition. Fieldwork was conducted over two months in Air Putih Village, which was chosen as the research site because the community continues to preserve the *Berzanji* tradition

³⁵ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Kombinasi, R&D Dan Penelitian Pendidikan)*, 3rd ed. (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2023).

as an integral part of religious and customary events, including the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday (*Mawlid*), *aqiqah* ceremonies, circumcisions, weddings, and community thanksgiving gatherings.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct knowledge, experience, and involvement in the *Berzanji* tradition. The study involved 12 participants, comprising two *Berzanji* group leaders, two religious leaders, four *Berzanji* group members, two parents, and two community members. The primary informants were Mr Misri Hasim and Mrs Mastijah, who respectively led the men's and women's *Berzanji* groups. Mr Misri Hasim has been involved in *Berzanji* activities since 1980, while Mrs Mastijah has been actively involved in *Berzanji* activities for approximately 18 years. The other participants included religious leaders Mr Maulidis and Mr Jamal Abdillah; group members Mrs Ketj, Mrs Saniyem, Mrs Ita, and Mrs Erlina; parents Mr Isnaini and Mr. Yanto; and community members Mr. Yusri and Mr. Hendra. Collectively, they provided diverse perspectives on *Berzanji* practices, Islamic values, family involvement, community participation, intergenerational transmission, and the continuity of the tradition.

Table 2. Research Participants

No.	Participant	Participant Category
1	Mr. Misri Hasim	Men's <i>Berzanji</i> Group Leader
2	Mrs. Mastijah	Women's <i>Berzanji</i> Group Leader
3	Mr. Maulidis	Religious Leader
4	Mr. Jamal Abdillah	Religious Leader
5	Mrs. Ketj	<i>Berzanji</i> Group Member
6	Mrs. Saniyem	<i>Berzanji</i> Group Member
7	Mrs. Ita	<i>Berzanji</i> Group Member
8	Mrs. Erlina	<i>Berzanji</i> Group Member
9	Mr. Isnaini	Parent
10	Mr. Yanto	Parent
11	Mr. Yusri	Community Member
12	Mr. Hendra	Community Member
Total	12 participants	

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation was conducted during various religious and customary events to examine *Berzanji* practices, community interactions, and the internalisation of Islamic educational values. Semi-structured interviews explored participants' experiences and perspectives on the educational role of *Berzanji*, the values it transmits, and challenges to its preservation. Documentary data included photographs, field notes, village records, and other relevant documents.

Data were analysed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Within the data condensation stage, a systematic coding procedure was applied. First, interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, while observation notes and documentary materials were organised according to the source and research focus. Second, initial coding was conducted by identifying meaningful statements related to the *Berzanji* practice, Islamic educational values, community participation, habituation, role modelling, intergenerational transmission, and regeneration. Third, focused coding was conducted by grouping related initial codes into broader conceptual categories. Fourth, the categories were developed into thematic patterns representing the major findings of the study. Fifth, cross-source comparison was conducted by comparing information from *Berzanji* group leaders, religious leaders, group members, parents, and community members, as well as comparing interview, observation, and documentary evidence. Finally, the themes were theoretically interpreted through the complementary perspectives of Community-Based Islamic Education and UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage framework. Data analysis was conducted manually without the use of qualitative data analysis software.

The trustworthiness of the data was established through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation involved comparing perspectives across participant categories, while methodological triangulation involved cross-checking findings from observation, interviews, and documentary evidence. Member checking was conducted by confirming the findings with key informants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected participants' experiences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

The Continuity of the Berzanji Tradition amid Weak Intergenerational Transmission

The Berzanji tradition remains an integral part of the religious and cultural life of the Malay community in Air Putih Village, Bengkalis District. This finding is based on an interview with Mr Misri Hasim, who has served as the leader of the village's Berzanji group since 1980. He explained:

“Berzanji was introduced to Air Putih from Malaysia. Mr Yasir was the first person to teach the recitation of the Kitab Al-Barzanji here. His descendants then continued and spread the practice within the community.” (Interview, Mr Misri Hasim)

According to Mr Misri Hasim, this continuity has made Berzanji an important part of both religious practice and Malay cultural identity, reflecting the philosophy *adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah*³⁶. However, the continued practice of Berzanji does not necessarily indicate strong intergenerational transmission.

The practice is maintained through its regular inclusion in religious and customary gatherings such as Mawlid, aqiqah, circumcision ceremonies, weddings, and thanksgiving events. Mr Misri Hasim noted, “Berzanji is usually performed during Mawlid, aqiqah, circumcision ceremonies, weddings, and thanksgiving gatherings.” This regular performance demonstrates that Berzanji remains embedded in communal religious and customary practices.

Nevertheless, the composition of the existing Berzanji groups indicates a challenge in intergenerational transmission. Mrs Mastijah, who has led the women's Berzanji group for approximately 18 years, explained:

“In Air Putih, there are around five women's Berzanji groups, with about 15 to 20 members in each group. However, we do not yet have a special group for children or adolescents. Many young people leave the village to continue their education or to work, while those who remain generally participate only occasionally. Because of this, it is difficult to regenerate the group and find replacements when older members are no longer able to participate.” (Interview, Mrs Mastijah)

The limited participation of younger generations is also influenced by the organisation and timing of Berzanji training. Mrs Ketu explained that adolescents are relatively easy to teach because they enjoy singing and can adapt to the melodic character of Berzanji. She stated:

“Actually, adolescents are easier to teach. They enjoy singing, and Berzanji is like singing and Qur'anic recitation because it has a melody. The

³⁶ Baits, “Pemikiran Sayyid Ja'far Al-Barzanji: Pengaruhnya Terhadap Tradisi Keagamaan Dan Budaya Islam Di Indonesia.”

problem is that they must attend school. Parents do not want their children to study at night because it can interfere with their rest. Our own training sometimes continues until late at night, even beyond 10 p.m.” (Interview, Mrs Ketj)

This finding is reinforced by parents who support the Berzanji tradition but face practical difficulties involving their children. Mr Yanto explained:

“We support our children joining Berzanji, but they cannot participate regularly because of school activities. The training is usually held at night, and sometimes they also cannot join Berzanji at weddings because they have school the next day.” (Interview, Mr Yanto)

Similarly, Mr Isnaini, a parent in the community, noted that school schedules and late-night activities make it difficult for children to participate consistently.

The four group leaders similarly explained that new members are expected to have basic Qur’anic reading skills and adequate recitation ability. They noted that beginners, particularly adults, often require repeated guidance because mastering the melodic recitation of Berzanji takes time (Interview, Mrs Ketj, Mrs Saniyem, Mrs Ita, and Mrs Erlina).

These requirements, together with limited institutional support, further constrain the active participation and regeneration of younger members. Mrs Mastijah explained that the village government has not provided regular guidance for Berzanji groups, with support largely limited to uniforms and training conducted mainly before performances. She noted that regular training still depends on the initiative of individual groups, indicating that Berzanji regeneration has yet to become part of a structured institutional program.

The Berzanji Tradition as a Medium of Islamic Religious Education

Mr Misri Hasim explained that children are introduced to Berzanji through religious activities from an early age, with leaders briefly explaining its meaning and the exemplary qualities of Prophet Muhammad: “Children learn Berzanji from a young age through religious gatherings, where we explain its meaning and the Prophet’s exemplary character.” Mrs Mastijah added that although participants may not fully understand the manuscript, its values are conveyed through recitation, prayers, and repeated participation.

Mr Maulidis, an imam at a local mosque, explained that the recitation of Al-Barzanji during religious occasions introduces participants to the exemplary character of Prophet Muhammad: “When Berzanji is recited during Mawlid or childbirth ceremonies, people learn about the Prophet’s character through the

stories and verses.” Mr Jamal Abdillah added that the repeated and melodious recitation helps the message remain memorable: “Because it is recited repeatedly with a melody, the values and stories about the Prophet are easier for people to remember.”

This educational function is closely connected to the cultural significance of Berzanji within the Malay community. Mr Hendra, a community member, further emphasised that Berzanji has both religious and cultural dimensions: “For the people of Air Putih, Berzanji is part of a religious tradition that has become integrated into Malay community life. It is not only an act of worship but also a way of preserving our customs and cultural identity.”

Supporting and Challenging Factors in the Sustainability and Regeneration of the Berzanji Tradition

The sustainability of the Berzanji tradition in Air Putih Village is supported by the active roles of Berzanji group leaders, religious figures, families, community members, Malay cultural identity, and mosques as spaces for religious activities. Mr Misri Hasim emphasised the important role of Berzanji leaders and religious figures in sustaining the tradition: “The leaders not only lead the recitation, but also guide the members so that Berzanji continues to be practised and its religious values are passed on.” Mrs Mastijah added that family and community involvement, as well as the Malay cultural identity, strengthen its continuity: “Berzanji is supported by families and the community because it is part of our Malay religious and cultural identity. The mosque also provides an important place for us to gather and practice.”

Mr Isnaini emphasised that community participation helps sustain Berzanji through various religious and social occasions: “Berzanji is still practised during Mawlid, aqiqah, circumcision ceremonies, weddings, and thanksgiving gatherings. These activities bring people together to participate in religious and community life.” Mr Yusri, a community member, explained that homes and mosques also provide important spaces for maintaining the tradition: “Berzanji is usually held in homes or mosques, where people can gather, practice together, and learn from one another.” Mr Hendra further noted, “Through regular participation, the younger generation can become familiar with both the religious practices and the Malay traditions that are preserved through Berzanji.”

However, several factors constrain the sustainability and regeneration of the tradition. First, the recruitment and training of new members involve certain skill requirements. Mrs Ket, Mrs Saniyem, and Mrs Erlina explained that prospective members are generally expected to be able to read the Qur'an and possess an appropriate or melodious recitation voice. These requirements are

important for maintaining the quality of the recitation but may also make the recruitment of new members more difficult. Training adult newcomers also requires repeated guidance and practice.

Second, the existing organisation of training is not fully compatible with the circumstances of younger generations. Mrs Ita explained that the timing of Berzanji training can limit young people's participation: "Our Berzanji training is usually held at night, while children and adolescents still have school activities and need enough rest. Because of this, they cannot always attend regularly." She added that the challenge is therefore related not only to their interest but also to the timing and organisation of the training.

Mrs Mastijah explained, "So far, the village government has mostly helped by providing uniforms. We haven't received regular guidance or a structured training program for Berzanji, and there hasn't been much continuous mentoring for the younger generation either. So, for now, keeping Berzanji going still depends on the initiative of our groups and the community."

Another challenge is the changing social environment. Four members of different Berzanji groups, Mrs Ketit, Mrs Saniyem, Mrs Ita, and Mrs Erlina, explained that young people now spend more time on social media, education, and work, leaving less time to participate in Berzanji activities. They also noted that the absence of specific Berzanji groups for children and teenagers makes it more difficult for younger generations to learn and continue the tradition.

Discussion

The findings reveal a central paradox in the continuity of Berzanji in Air Putih: the tradition remains active as a religious and cultural practice, yet its intergenerational transmission and regeneration remain weak.

Previous studies establish Berzanji as a meaningful medium of community-based Islamic education through habituation³⁷, role modelling³⁸, and participation³⁹. Consistent with these studies, the present findings show that Berzanji continues to function as a community learning environment in which religious and Berzanji group leaders facilitate learning, while families and

³⁷ Titik Wahyuni, Ines A.W Chasanah, and Tri Prihatin Hidayatillah, "Metafora Religiusitas Dalam Syair Barzanji Karya Abu Ja'far Al Barzanji Telaah Sastra Islam," *GHANCARAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, September 18, 2025, 1013–24, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ghancaran.vi.21748>.

³⁸ Misbahuddin and Espinosa III, "Barzanji Tradition In Muslim Society As An Manifestation of Islamic Values Faith In the Apostles For Discipline Character."

³⁹ Siregar, Nur Siagian, and Ulya, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Dalam Melestarikan Al-Barzanji Di Pondok Pesantren Irsyadul Islamiyah Tanjung Medan."

community members support the transmission of Islamic values⁴⁰. However, participation remains concentrated among adult practitioners, limiting the continuity of this learning process across generations.

From the perspective of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage framework, the continued performance of Berzanji indicates that safeguarding remains relatively strong because the practice continues to be actively performed within the community. However, transmission and regeneration remain limited because participation is concentrated among existing adult groups and no dedicated groups for children or adolescents have been established⁴¹. While Dewi and Utari emphasise the importance of institutional structures in preserving the Berzanji tradition⁴², this study highlights the need to strengthen community-based transmission and regeneration mechanisms. The primary challenge is therefore not the disappearance of Berzanji itself, but the weakening of the mechanisms through which knowledge, participation, and educational values are transmitted to younger generations. Preservation efforts should consequently move beyond maintaining existing performances toward developing age-appropriate training, more accessible schedules, and stronger collaboration among families, Berzanji groups, religious leaders, customary institutions, and village authorities.

The findings from religious leaders indicate that Berzanji conveys Islamic values through repeated auditory exposure and communal recitation. Maulidis and Jamal Abdillah explained that the recitation of Berzanji during Mawlid celebrations and childbirth ceremonies introduces participants to the personality and exemplary qualities of Prophet Muhammad. Its melodic rhythm, repetition, and collective recitation make religious messages easier to hear, remember, and recognise through continued exposure⁴³. Thus, the educational function of Berzanji is not limited to understanding its textual content but also

⁴⁰ Idham Hamid, "Tradisi Berzanji, Antara Sakral Dan Profan Di Masjid Raya Campalagian," *PAPPASANG* 3, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 51–65, <https://doi.org/10.46870/jiat.v3i1.74>.

⁴¹ (UNESCO)United Nations Educational, "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage."

⁴² Dewi and Utari, "The Role of Traditional Institutions in Preserving the Al-Barzanji Tradition."

⁴³ Anis Salsabilla, Al Farra, and Abdul Wahid, "Management of the Al- Qur ' an Memorization Program and the Mechanism for Building Independent Character of Students in Islamic Boarding Schools Character Education Has Become a Crucial Agenda in the Development of 21st-Century Education Because Social ," *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 1 (2026): 197–220, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v11i1.16925>.

operates through an auditory learning process in which repeated listening and recitation reinforce the retention of religious messages⁴⁴.

Berzanji functions not only as a religious recitation but also as a medium through which Islamic practices and Malay cultural identity are continuously reproduced within community life⁴⁵. Its regular performance in Mawlid⁴⁶, aqiqah, circumcision ceremonies, weddings, and thanksgiving gatherings demonstrates that the tradition is embedded in important religious and social events. This finding supports Syauqii and Arifin's view of Berzanji as part of the Malay religious tradition while also reinforcing previous studies that highlight its role in strengthening religious practice and social solidarity⁴⁷. The present study further shows that its cultural-religious significance is expressed through collective practices such as cooperation, social interaction, and the preparation of traditional foods during Berzanji gatherings. In this context, Berzanji embodies the Malay principle of adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah, in which religious values and customary practices are mutually connected. Thus, the continuity of Berzanji in Air Putih reflects not merely the preservation of a ritual, but the ongoing reproduction of Islamic values, communal relationships, and Malay cultural identity through everyday community practices.

The findings show that Berzanji functions as a medium for transmitting Islamic values, including faith (aqidah) through narratives and exemplary qualities of Prophet Muhammad, worship (ibadah) through collective prayers, dhikr, and shalawat, morality (akhlaq) through respect and humility (tawadhu'), and social values through cooperation (gotong royong), brotherhood (ukhuwah), and social interaction (silaturahmi)⁴⁸. These values are reinforced through repeated participation in Berzanji recitations, collective prayers, and

⁴⁴ Zumzianah, Usman, and Wahab, "Islamic Religious Education Based On Local Culture: Strategy For Developing Islamic Religious Education Materials In Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *IJGIE (International Journal of Graduate of Islamic Education)* 5, no. 1 (February 27, 2024): 39–45, <https://doi.org/10.37567/ijgie.v5i1.2727>.

⁴⁵ Nurul Huda, "Persepsi Siswa Madrasah Tsanawiyah Terhadap Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Islam Melalui Pembelajaran PAI Berbasis Kearifan Lokal," *Jurnal Miftahul Ilmi: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 3 (May 27, 2026): 25–35, <https://doi.org/10.59841/miftahulilmi.v3i3.465>.

⁴⁶ Salamah and Muhammad Faqih Mukaddam, "Barzanji's Maulid Tradition in South River Communities as a Basis of Islamic Education (Ethnographic Study)," *Journal Analytica Islamica Barzanji's* 13, no. 02 (December 30, 2024): 290–302, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.30829/jai.v13i2.22816>.

⁴⁷ Syauqii and Arifin, "The Barzanji Ritual in the Malay Tradition of the East Coast of Sumatra: Meanings, Symbols, and Local Variations."

⁴⁸ Ahmad Muttaqin, "Barzanji Bugis' Dalam Peringatan Maulid: Studi Living Hadis Di Masyarakat Bugis, Soppeng, Sul-Sel," *Jurnal Living Hadis* 1, no. 1 (December 6, 2016): 129, <https://doi.org/10.14421/living-hadis.2016.0101-06>.

communal gatherings, creating a habituation process in which religious values are heard, practised, and gradually internalised. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that Berzanji supports religious value formation⁴⁹, character development⁵⁰, religious practice⁵¹, and social solidarity⁵². From the perspective of Community-Based Islamic Education, these findings demonstrate that religious learning occurs through habituation, participation, and social interaction within community life.

The limited participation of younger generations in Berzanji appears to be shaped more by structural and social constraints than by a lack of interest⁵³. The findings indicate that adolescents are generally capable of learning Berzanji because its melodic form is considered accessible and enjoyable, yet school schedules, the late timing of training, and the need for adequate rest restrict their regular participation. Parents similarly support their children's involvement but face difficulties when Berzanji activities conflict with school responsibilities. In addition, education, work, mobility outside the village, and increasing engagement with social media further reduce the time available for participation. These findings suggest that youth disengagement should not be interpreted simply as declining appreciation of the tradition; rather, it reflects a mismatch between the existing organisation of Berzanji activities and the changing circumstances of younger generations⁵⁴. This extends Dewi and Utari's argument concerning the importance of institutional support by showing that effective regeneration also requires more flexible and age-appropriate forms of participation⁵⁵. From the perspective of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage framework, therefore, sustaining Berzanji requires not only maintaining

⁴⁹ Handoyo, Khoiri, and Aldi Irfan, "Nilai - Nilai Pendidikan Islam Yang Terkandung Dalam Pembacaan Kitab Al – Barzanji Pada Tradisi Pernikahan Di Desa Pematang Duku Timur."

⁵⁰ Athoillah, Siti Roudhatul Jannah, and M. Sayyidul Abrori, "Character Education Through Al-Barzanji: A Study of Traditional Muslim Society in Tanjung Harapan Village, Seputih Banyak, Central Lampung."

⁵¹ Nurul Huda, "Persepsi Siswa Madrasah Tsanawiyah Terhadap Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Islam Melalui Pembelajaran PAI Berbasis Kearifan Lokal."

⁵² Syaquii and Arifin, "The Barzanji Ritual in the Malay Tradition of the East Coast of Sumatra: Meanings, Symbols, and Local Variations."

⁵³ Kusumaningtyas, "Peran Gen Z Dalam Melestarikan Budaya Islam Lokal Di Era Digital."

⁵⁴ Apri Kurniasih, Titin Nurhidayati, and M. Nafiur Rofiq, "Planting Character Education Values Through the Moral Education Perspective of Syeh Ja'far Al-Barzanji Titin," *As-Salam: Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam & Pendidikan* 13, no. 02 (December 30, 2024): 145–69, <https://doi.org/10.51226/assalam.v13i02.729>.

⁵⁵ Dewi and Utari, "The Role of Traditional Institutions in Preserving the Al-Barzanji Tradition."

existing practices but also adapting transmission mechanisms to the social realities of younger generations⁵⁶.

A further issue concerns the tension between preserving the quality of Berzanji performance and ensuring its regeneration. The findings show that prospective members are generally expected to have basic Qur'anic reading skills and an appropriate or melodious recitation voice. These requirements are important for maintaining the quality and distinctive character of Berzanji performance, but they may also narrow opportunities for new members to enter the tradition. Adult newcomers, in particular, require repeated guidance and practice before they can participate confidently in melodic recitation. This creates a tension in which mechanisms intended to preserve the established form of Berzanji may simultaneously make regeneration more difficult. In the absence of dedicated groups or gradual training pathways for children and adolescents, younger generations have limited opportunities to acquire the necessary skills from an early age. Thus, regeneration requires not necessarily lowering the standards of Berzanji performance, but developing more accessible and gradual learning processes through which younger and new participants can acquire these skills.

Community-based participation sustains Berzanji through the involvement of group leaders, religious figures, families, and community members, but this support has not been matched by sufficient institutional mechanisms for regeneration⁵⁷. Village government support remains limited, mainly through the provision of uniforms, while structured training, regular guidance, and mentoring for younger generations are still lacking. This finding reinforces Dewi and Utari's emphasis on institutional support and suggests that systematic regeneration programs and stronger collaboration among community and customary institutions are needed to sustain Berzanji without weakening its communal character⁵⁸.

Overall, the long-term continuity of Berzanji depends on strengthening its intergenerational transmission through inclusive and systematic community-based learning that connects existing practitioners with younger generations.

⁵⁶ (UNESCO)United Nations Educational, "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage."

⁵⁷ Romi Saputra, "Governance Frameworks and Cultural Preservation in Indonesia: Balancing Policy and Heritage," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (July 30, 2024): 25–50, <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2145>.

⁵⁸ Dewi and Utari, "The Role of Traditional Institutions in Preserving the Al-Barzanji Tradition."

Implications of the Berzanji Tradition for Community-Based Islamic Religious Education and Heritage Sustainability

The findings have theoretical implications for understanding Berzanji as both a community-based Islamic learning practice and an intangible cultural heritage. From the perspective of Community-Based Islamic Education, Berzanji demonstrates how Islamic values are learned through communal recitation, habituation, role modelling, and participation involving families, religious leaders, Berzanji groups, and community members⁵⁹. From the perspective of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage framework, however, the continuity of the practice does not automatically ensure the sustainability of its intergenerational transmission⁶⁰. The findings therefore suggest that educational continuity and heritage sustainability should be understood as interconnected processes: Berzanji remains educationally meaningful when its learning mechanisms continue, while its heritage remains sustainable when knowledge, skills, values, and participation are transmitted across generations⁶¹.

The intersection of these perspectives provides the basis for the conceptual model developed in this study. As illustrated in Figure 2, the model integrates two interconnected pathways: Berzanji Practice → Community Learning → Islamic Value Internalisation and Berzanji Practice → Safeguarding → Transmission → Regeneration → Heritage Sustainability. The model highlights the main vulnerability between transmission and regeneration, where existing mechanisms remain concentrated among adult practitioners and have not sufficiently engaged younger generations. By integrating Community-Based Islamic Education and Intangible Cultural Heritage perspectives, the model demonstrates how the educational and cultural sustainability of Berzanji is interconnected through community learning, value internalisation, safeguarding, transmission, and regeneration.

⁵⁹ Sa'idah, Prasetya, and Sain, "Community-Based Islamic Education through Local Traditions: Internalising Religious Values in the Tong Gentong Practice during Maulid Nabi."

⁶⁰ (UNESCO)United Nations Educational, "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage."

⁶¹ Neng Sufia et al., "Educational Strategy in Preserving and Developing Malay Islamic Arts and Culture," *Jurnal Ilmiah Global Education* 6, no. 3 (September 30, 2025): 2232–38, <https://doi.org/10.55681/jige.v6i3.3979>.

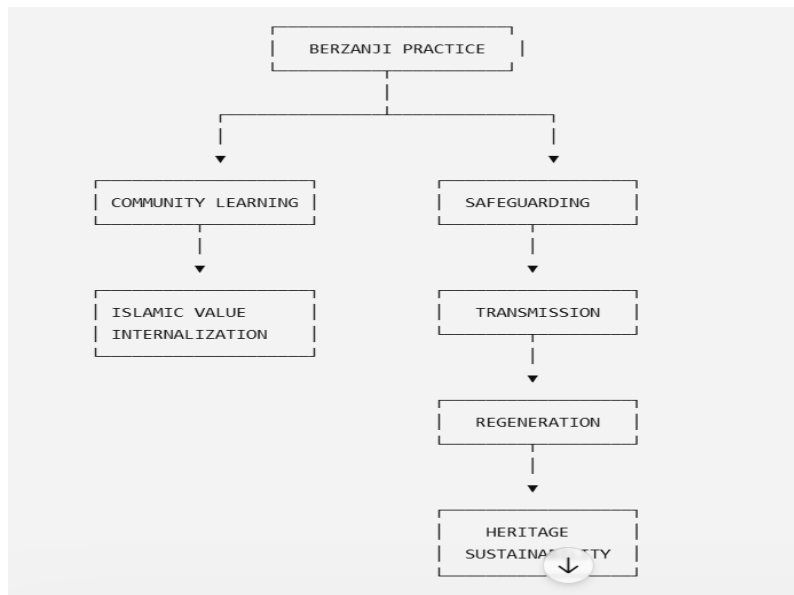


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Berzanji as Community-Based Islamic Education and Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding

Practically, the findings imply that preservation efforts should move beyond maintaining existing performances toward strengthening intergenerational learning. Age-appropriate training, accessible schedules, gradual skill development, and stronger collaboration among families, Berzanji groups, religious leaders, customary institutions, and village authorities are needed to expand youth participation without weakening the communal character of the tradition. In this way, Berzanji can remain both a meaningful medium of Islamic religious education and a sustainable expression of Malay cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the Berzanji tradition among the Malay community of Air Putih Village, Bengkalis District, functions beyond a religious ritual as a medium of Community-Based Islamic Education and an important practice of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Through habituation, role modelling, collective participation, and guidance from religious and Berzanji group leaders, the tradition facilitates the internalisation of Islamic values, including faith (aqidah), worship (ibadah), morality (akhlaq), and social responsibility. Its continued practice in religious and customary events also indicates that safeguarding of the tradition remains relatively strong.

However, the study identifies a significant gap between the continuity of Berzanji practice and its intergenerational sustainability. Although approximately five women's Berzanji groups remain active, with around 15–20 members in each group, no dedicated groups for children or adolescents have been established. Regeneration is constrained by recruitment requirements, school schedules, predominantly night-time training, limited institutional support, and changing patterns of youth participation. Thus, weak regeneration reflects not only declining youth participation but also limitations in existing mechanisms of transmission and training.

The study concludes that the long-term sustainability of Berzanji depends on strengthening the connection between community-based Islamic learning and intergenerational cultural transmission. The conceptual model developed in this study integrates these dimensions by linking community learning → Islamic value internalisation with safeguarding → transmission → regeneration → heritage sustainability. Preserving Berzanji therefore requires not only maintaining existing practices but also strengthening accessible and age-appropriate learning arrangements and collaboration among families, Berzanji groups, religious leaders, customary institutions, and village authorities. These efforts can help sustain Berzanji as both a medium of Community-Based Islamic Education and a living Malay cultural heritage across generations.

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