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The Representation of Religious Education as Local Wisdom in Four Novels that Won the Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa Award: A Topoideological Model

Moh. Badrus Solichin¹²; Kisyani Laksono³; Anas Ahmadi⁴; Siti Khotijah⁵

¹Doctoral Program (S3) Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya; ²Indonesian Language Education Study Program, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syekh Wasil Kediri; ³Universitas Negeri Surabaya; ⁴Universitas Negeri Surabaya; ⁵Indonesian Language Education, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syekh Wasil Kediri
Correspondence e-mail: 26020956035@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Abstract:

Religious education is often treated as a neutral transfer of knowledge, yet it also operates as an ideological practice. This study examines how religious education is represented as local wisdom in four Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa winning novels, Tanah Tabu, Lampuki, Maryam, and Kura-kura Berjanggut, and tests the feasibility of the proposed Topoideology Model against close reading. Using a qualitative-interpretive comparative multiple-case design, 19 purposively selected quotations were analysed through thematic close reading guided by Eagleton's ideological questions, coded with five religiosity dimensions (adapted as akidah, ibadah, ihsan, ilmu, and amal), and positioned within a five-category taxonomy of religious ideology. The model's two layers, topic modelling (LDA, K = 2–6) and taxonomy-based classification, were compared with close reading on coverage, repeatability, and additional findings. The novels form a spectrum: religious education is most integrated with local wisdom when it is informal and communal (Tanah Tabu), whereas institutionalised or discursive forms function as instruments of authority and exclusion (Lampuki, Kura-kura Berjanggut, Maryam). Akidah dominates the coded quotations (53.3%), followed by amal (26.7%), and local-wisdom markers appear in 10 of 19 quotations. The model proved less systematic than close reading, with lower coverage (31.6% versus 63.2%), unstable topics across runs (ARI = 0.018), and labelling agreement of 47.4%. It nevertheless revealed one cross-novel cluster, the moral evaluation of habits, which warrants expert verification. Close reading remains indispensable for capturing irony and context. Pedagogical implications include contextual value learning, critical literacy toward religious authority, and a five-dimension appreciation rubric, though not yet classroom-tested.

Keywords: Religious Education; Local Wisdom; Indonesian Novel; Topoideology Model; Religiosity Dimensions

Introduction

Indonesia is a multicultural country with a vast diversity of ethnic groups, languages, cultures, and religions (Iman & Azizah, 2024). This diversity is a source of national wealth, but it also harbors the potential for conflict. A survey by the SETARA Institute and INFID (2023) of 947 high school students in five cities found that 70.2% of students were classified as tolerant, up from 61.6% in the 2016 baseline. However, the “actively intolerant” category rose from 2.4% to 5.0%, and the “potentially at risk” category increased from 0.3% to 0.6%. The KBB Advocacy Coalition also reported 217 incidents of violations of religious freedom in 2023, up from 175 incidents in 2022 (Zulkarnain & Gule, 2025). In such a situation, religious education occupies an ambivalent position. It is expected to instill moderation and harmony (Sundoro & Shalih, 2024), but it can also become a space for ideologization. Abdullah (2015) even refers to Islamic religious education as one of the faces of educational ideology in Indonesia. This perspective serves as the starting point for this article, which positions religious education as both a facet of ideology and a sub-focus of the author’s dissertation on the transformation of authorship, themes, and ideology in Indonesian novels. Religious education is understood not as a neutral transfer of knowledge, but as an ideological practice that also operates within literary representations.

One way to examine this issue is through religious education grounded in local wisdom—that is, education that positions religious values as part of a community’s traditions, customs, and collective experiences (Abdullah et al. 2008). Al Musanna (2011) considers this approach to be more grounded as a basis for character education than a nationally standardized approach, while Wahyuni et al. (2025) found that this approach is effective in addressing the social dynamics of a community. To explore the interplay between religion and local wisdom, literature is a suitable medium because it serves as a vehicle for values-based literacy: *through the experience of reading, readers interpret, compare, and internalize values, rather than merely receiving information*. According to Nurgiyantoro (2007), values in fiction are integrated into the plot and characterization and are not conveyed didactically, thereby indirectly influencing the reader’s perspective. These values include religious, moral, social, and cultural values. Mangunwijaya (1982) defines religious values as the lived experience of human relationships with the Divine, with others, and with the universe—as manifested in the characters’ actions, rather than merely as religious symbols. However, these values are not ideologically neutral, as ideology operates through ideas and beliefs that either support or challenge power relations (Eagleton, 1991). Therefore, an analysis of a novel must examine which religious perspectives are normalized, contested, or marginalized by the text.

To ensure that religious values can be measured and analyzed, this study employs the five dimensions of religiosity proposed by ? (1968), namely belief, practice, experience, knowledge, and consequences. Ancok and Suroso (2011) adapted these five dimensions to the Islamic context as *akidah*, *ibadah*, *ihsan*, *ilmu*, and *amal*. This framework has proven applicable to Indonesian literary texts (Adji & Indrastuti, 2024). The subject of this study is four novels that won the *Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa* (KSK) award, which feature tensions or a fusion between religion and local wisdom. **Tanah Tabu** (Anindita S. Thayf, 2009 KSK winner) tells a story of Papuan spirituality and traditions. **Lampuki** (Arafat Nur, 2011 KSK winner) explores informal religious education in Aceh that confronts formal education, which, according to Hartanto et al. (2021), is suspected of being a tool for state ideologization. **Maryam** (Okky Madasari, 2012 KSK winner) explores the religious experiences of the Ahmadiyya community, and **Kura-kura Berjanggut** (Azhari Aiyub, 2018 KSK winner) examines Islam, power, and local culture within the context of the Aceh Sultanate. These four works were purposively

selected from the corpus of KSK works from 2001 to 2025 (55 winning and nominated titles) because they represent distinct local religious contexts, thereby allowing for cross-contextual comparison without sacrificing the depth of analysis.

Previous studies indicate that research on religiosity in Indonesian novels over the past five years has been dominated by qualitative literary sociology focused on a single novel. Fauzi and Supratno (2023) analyzed **Layla Seribu Malam Tanpamu**; Ardiansyah and Supratno (2023) analyzed **Merindu Cahaya De Amstel**; Prayoga et al. (2025) analyzed **Rinjani**; and Yuda et al. (2026) analyzed **Di Balik Kesabaran Cinta**. All four studies employed a descriptive-qualitative method using the read-and-note technique; they did not conduct cross-corpus or cross-temporal comparisons and limited their analysis to identifying religious values without mapping their ideological positions. On the other hand, *topic modeling* in Indonesia is more commonly applied to non-literary texts, such as undergraduate theses, master's theses (Hakim et al., 2022), and online news articles (Dwijayanti & Habibi, 2026). Yet “*distant reading*” has been proposed as a method for identifying patterns in corpora that are beyond the reach of close reading (Moretti, 2013), and topic modeling enables the discovery of latent themes in large text collections (Blei, 2012; Jockers, 2013).

Based on this gap, the novelty of this study lies in three aspects. *First*, its subject is the representation of religious education as local wisdom in the KSK-winning novel. *Second*, the analysis spans various religious and local contexts and is not limited to a single novel. *Third*, this study proposes the Topoideology Model—a two-tiered analysis that maps *topos* through topic modeling and then determines their ideological positions through taxonomy-based text classification.

With this novelty, this study lies at the intersection of language and literature education, religious education based on local wisdom, and *the digital humanities*—three fields that have thus far developed independently. This study proposes a qualitative-interpretive model that tests a taxonomy of religious ideologies before applying it to the entire corpus in this research, while simultaneously shifting the study of religiousness in literature from the identification of values to the mapping of ideological patterns. This shift offers three benefits. Theoretically, this study enriches the sociology of literature with a framework that bridges *close reading* and large-scale analysis. Methodologically, this study can serve as an initial reference for the integration of *the digital humanities* into the study of Indonesian literary ideology. Practically, this study is useful for developers of literature and religious education curricula who wish to incorporate local wisdom into learning by using novels as alternative teaching materials (Umam & Husain, 2024).

Based on the above discussion, the research questions (RQ) for this study are as follows: (RQ1) How is religious education represented as local wisdom in the four novels; (RP2) What local religious values emerge, and what are the patterns of their emergence based on the five dimensions of religiosity?; and (RP3) How does a assess the suitability of the Topoideology Model in mapping these patterns compared to *a close reading* of a limited corpus of quotations? Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) describe the representation of religious education as local wisdom in the four novels; (2) identify local religious values and their patterns of emergence based on the five dimensions of religiosity; and (3) determine the suitability of the Topoideology Model in mapping these patterns compared to *close reading* of a limited corpus of quotations.

Methods

Design and Data Sources

This study employs a qualitative-interpretive approach using a comparative multiple-case study design (Yin, 2018), supplemented by a feasibility test of the Topoideology Model applied to *close reading*. Each novel is treated as a single case of local religiosity, and all four are then compared across contexts. The data sources are four KSK-winning novels: **Tanah Tabu** (Thayf, 2009), **Lampuki** (Nur, 2011), **Maryam** (Madasari, 2012), and **Kura-kura Berjanggut** (Aiyub, 2018). These novels were selected purposefully based on three criteria: they explicitly address the transmission of religious values, are set against the backdrop of distinct local traditions (Papua, post-conflict Aceh, the Ahmadiyya community, and the Sultanate of Aceh), and hold the status of KSK award-winning works, thereby ensuring their equal legitimacy.

The research data consists of 19 selected excerpts from the four novels (*Lampuki*: 4, *Kura-kura Berjanggut*: 3, *Tanah Tabu*: 7, and *Maryam*: 5), rather than the entire text of each novel. These excerpts consist of sentences, dialogues, or paragraphs that address religious education, the transmission of religious values, religious authority, or community learning practices. The excerpts were selected through a thorough reading of the novels, and duplicate excerpts were combined. Each excerpt was coded with the novel's initials and a sequential number (LP, KB, TT, MR), and the novel, page number, and cultural context were recorded. Each excerpt served as a single unit of analysis throughout all stages.

Instrument

The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by three tools. *First*, a coding manual for the five dimensions of religiosity (belief, worship, ihsan, knowledge, and deeds), adapted from Glock and Stark (1968) and Ancok and Suroso (2011). This coding manual includes additional markers for local wisdom and uncoded categories for quotations without textual religious references. *Second*, a taxonomy of religious ideologies based on Eagleton's (1991) concept of ideology, presented in Table 1. Third, Python (Gensim) for exploratory topic modeling.

Table 1. Taxonomy of Religious Ideologies

Category	Operational Definition
Accommodative-Syncretic	Religion and local traditions mutually reinforce each other in values education
Puritan-Normative	Local traditions must be purified by standard religious norms
Institutional-hegemonic	Religious/formal education becomes a tool of dominant authority
Critical-pluralist	The text challenges authority and defends marginalized forms of religiosity
Non-ideological	Does not contain any religious positions that can be classified

Procedures and Data Analysis

RM1. Excerpts were analyzed using thematic close reading (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2021) focusing on characters, setting, conflict, and discourse. Ideology is examined through Eagleton's framework—specifically, which religious views are normalized, contested, or marginalized, and by whom. The results consist of profiles for each novel, which are then compared across novels.

RM2. All quotes were coded using a coding manual (Krippendorff, 2018). Due to the limited amount of data, a second coder also coded all quotes. Reliability was measured using Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960) with a minimum threshold of 0.61 (Landis & Koch, 1977), and any discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached. The outputs of this stage consisted of the frequency and proportion of dimensions per novel, as well as the order of their appearance by page.

RM3. The Topoideology model is designed in two layers: topos mapping through topic modeling and ideological positioning according to Table 1. Since the dataset consists of only 19 quotations, the proposed model was tested as a qualitative-comparative feasibility test, rather than as a performance metric. The first layer was run using *Latent Dirichlet Allocation* (Blei et al., 2003) with a number of topics $K = 2-6$. The results were evaluated based on coherence C_v (Röder et al., 2015) and stability across modeling iterations (10 random initializations, *adjusted Rand index*). The second layer was conducted through ideological positioning by the researcher based on a close reading of RM1, supplemented by a lexical-based automatic labeling trial as a boundary test. The results of both layers were mapped into a topic $\times$ ideology $\times$ novel matrix, then compared with the close reading using three criteria: (a) *coverage*, i.e., the proportion of quotations assigned an ideological position; (b) *reproducibility*, i.e., the stability of results across runs and the consistency of labeling; and (c) *additional findings*, i.e., patterns detected only by the model and meanings captured only by close reading.

Validity, Ethics, and Limitations

Data validity is ensured through triangulation of theory and readers, audit trails (decision logs, code book versions, model configurations, and *random seeds*), and researcher reflexivity. This study does not involve human participants. Ethical risks related to copyright and the sensitivity of religious issues were addressed by limiting quotations and framing ideologies as textual positions rather than judgments on the beliefs of specific groups. Because the data were limited and selected purposively, the model's results are not generalized and should be interpreted as preliminary evidence supporting the proposed model.

Results and Discussion

Informing The results and discussion are organized according to the sequence of the research questions. The first section describes the representation of religious education as local wisdom through a close reading of each novel (RM1). The second section presents patterns of the emergence of local religious values based on five dimensions of religiosity (RM2). The third section tests the validity of the Topoideology Model by comparing it with the close reading (RM3). These three sections are then synthesized in the discussion and pedagogical implications.

Analysis Results: Representations, Local Religious Values, and Testing the Proposed Topoideology Model

a. Representations of Religious Education as Local Wisdom

A close reading is conducted sequentially, starting with the novel that depicts the most informal religious education (*Tanah Tabu*) and moving on to the one that depicts the most institutionalized form (*Maryam*). For each novel, excerpts are read in light of Eagleton's questions about what is normalized, contested, and marginalized.

1. *Tanah Tabu*: Inheritance Through Family, Work, and Land

In *Tanah Tabu*, religious education does not exist as an institution, but rather as the transmission of values through the relationships between mothers, children, and elders. Mace tells Leksi, "*The Great God up there will always watch over you*" (Thayf, 2009: 37). Faith here is passed down as a sense of security and expressed through terms of local deity worship. Education is also supported by communal work: Mabel, "*is willing to work herself to the bone... to pay for Leksi's schooling*" (Thayf, 2009: 52). The most evident scene of this transmission of faith is seen in the elder's words: "*Our land is sacred, child. Taboo. Created by a special power just for us...*" (Thayf, 2009: 74), which teaches that protecting the land is a divine trust.

According to Eagleton's question, what is normalized is the unity of God, nature, and the land as a trust; what is contested is outsiders' claims to the land; and what is marginalized are the voices of women and children, as well as the knowledge of the Dani people.

2. *Lampuki*: Religious Discourse in the Context of Violence

Unlike **Tanah Tabu**, the data from **Lampuki** reveals a moral-religious discourse within the conflict, rather than a didactic scene. Ahmadi's oath not to let the soldiers "desecrate this noble land blessed by God" (Nur, 2011: 18) sanctifies the land for the sake of resistance. On the other hand, the narrator views the residents as having deviant behavior that "has become a sort of hereditary disease" (Nur, 2011: 13), while the authorities are portrayed as lacking "human feelings" (Nur, 2011: 329).

Religious education is thus present in a negative way—namely, through the consequences of its absence. What is normalized is the religious justification of violence; what is contested is the moral corruption of all parties, according to the narrator; and what is marginalized are civilians and historical traces.

3. *The Bearded Turtle*: Symbolic Authority

In **The Bearded Turtle**, religion is present through symbolic authority. Thanks are given "time and again, even though it might be a pirate ship" (Aiyub, 2018: 213–214)—a reflexive religiosity portrayed with irony. Then the envoy, who "claimed to have been sent directly by the Ottoman Caliph" (Aiyub, 2018: 261), arrived bearing gifts, and the sultan responded to the suggestion to appeal to the Caliph with, "Weapons?" (Aiyub, 2018: 269).

Thus, what appears to be normalized is the authority of the sultan and the caliph; what is challenged is reflexive religiosity through irony; and what is marginalized is the common people. In this way, the novel questions who has the authority to define Islam.

4. *Maryam*: Religious Education as a Tool of Exclusion

Unlike the three previous novels, **Maryam** depicts religious education taking place in schools and within families, and here religious education functions as a tool of exclusion. The religion teacher says, "I am a religion teacher. How can I give a good grade to a child who follows a heretical sect!" (Madasari, 2012: 75), thus turning academic evaluation into a punishment based on religious belief. Within the family context, Maryam turns to nature as "her only guide and role model" and abandons her faith (Madasari, 2012: 40). The practice of traditional healing is condemned: "Traditional healers are wrong..." (Madasari, 2012: 178), and "mass violence then reached its peak" (Madasari, 2012: 239).

In this novel, what is normalized is the single, mainstream interpretation; what is challenged is exclusion through Maryam's suffering; and what is marginalized are the Ahmadiyya community, women, and local practices.

5. Cross-Novel Comparison

Table 2. Representations of religious education as local wisdom and ideological interpretations across novels

Aspect	<i>Taboo Land</i>	<i>Lampuki</i>	<i>The Bearded Turtle</i>	<i>Maryam</i>
Forms of religious education	Informal: family, work, elders	Indirect: moral discourse and crises	Indirect: authority and legitimacy	Formal and family: school, marriage
Manifestations of local wisdom	Sacred land, local religious terms, communal economy	The sacredness of land, local vocabulary	Speech and sultanate hierarchy	Shamanic practices, community relations
Normalized	God, Nature, and the Earth as a Trust	Religious Justification for Violence	The Authority of the Sultan and the Caliph	Single interpretation, "heretical sects"

Contested	Claims by foreigners, domestic violence	Moral decay on all sides	Reflexive religiosity (irony)	Exclusion through schools and the masses
Marginalized	Women, children, Dani knowledge	Civil society and historical traces	The People	Ahmadiyya, women, traditional healers
Ideological Tendencies	Accommodating-syncretic	Institutional-hegemonic	Institutional-hegemonic (satire)	Puritan-normative, critical-pluralist

Table 2 shows that the four novels form a spectrum. **Tanah Tabu** portrays religious education as a living form of local wisdom that is integrated with nature. **Lampuki** and **Kura-kura Berjanggut** depict religion as linked to power and violence, so that religious education is understood through its failures or abuses. **Maryam** depicts formal religious education that marginalizes local communities and practices. Across these three forms— —a pattern emerges across the novels: the more institutionalized religious education becomes, the more it functions as a tool of authority; conversely, the more informal and communal it is, the more it becomes integrated with local wisdom.

b. Local-Religious Values and Patterns of Their Emergence

The patterns in this close reading were then examined in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the values. Of the 19 quotations, 15 were coded into the five dimensions of religiosity, and 4 were not coded because they did not contain textual religious references. Aqidah dominated (8 quotations, 53.3% of those coded), followed by amal (4 quotations; 26.7%), while ibadah, ihsan, and ilmu each appeared once (Table 3). Religious values are thus present more as beliefs and behaviors than as teachings or rituals, and the sole occurrence of knowledge (MR-05) actually takes the form of exclusion.

Table 3. Frequency (f) and proportion (%) of primary codes per novel

Dimension	<i>Lampuki</i> (n=4)	<i>Kura-kura</i> (n=3)	<i>Taboo Land</i> (n=7)	<i>Maryam</i> (n=5)	Total (n=19)
Belief	1 (25.0)	2 (66.7)	4 (57.1)	1 (20.0)	8 (42.1)
Worship	0	0	0	1 (20.0)	1 (5.3)
Ihsan	0	1 (33.3)	0	0	1 (5.3)
Science	0	0	0	1 (20.0)	1 (5.3)
Charity	0	0	3 (42.9)	1 (20.0)	4 (21.1)
Not coded	3 (75.0)	0	0	1 (20.0)	4 (21.1)

In addition to the dimension of religiosity, markers of local wisdom appeared in 10 of the 19 quotations (52.6%), all of which were among the coded quotations: *Kura-kura* 3/3, *Tanah Tabu* 5/7, *Lampuki* 1/4, and *Maryam* 1/5. Six of the eight quotes related to religious beliefs also exhibited indicators of local wisdom, such as the sacredness of the land and the term “Great God Above,” making religious beliefs the dimension most frequently intertwined with tradition. The order of code appearances in each novel is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Order of primary codes by page

Novel	Order of appearance
<i>Lampuki</i>	p. 13 TK → 18 Akidah → 32 TK → 329 TK
<i>Turtle</i>	pp. 213–214 Ihsan → 261 Aqidah → 269 Aqidah
<i>Taboo Land</i>	p. 18 Deeds → 37 Belief → 51–52 Deeds → 74–87 Belief

Novel	Order of appearance
<i>Maryam</i>	p. 40 Belief → 75 Knowledge → 154 Worship → 178 Deeds → 239 TK

Note: TK = not coded.

Table 4 shows that **Maryam** moves from personal belief to institutions, sharia, traditional judgment, and then communal violence. **Lampuki** only includes creed in the opening section, **Kura-kura** shifts from ihsan to the legitimization of authority, and **Tabu Land** moves from deeds to creed.

c. The Validity of the Topoideology Model

After the pattern of values was mapped through close reading and coding, the Topoideology Model was tested on the same data. Topic modeling (LDA—Latent Dirichlet Allocation) of the 19 excerpts yielded a C_v coherence of 0.435–0.532 for K = 2–6, with the highest value at K = 6 (Table 5). However, the differences between these values were smaller than the standard deviation across repetitions, and six topics for 19 documents meant only about three quotes per topic.

Table 5. C_v coherence by number of topics (mean ± SD, 10 initializations)

K	2	3	4	5	6
C _v	0.459 ± 0.021	0.435 ± 0.059	0.458 ± 0.083	0.521 ± 0.074	0.532 ± 0.083

Table 6. Comparison of close readings and proposed models based on three criteria

Criteria	Near-field readings	Proposed model
Coverage	12 of the 19 quotes (63.2%) were assigned an ideological position	6 out of 19 (31.6%); only 2 were consistent
Explanation	The second coder's κ was calculated later	Inter-rater reliability 0.018; labeling agreement 9/19 (47.4%), primarily in the <i>non-ideological</i> class
Additional findings	Irony, context, inheritance schemes	One cross-novel cluster: evaluation of "character/habits"

Note: (κ) = Cohen's kappa coefficient; ARI = *adjusted Rand index*.

Table 6 shows that the proposed model falls short in terms of coverage and reproducibility. Automatic labeling was accurate only for KB-03 ("*...Surely the Caliph will fulfill it*") and MR-05 ("*...a heretical sect!*"), whereas TT-02 and MR-01, which contain clear religious positions, were incorrectly classified as *non-ideological*. The clustering among repetitions has also changed almost entirely (ARI = 0.018). The model's systematic nature has thus only been demonstrated at the procedural level and not yet at the pattern level.

Nevertheless, the proposed model yielded one additional finding. The model grouped LP-02 ("*...hereditary disease*") and TT-03 ("*I realize that habit is wrong...*") into a single cluster of moral evaluations of behavior—a link not identified in RM1 and one that requires expert verification. However, only one of the six topics can be interpreted with certainty. A close reading, on the other hand, reveals the irony in KB-01, the connection between MR-04 ("*...stones scattered everywhere...*") and the expulsion of the Ahmadiyya community, and the scene of an elder passing on his legacy to his child in TT-07.

Discussion

Religious education is most closely integrated with local wisdom when it takes place informally and within the community. The findings from RM1 and RM2 reinforce each other in this regard. Education in *Tanah Tabu* takes place through the family, work, and the land; all of the quotes are coded, and five out of seven quotes reflect local wisdom. In the cases of *Maryam*, *Lampuki*, and *Kura-kura Berjanggal*, institutionalized or discursive religious education actually appears as an authority. The dimension of knowledge

appears only once (MR-05) and takes the form of an exclusionary “,” so that formal religious education in this data appears more as power than as knowledge.

Belief as the meeting point of religion and tradition. Six of the eight quotes on belief reflect local wisdom, such as the sacredness of the land and references to local deities. Religious values are thus passed down through narratives of the land and family relationships, rather than through rituals or formal instruction.

Position of the Proposed Model. The above findings are based on a contextual reading (irony and the context of community marginalization) that cannot be captured by lexical modeling on a small scale. Therefore, the proposed new model has the potential to serve as an exploratory complement—for example, through character evaluation clusters—but cannot yet replace close reading.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have three implications for language and literature learning as well as religious education. All three are conceptual in nature because they have not yet been tested in the classroom.

a. Teaching Religious Values Grounded in Local Context

RM1 indicates that religious education is most closely integrated with local wisdom when it takes place in an informal and communal setting, for example, in a mother’s message that “*The Great God up there will always watch over you*” (Thayf, 2009: 37) and an elder’s words: “*Our land is sacred, child. It is taboo...*” (Thayf, 2009: 74). Scenes like these can serve as catalysts for contextual learning. Students explore how religious values are passed down in their families and communities, then compare them with the transmission of values depicted in the novel. Religious education, in this way, does not stop at mastery of subject matter (the “knowledge” dimension, which appears only once in the data), but touches on “belief” and “practice”—the dimensions that dominate Table 3—as well as “ihsan,” which still rarely appears.

b. Critical Literacy Regarding Religious Authority

Eagleton’s questions (normalized, contested, marginalized) can be simplified into tools for textual analysis in the classroom. The quote from the religious teacher in **Maryam**, “*...for a child who has joined a heretical sect!*” (Madasari, 2012: 75), is suitable for a guided discussion on how academic assessment becomes a tool of exclusion, as well as for reflection on the ethics of educators and the teaching of tolerance. Since it concerns a real community (the Ahmadiyya), the discussion must be framed as an analysis of the text’s stance, not a judgment on the group’s beliefs, in accordance with the ethical principles of this research.

c. Close Reading and the Code Book as Tools for Appreciation

The five dimensions of religiosity can be used as evaluation criteria. Students categorize the quotes, explain the dominant dimension, and identify elements of local wisdom. The dominance of faith and good deeds, along with the scarcity of ihsan and knowledge in the data, indicates dimensions that need to be intentionally cultivated. The RM3 results confirm that small-scale topic modeling does not capture irony (KB-01) or the context of community exclusion (MR-04), so close reading skills remain central to learning. Computational tools should be introduced only as exploratory supplements—for example, to identify cross-text word clusters that are then verified through interpretation.

Table 7. Research findings, pedagogical implications, and examples of learning activities

Findings	Pedagogical Implications	Examples of Activities
Informal, community-based religious education integrated with local wisdom (TT-02, TT-07)	Contextual values education	Students interview elders about the transmission of values, then compare their findings with the scene “Our land is sacred, my child”
Formal religious education becomes a tool of exclusion (MR-05)	Critical literacy and tolerance education	Guided discussion using Eagleton’s questions regarding a religious teacher’s quote
Doctrine and good deeds dominate; knowledge, benevolence, and worship are minimal	A five-dimensional rubric for literary appreciation	Coding quotations using a concise code book and explaining their dominant dimensions
Lexical models do not capture irony (KB-01) and context (MR-04)	Close reading as a core competency	Comparing computationally generated word clusters with teachers’ or students’ interpretations

This study concludes that the Topoideology Model can be used to interpret representations of religious education as local wisdom in the four novels examined. The pedagogical implications are based on 19 purposefully selected quotations. Quotations from **Lampuki** and **Kura-kura Berjanggal** need to be supplemented with scenes depicting religious learning before they can be used as teaching materials. Further research is needed to test its effectiveness through the development of teaching materials and classroom trials.

Conclusion

First, the four novels portray religious education as a form of local wisdom across a spectrum. **Tanah Tabu** portrays it as an informal tradition intertwined with family, work, and the land, while **Lampuki**, **Kura-kura Berjanggal**, and **Maryam** depict it through failed moral discourse, symbolic authority, and institutional exclusion. The more institutionalized religious education becomes, the more it functions as a tool of authority; the more informal and communal it is, the more it becomes integrated with local wisdom.

Second, local religious values primarily emerged as beliefs (53.3% of coded quotes) and acts of piety (26.7%), with local wisdom appearing in 10 of the 19 quotes. Beliefs were the dimension most frequently intertwined with tradition, though the patterns of their appearance differed across novels—for example, ranging from personal convictions to institutional authority and violence in **Maryam**.

Third, on the corpus of 19 excerpts, the Topoideology Model was not yet able to map patterns more systematically than close reading. Its coverage was lower (31.6% versus 63.2%), and its topic clustering was unstable across iterations (ARI = 0.018). The proposed model offered only one cross-novel link worthy of verification. Expanding the corpus to include full-text data, obtaining evaluations from two experts, and conducting a second round of coding are therefore on the agenda for future research.

Fourth, the Topoideology Model can be used to interpret religious education as local wisdom in the four novels analyzed. The pedagogical implications include contextual values education, critical literacy, and close reading. These implications are based on 19 purposive quotations and have not yet been tested in the classroom; therefore, further research is needed to develop teaching materials and test their effectiveness.

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