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The Practical Understanding of Contextual Islamic Religious Education Based on Local Marine Wisdom

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning integrated with coastal local wisdom, to assess students' levels of practical understanding following the learning process, and to identify the dominant and non-dominant dimensions of that understanding. The study was conducted at a Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated vocational secondary school located in Palang, Tuban, East Java, Indonesia, employing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Data collection involved the administration of a conceptual test for quantitative analysis, which was analysed using descriptive statistics, as well as classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis for qualitative inquiry. The quantitative findings indicate that students achieved a high level of mastery in the cognitive dimension (Mean = 7.73; 77.3%), followed by the applicative dimension (Mean = 5.60; 56%). The reflective-affective dimension demonstrated the lowest level of mastery (Mean = 4.80; 48%). Qualitative findings reveal that the integration of coastal local wisdom into PAI learning has been implemented primarily at the conceptual and contextual levels, through the use of illustrations and narratives related to coastal life. However, this integration has not yet extended to the experiential and reflective levels. The composite analysis suggests that while students' cognitive understanding is relatively strong, their reflective-affective understanding remains limited due to insufficient application of experiential learning approaches, reflectively oriented pedagogy, and authentic assessment practices. This study is limited by its focus on a single vocational secondary school and a relatively small sample size. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader educational contexts and to employ experimental or design-based research approaches in order to develop and test pedagogical models that emphasize experiential and reflective dimensions of PAI learning within coastal cultural settings.

Keywords: Coastal Vocational School, Local Marine Wisdom, Practical Understanding of Islamic Education.

1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction in classroom settings has predominantly emphasized theoretical content, which often lacks contextual relevance for students attending schools in coastal

regions. Limited attention is given to discussions that connect religious learning with students' immediate geographical and socio-cultural environments. In many cases, educators focus primarily on transmitting foundational Islamic concepts through memorization or surface-level comprehension, with minimal efforts to relate these teachings to local livelihoods such as fishing, shrimp farming, or seaweed cultivation, which constitute integral aspects of coastal community life [1, 2, 3].

Consequently, PAI learning is frequently perceived as abstract and detached from students' lived experiences, resulting in low perceived practical relevance and a tendency toward learning for its own sake. This condition adversely affects students' learning motivation and limits their understanding of the practical applicability of Islamic values in everyday life. Moreover, PAI instruction that is disconnected from local marine knowledge and activities has broader implications for the development of students' social and religious character. In coastal educational contexts, such instruction often fails to adequately cultivate essential attributes such as personal responsibility, resilience, and social cooperation—qualities that are inherently fostered through engagement with coastal livelihoods and communal practices [4, 5, 6]. As a result, students encounter difficulties in translating religious theory into meaningful religious practice.

Integrating Islamic teachings with local maritime values offers a promising pedagogical alternative. Such integration may encompass eco-theology, which emphasizes environmental stewardship as an act of worship; environmental fiqh, addressing Islamic legal perspectives on marine resources and sustainability; fishermen's moral and character values, including honesty, responsibility, patience, and respect for local wisdom; and the historical and cultural dimensions of coastal Islam, such as the spread of Islam through maritime trade, Hadrah and Qasidah arts, and local traditions like Sedekah Laut. Additionally, contextual case studies and project-based learning—such as analyzing coastal environmental issues (e.g., marine pollution) from an Islamic perspective or developing educational infographics—can further strengthen experiential learning [7, 8].

This integrative approach seeks to cultivate a form of religious character that is responsive to the environmental and social challenges of coastal communities through contextualized and experiential learning strategies. Accordingly, it underscores the need to enhance the instructional relevance of PAI by aligning curricular content with students' prior knowledge and lived experiences. Providing learners with meaningful, productive, and contextually grounded learning opportunities not only improves educational outcomes but also supports holistic personal development and fosters sustained motivation for lifelong learning [9, 10].

PAI curriculum with maritime knowledge integrated with the surrounding environment serves the vital purpose it holds for an oceanic region. For instance, children could learn honesty, responsibility, and cooperative skills by observing the growth of seaweeds, or the work of fishermen. This would be paramount in the application of Islamic principles in everyday life [11, 12]. This approach broadens the scope of learning and makes it easier, hence catering to different ways in which people learn about their religion. It is a positive thing to practice the PAI of Islam and learn about the sea and its living things simultaneously. You may describe some case studies, or demonstrate how people living along the coast relatively more work with sailors, more often the exercising of the rule of patience and the rule of waiting. This is how students learn about religious philosophy, and its practice in their lives. They also learn more about the sea and the culture and the resources, and the more about religious principles about conserving marine culture and resources [13]. This approach highlights the practical gap of educational religious practice and the requirement of the place, hence encouraging the formation of more meaningful practices of teaching and learning.

Previous studies examining students' practical understanding of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in relation to Indigenous Marine Knowledge can be broadly categorized into three interrelated strands. The first strand focuses on students' understanding of Islamic teachings in relation to specific forms

of local maritime wisdom [14, 15, 16]. Findings from these studies indicate that the values embedded in the Sedekah Laut (sea alms) tradition contribute significantly to fostering a spirit of mutual cooperation within coastal communities. The second strand addresses the internalization of religious beliefs in students' daily lives within maritime and culturally embedded context [17, 18, 19]. Empirical evidence from this body of research confirms that PAI learning grounded in local religious traditions is effective in enhancing students' religious understanding and in strengthening character development. The third strand emphasizes the integration of Islamic teachings with Indigenous knowledge systems as a means of cultivating desirable character traits and behaviors aligned with both religious principles and local customs [20, 21, 22, 23, 24]. The findings consistently demonstrate that incorporating local wisdom into PAI instruction enhances religious comprehension, reinforces religious character, and nurtures students' appreciation of local culture. Moreover, local wisdom-based education not only promotes religious, tolerant, and culturally grounded character formation but also renders the learning process more engaging and meaningful for students.

Despite these contributions, existing studies have not sufficiently addressed several critical issues, including the integration of Islamic values with marine-based local wisdom, the enhancement of students' practical religious understanding, and the identification of dominant and underdeveloped dimensions within the integration of PAI and Indigenous Marine Knowledge. This gap in the literature constitutes the primary focus of the present study. Accordingly, the research problems are formulated as follows: (1) How does PAI learning grounded in local marine wisdom shape the practical understanding of students at the Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated vocational secondary school in Palang? (2) What is the level of students' practical understanding of PAI at the Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated vocational secondary school in Palang? (3) Which dimensions of practical understanding in PAI are most dominant, and which dimensions require further strengthening among students at the Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated vocational secondary school in Palang?

The practical implications of Islamic Religious Educations (PAI) relation with marine local wisdom helps cover the educational theory and practices gaps as it relates to the understanding and practice of the religious as expounded. School-going children who reside in the proximity of the sea and coastal area are, PAI helps them put in practice Islamic principles in diverse day to day activities to include the harvesting of marine products like fishing, seaweeds farming, and aquaculture; as well as aquaculture base farming. They are taught emotional self-regulation, civics, interpersonal communication, and prosocial behaviour. This is evident where students are taught to use the principles of Islam to come up with the appropriate solutions to pertinent real-world problems. Islamic Religious Education as taught and practiced in the PAI syllabus is more relevant and practical in case taught and practiced with some knowledge pertaining to the geography and ecology of the area. It fosters the inculcation of more ethical and spiritually religious practical observation of daily life.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using a sequential explanatory design, in which quantitative data collection and analysis were conducted prior to qualitative data collection and analysis. The purpose of this design was to explain and enrich the quantitative findings through in-depth qualitative insights. The sequential explanatory design was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' practical comprehension of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) grounded in local wisdom. Specifically, it enabled the examination of both measurable learning outcomes and the contextual dimensions of students' learning experiences [25]. The quantitative phase was designed to assess the depth and distribution of students' practical understanding in PAI, whereas the qualitative phase sought to understand how PAI learning based on local wisdom of

coastal areas is exerted in classroom learning and which dimensions of practical understanding that prevail more or might have less growth. Integration of the two phases was carried out at the level of interpretation, so as to accomplish some sort of matching between numerical trends and textual resources.

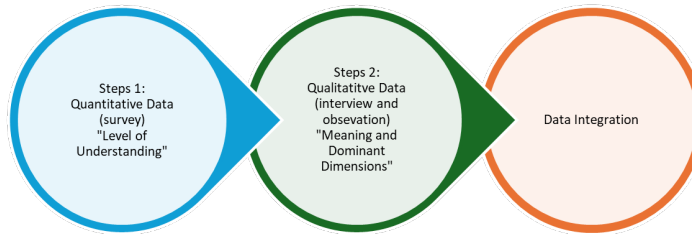


Figure 1. Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design (Practical Understanding of IE Based on Maritime Local Wisdom Research)

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The study was carried out in The Vocational Secondary School Affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama which is situated in the Karangagung Village of Palang District, Tuban Regency, East Java, Indonesia that belonged to vocational school located at coastal area with marked marine socio-cultural. Respondents in the quantitative stage were 25 students of class XI AKL as whole sampling (totally sampling) because the number was manageable and representative of students at vocational school on the coast. Participants in the qualitative stage were:

1. Islamic Religious Education teacher,
2. The vice principal for curriculum affairs, and
3. The sampling technique used was proportional purposive random sampling from class XI AKL representing different levels of learning result.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

Quantitative data was obtained through applied and conceptual test of student practical comprehension on PAI with marine local wisdom integrated. The test comprised 20 items (multi-choice and short essay questions), with three dimensions:

1. Cognitive (conceptual understanding)
2. Applicative (contextual application)
3. Reflective–affective (value reflection and internalization)
4. Exam items were designed to draw students' attention to Islamic teachings on the applied concepts at real life coastal settings e.g., joint effort of fishermen, port operation, marine safety and respect toward environment.

Qualitative data were collected through:

1. Classroom observation on the teaching strategy, student engagement and the use of coastal local wisdom in learning PAI;

2. Semi-structured interviews that were held with teachers, school principals and students on the perceptions, experiences and barriers in implementing contextual PAI learning; and
3. The analysis of documents on lesson plan, teaching module, and student worksheet (LKPD) to find out the integration of marine local wisdom.

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, including means, percentages, and categorical classification. Students' levels of achievement were classified to clarify their overall practical understanding of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Qualitative data analysis followed the systematic procedures of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis were thematically coded to identify recurring patterns, which were subsequently grouped into thematic categories related to students' practical understanding of PAI as the following:

1. Implementation of PAI learning with the source local Wisdom Coastal;
2. Student engagement and experiences; and
3. Strengths and weaknesses of applied understanding.

2.5 Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Synthesis took place while interpreting the data, with qualitative findings informing the interpretation and expansion of quantitative results. This assimilation provided insight into why some features of practical understanding was prevalent and others were weak.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Quantitative Results: Measure of Students' Practical Understanding

The test instrument applied conceptual is systematized to quantitatively measure students' ability in understanding the practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) contextualizes local marine wisdom. The test was designed to measure three degrees of comprehension, defined as conceptual (cognitive) (first degree), applicative (second degree), and reflective-affective (third degree); which manifest the stages of progress in achieving learning outcomes in contextual religious education. The instrument was composed of 20 items with multiple choice and short essay answers to maximize the objectivity, and to a certain point the capacity for analysis.

The items of the test were conceived to interpret abstract Islamic concepts into situations pertaining to coastal-life so that students who were answering the questions did not confine themselves only recalling from memory about religious knowledge, rather they practiced connecting it in their real life environment as members of a coastal community.

Table 1. Grid of Questions for the Applied Conceptual Test of The Vocational Secondary School Affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama Palang Students

Topic	Coastal Context
Fastabiqul Khairat	Seen through collaborative activities like repairing fishing nets together.
	Reflected in helping during fish unloading or sharing tasks at the dock.
	Related to how fishermen compare their catches while still supporting each other.
Prohibition of Free Mixing	Drawn from interactions observed at the fish auction site (TPI).

	Noted from the busy, mixed environment around the harbour.
	Reflected in various work situations at the harbour that require discipline.
Syu'ab al-Iman	Illustrated through honesty and trustworthiness in fish transactions.
	Seen in fair profit-sharing among fishermen.
	Such as helping family members during fishing trips.
Khauf, Raja', Tawakkal	Associated with dealing with unpredictable sea weather.
	Seen when fishermen wait patiently for whatever catch they receive.
	Especially during times when the catch is lower than expected.
Islamic Ethics	Linked to competition among fishermen in their daily lives.
	Sometimes seen in activities like local boat races.
	Related to tensions or disagreements in the coastal community.
Al-Kulliyāt al-Khamsah	Connected to safety measures taken while at sea.
	Reflected in efforts to maintain beach cleanliness.
	Includes practices like wearing life jackets before sailing.
Islamic History	Using examples such as Tuban Port's historical significance.
	Seen in the religious traditions preserved by fishermen's communities.

Measuring of *fastabiqul khairat* is the following by quantitative: caring point see student understand can't how when fix and use nets (repairing fishing net), carrying, helping offloading fish, divide at dock some jobs. The restriction of free mixing was evaluated based on how students perceived social interaction in the Fish Auction Site (TPI) and the conduct necessary in a busy harbour. Unconscious signs for *syi'ab al-ma'un* showed honesty in the fish trading, fair profit-sharing and mutual assistance among fellow fishermen families. The ideas of *khairi raja'*, and *tawakkal* were concretised in relation to the sea affects dealing with unpredictable sea weather and ambiguous fishing yields. Islamic ethics were tested through moral dilemmas in competition between fishermen, and *al-kulliyat al-khamsah* was validated among safe fishing practices and environmental cleanliness. Islamic history set addressed the Islamization of Tuban Port and perpetuation of religious practices in fishermen communities.

The quantitative assessment results were analyzed descriptively using mean scores, percentages, and categorical interpretation to examine students' levels of practical understanding of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) across three dimensions: cognitive, applicative, and reflective-affective.

Table 2. Descriptive Data of Research Results: Level of Practical Understanding of Islamic Religious Education

Dimension of Practical Understanding	Mean Score	Percentage (%)	Level of Mastery
Cognitive	7.73	77.3	Good
Applicative	5.60	56.0	Moderate
Reflective-Affective	4.80	48.0	Fair to Weak

From Table 2 and Fig 1, the practical proficiency of students in school learning for Islamic Religious Education witnesses a noticeable downward trend on various dimensions. The highest mean indicator was reached in the cognitive component (7.73; 77.3%), pointing to a good degree of command

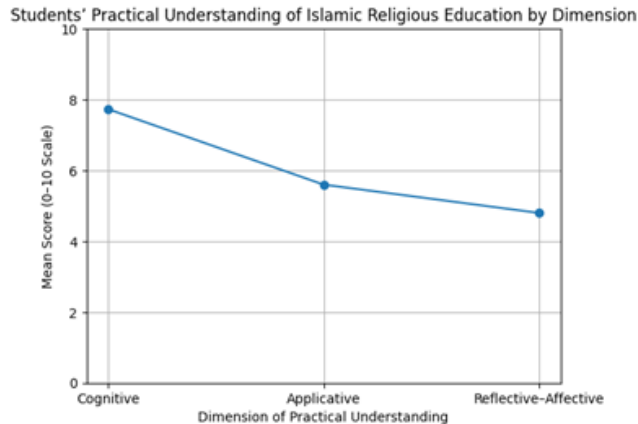


Figure 2. Trend of Students' Practical Understanding of Islamic Religious Education across Dimensions

reached. This finding indicates that most students were able to interpret and explain Islamic concepts contextualized in coastal life perspective: *fastabigul khawat*, moral boundaries from Surah Al-Isra' verse 32, branches of faith and *hilda an-nafs*, related to maritime safety. These findings imply that the coastal contexts were helpful for students in developing their conceptions.

The applicative aspect yielded a moderate mean score (5.60; 56.0%), demonstrating the students' moderate ability in applying Islamic values to daily life in the coastal region such as cooperative fishing, trade ethics and safety at sea situations. But as the decrease in Fig.1 indicates, it is often a matter of better or worse accommodating values to situation and largely copying instructions (and very infrequently devising their own reasoning) that determines whether the students have activated them or not.

The reflective-affective factor, by contrast, was reported as the least successful (4.80; 48.0%), or fair to weak being reported for this dimension. As shown in the dramatic drop-off depicted in Figure 1, many students seemed to struggle to reach that higher level of reflection and imbibing spiritual tenets. Students were challenged to consider ethical competition between fishermen, understand changing fishing yields as a matter of spirituality, and work through moral dilemmas in coastal communities. These quantitative results show that students have a cognitive understanding of Islamic values but they experience difficulties internalizing those values to their personal and spiritual aspects.

There is an overall disparity in students' practical comprehension of Islamic Religious Education with their conceptual mastery scores being strong, followed by the application component, and lastly reflective-affective engagement. This trend as seen in Figure 1, emphasizes the vital importance of qualitative inquiry into how instructional practices and learning activities impact these results. Thus, qualitative results were included in the subsequent subsection to explain and interpret those quantitative findings in conformity with the sequential explanatory mixed methods design.

3.1.2 Qualitative Results: Process of Learning and Contextual Application

Classroom observations revealed that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction at the Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated vocational secondary school in Palang, Tuban, tended to be predominantly teacher-centered. Instructional practices were largely delivered through lecturing and question-and-answer techniques. Although teachers occasionally incorporated examples related to coastal life when explaining textbook content, these references were primarily conveyed through oral explanations.

Opportunities for active student engagement were limited, with few learning activities extending beyond teacher explanations and class discussions. Students were rarely encouraged to explore concepts independently, engage directly with their surrounding coastal environment, or reflect systematically on their learning experiences. Consequently, levels of student engagement varied, with only a small number of students participating actively in classroom interactions, while the majority assumed relatively passive roles. This instructional pattern suggests that while the teaching approach contributed positively to students' conceptual understanding, it was less effective in fostering reflective engagement and experiential learning.

Interviews contributed the perspectives of students for this study. It was clear across the board that students felt more interested and motivated when lessons used examples from fishermen, port activities and coastal environments in general, as it made Islamic studies feel more real to their lives. But not all students felt that interest had translated into deeper understanding. A number said they would learn more about religious values through direct participation (e.g. observing the activities of harbours, contacting with fishermen, participating community activities concerning society and environment). These expectations were recognized by the teachers and they confirmed that learning-by-doing would deepen students' knowledge. However, they reported practical challenges such as time constraints, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of institutional support structures for the field visits.

Document analysis of lesson plans, teaching modules and student worksheets also provided evidence in support of these findings. Pictures and news clippings were effectively employed to help make learning contextual, however reviewers noted that for these resources to work as core instructional pieces they would need to be developed further. One might even argue that local wisdom was not systematically included in learning objectives, scales of success or forms of assessment. As a result, contextual integration was incoherent and it continued to be controlled mainly by single teacher initiative rather than incorporated into any systemic teaching design. These results suggest that although there was awareness of the need to avoid decontextualized PAI teaching and learning, this had not been operationalized in terms of thorough pedagogical planning.

Further qualitative findings found that teachers used stories and analogies regularly to apply Islam teaching. For example, the **fastabiqi khauzai** was discussed using the mean of cooperation such as for mending fishing nets and joint fishing; **syu'ab al-iman** by the honesty in fishermen transaction; **khauf, raja'**, and **tawakkal** through perseverance and trust in God when seawater does not produce certainty. Moral notions of envy and pride were connected to competitive fishing, and **al-kullivāt al-khamsah** entailed marine safety and environmental cleanliness. Although such methods successfully reinforced students' understanding at the conceptual level, they were mainly descriptive and did not include any reflective or experiential activities that could lead to a deeper internalization of value. Further qualitative analysis found that teachers often used stories and analogies to situate Islamic content. For example, **fastabiqi khauzai** was interpreted in the form of collaborating towards improving economic well-being by mending fishing nets and engaging in group activities to fish; **syu'ab al-iman** through fishermen's honesty during transaction processes; and **khauf, raja'**, and **tawakkal**, proxied through patience behaviour and trusting in God when encountering risky sea conditions. Moral issues including envy and pride were expressed in terms of fisherman competition, while **al-kullivāt al-khamsah** was associated with sea safety and environmental hygiene. Although these practices have successfully enhanced students' understanding of value, they were more descriptive-based in nature and did not engage with reflection or experience that may lead to a deeper internalisation of value.

Teachers discussed maritime trade, and the role of **Tuban Port** in the spread of Islam in history class. Such explanations enabled the students to appreciate the significance of the coastlands in Islamic culture. There were, however, no project-based, enquiry-based or problem-based learning activities

planned to help students explore these issues in a critical manner. It was agreed by teachers and students alike that learning about coastal contexts continued to remain illustrative as opposed to experiential.

From an institutional approach, the vice principal of curriculum affairs stated that teachers were encouraged to include local and indigenous values in their teaching. Yet practical execution was much left to individual teacher discretion, leading to inconsistent treatment from classroom to classroom. The assessments continued to be focused on the written examinations aimed at testing cognitive comprehension. Pupils preferred alternatives of assessment to be manipulated, including social action projects, environmental schemes and reflective activities which they perceived to better aid their comprehension and practice of Islamic values. These results suggest a mismatch between the visions of local wisdom-based PAI learning intended and the current implemented teaching and assessment practices.

3.1.3 Integrated Interpretation of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings: Mapping the Dominant and Weak Dimensions of Practical Understanding

After describing qualitative and quantitative findings, this section fuses the two sub data set in order to obtain a more in-depth interpretation of students' practice knowledge of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Based on the sequential explanatory mixed methods design, quantitative results offer the main source of pattern recognition in achievement across dimensions and are then interpreted by means of qualitative data.

Results The quantitative analysis demonstrated a gradient of proficiency in all dimensions. As reported in Table 2, the cognitive dimension is what students best managed (mean score of 7.73), followed by the applicative one (mean score of 5.60) and, finally, by the reflective-affective dimension recorded with a less mastery level (mean score of 4.80). This downward trend showed that the practical understanding of students was best at the stage of conceptual comprehension and became weaker step by step to application and reflection level. Qualitative findings can give some insight as to why the cognitive dimension emerged most prominent. It was found through classroom observations and document analysis that PAI instruction often focused on verbal explanation, narrative type examples and textbook-based learning. Teachers often contextualized Islamic teachings using relevant coastal examples, like fishermen's teamwork, sea safety measures and moral conduct in the environs of a port. Whilst these teaching methodologies were fruitful in assisting students in gaining knowledge, they are also why there were relatively high numerical scores in the cognitive domain.

The low performance in the applicative domain is consistent with copious qualitative evidence showing that value application was most commonly situational and teacher-led. Although students could make links between Islamic principles and everyday coastal practices, the application was limited to illustrative examples rather than active participation or self-directed involvement. With no experiential or observational learning occurred in the field and community, it challenged the opportunities to implement these high-level thinking skills to practices on a long-term basis away from theoretical side.

The lack of strength for the reflective-affective dimension is well born in qualitative findings. While students were provided exposure to moral stories and situational examples, they were seldom made to participate in introspection, personal meaning-making or experiential learning activities. Assessment was primarily cognitive and written, with little encouragement provided for reflection, spiritual assimilation or ethical reasoning. As such, students had difficulty engaging in reflection on experience at sea or grappling with moral decisions in the fishing communities and understanding Islamic teaching beyond a superficial level.

In general, the quantitative and qualitative results of study show that after being integrated both PAI

learning based on local wisdom coastal at The Vocational Secondary School Affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama in Palang reached to level of student conceptual contextualization for the process has not appeared in transformation experiential and reflective. This justifies the non-significance of applied and reflective-affective dimensions as well as the significance of cognitive mastery. Relying on this meta-interpretation, we can systematically map the level of students' practical comprehension to their prevalent and neglected aspects (Table 3).

Table 3. Integrated Mapping of Mastery Levels of Islamic Religious Education Practical Understanding Dimensions

Dimension of Practical Understanding Level of Mastery	Integrated Evidence (Quantitative	Qualitative)
Cognitive	Quantitative data show the highest mean score (7.73), indicating strong conceptual mastery. Qualitative findings reveal frequent use of verbal explanations and contextual illustrations related to coastal life, which effectively support students' understanding of Islamic concepts.	Good
Applicative	Quantitative results indicate a moderate mean score (5.60). Qualitative evidence shows that students can apply Islamic values in coastal contexts when guided by examples, but lack consistent practice through experiential or project-based activities.	Moderate
Reflective-Affective	Quantitative data reveal the lowest mean score (4.80). Qualitative findings indicate limited opportunities for reflection, experiential learning, and affective assessment, resulting in weak internalization of spiritual and moral values.	Fair to Weak

3.2 Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) with coastal local wisdom at the Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated vocational secondary school in Palang has been implemented primarily at the conceptual and contextual levels. This integration is evident in the use of examples and explanations related to coastal life that are generally well understood by students. These findings are consistent with the quantitative results, which indicate high levels of cognitive achievement. However, the integration has not yet been systematically extended to experiential and reflective learning approaches that actively engage students in direct interaction, critical reflection, and deeper internalization of Islamic values.

These findings support Komalasari's assertion that contextual learning involves integrating instructional content with learners' lived experiences so that learning extends beyond theoretical or conceptual understanding and becomes meaningful in everyday practice. For schools located in coastal areas, the application of this approach is particularly crucial. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Fajriyah and Umam [5, 22] provide empirical evidence that incorporating local wisdom into religious education contributes significantly to the enhancement of students' moral understanding and the development of civic values relevant to their social environments. Such an approach enables religious teachings to become more accessible, attainable, and sustainable when they are firmly grounded in learners' daily lives. Consistent with these arguments, field evidence from the present study indicates that some teachers have begun to connect PAI instructional materials with social values such as cooperation, responsibility, and mutual assistance, as exemplified in the communal practices of fishermen within coastal communities.

Nevertheless, the findings indicate that the application and reflective dimensions of learning remain underdeveloped. Ni'am and Hosaini [26, 27] argue that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should no longer focus solely on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but should also aim to influence values (affective outcomes) and encourage normative–intellectual practice. In this regard, the cognitive dimension appears to be more fully achieved than the affective and reflective dimensions, which remain relatively weak [28, 29]. This condition supports the argument that religious instruction often emphasizes declarative knowledge rather than advancing toward procedural understanding and deep reflective internalization. Nurhayani [22] further emphasizes that the integration of local values into religious instruction significantly enhances students' understanding of Islamic values as they relate to social realities [30]. Through such an approach, students are not only able to comprehend Islamic teachings conceptually, but also to understand how these teachings function within society. Similar findings are reported by Jumriah [31], who demonstrates that contextual learning fosters active student engagement and improves social understanding. However, both of these previous studies, as well as the present research conducted at a vocational secondary school in Palang, share a common limitation: the insufficient development of students' personal reflection. While students may be able to observe, describe, and even replicate certain values, deeper spiritual consciousness formed through reflective processes has yet to fully emerge.

This situation can also be interpreted through the lens of John Dewey's reflective learning theory [32], which positions reflection as a fundamental component of meaningful learning. Dewey contends that without reflection, knowledge remains mere information and does not develop into spontaneous insight. The findings of this study suggest that students tend to understand religious values primarily as elements embedded in social relationships, rather than as part of an individual faith journey. This tendency is closely associated with the limited opportunities for experiential and reflective practice. Students expressed a desire to experience religious values firsthand through direct engagement—such as observing religious practices at harbors, participating in social activities on fishing vessels, or interacting with elders in coastal communities. Consequently, it is unsurprising that the reflective dimension remains underdeveloped when learning processes rely predominantly on lectures and routine classroom exercises [33, 34].

The findings also reveal limitations in the current evaluation mechanisms of the PAI learning system. The predominance of written examinations indicates an assessment focus on cognitive outcomes. Nikmah and Makhsun [35] criticize this approach, noting that such assessments inadequately capture the development of students' values, attitudes, and behaviors. Although examinations may include items related to Qur'anic translation or specific aspects of fiqh practice, they are poorly suited to assessing ethical behavior in trade, collaborative skills, or environmental awareness, such as maintaining coastal cleanliness. As a result, there is a clear mismatch between the intended objectives of PAI—particularly character development—and the assessment instruments employed to measure learning outcomes. Notably, students themselves expressed a preference for more practical and authentic forms of assessment, including coastal clean-up projects, community service activities, ethically oriented entrepreneurial tasks, and reflective portfolio assessments. This finding indicates a genuine demand among students for learning religious values in ways that are relevant and applicable to real-life contexts.

Overall, the findings present a consistent picture: integrating PAI learning with coastal local knowledge offers significant potential that has not yet been fully realized. Current instructional practices remain largely illustrative; while teachers frequently employ examples drawn from fishermen's lives, they seldom design learning experiences that allow students to engage directly with these contexts and internalize the associated values. In essence, PAI learning at the vocational secondary school has succeeded in integrating religious teachings with coastal culture, yet it has not reached an optimal stage in which students can fully internalize, personalize, and practice these values in their daily

lives. To bridge this gap, PAI instruction must adopt a more transformative pedagogical approach. Educators should not only transmit religious doctrines but also facilitate learning experiences that are directly connected to the realities of coastal life. Anggelia, Ansariu, and Arifin [36] argue that project-based learning can enhance student participation and deepen understanding. Furthermore, applied assessment strategies are essential if religious values are to be manifested in students' concrete actions, as demonstrated by Hanafi *et al.* [37].

Moreover, the integration of local wisdom with an ecotheological orientation becomes increasingly significant [38, 39]. Ikhwansyah [40] asserts that Islamic Religious Education grounded in local wisdom can foster stronger ecological awareness. PAI learning can be meaningfully connected to docks, fish markets, fishing boats, and other aspects of coastal community life through case studies, collaborative projects, and ecotheological analyses. Through such approaches, students are not merely introduced to religious values, but are also immersed in authentic coastal experiences that enable them to identify with and internalize these values. Therefore, strengthening the experiential and reflective dimensions of PAI learning is crucial to ensure that the integration of coastal local wisdom functions as a transformative process, effectively shaping students' religious and social character.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) grounded in coastal local wisdom at a Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated vocational secondary school in Palang, Tuban, East Java, Indonesia has been implemented primarily at the conceptual and contextual levels. This integration is reflected in the narrative use of examples drawn from coastal life, enabling students to cognitively relate Islamic teachings to their everyday coastal experiences. However, this approach has not yet been systematically translated into experiential learning that involves direct engagement, structured reflection, and authentic interaction with coastal social realities.

With respect to students' levels of practice, the quantitative findings indicate that the cognitive dimension achieved the highest mean score (7.73 or 77.3%), demonstrating strong mastery. The applicative dimension reached a moderate level (mean score of 5.60 or 56.0%), while the reflective-affective dimension recorded the lowest mean score (4.80 or 48.0%), indicating fair to weak mastery. This overall pattern reinforces the dominance of cognitive learning outcomes, largely driven by teacher-centered and illustrative instructional strategies. In contrast, the reflective-affective dimension remains underdeveloped due to the limited use of experiential learning, reflective pedagogies, and authentic assessment practices.

These findings suggest that the incorporation of coastal local wisdom into PAI learning remains largely illustrative rather than transformative. Consequently, there is a clear need to adopt learning approaches that are more experiential, reflective, and ecotheologically oriented in order to foster deeper spiritual internalization and strengthen students' sense of social and environmental responsibility.

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