



***Pasang ri Kajang* as a Cultural Tool for Multicultural Islamic Education**

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Abstract

This study examines how *Pasang ri Kajang*, the orally transmitted normative system of the *Ammatoa Kajang* indigenous community in South Sulawesi, functions as a cultural tool for internalizing Islamic and multicultural educational values. Data were generated during approximately three months of field engagement through ethnographic interviews with 13 purposively selected participants, participant observation, field notes, and analysis of documents and cultural artefacts. Following Spradley, the analysis proceeded through domain, taxonomic, componential, and cultural-theme analysis. The findings showed that *Pasang* works not as a single text but as an ecology of interrelated tools: *Konjo* terms, moral narratives, black clothing and barefoot practice, customary meetings, exemplary leadership, reciprocal labour, and forest rules. These tools mediate the internalization of monotheism, simplicity, honesty, responsibility, solidarity, and ecological stewardship through modelling, habituation, participation, dialogic interpretation, and normative reinforcement. The multicultural dimension appears in equal treatment across social rank, openness to visitors of different beliefs, cultural translation of Islamic concepts, and cooperation extending beyond kinship. However, this inclusivity operates within firm customary boundaries and should not be romanticized as unrestricted pluralism. The study contributes a process-oriented account of Indigenous Islamic education by showing how local culture actively organizes learning, conduct, and moral accountability. It recommends context-sensitive collaboration among customary leaders, religious educators, schools, and communities while preserving Indigenous authority over cultural knowledge.

Keywords: cultural tools; indigenous education; multicultural Islamic education; *pasang ri kajang*

1. Introduction

Education in an Indigenous community does not begin only when a teacher enters a classroom. It is also carried by the language used to name the sacred, by rules governing entry into a customary territory, by the conduct of leaders, by reciprocal work, and by collective obligations toward the forest. Such practices become especially important when globalization, formal schooling, religious standardization, and technological change place local moral systems under pressure. The educational issue is therefore not merely whether Indigenous knowledge survives, but how it continues to mediate learning, identity, and ethical action. This issue is particularly significant in Indonesia, where Islamic life develops within diverse cultural and linguistic settings. Studies of Islam and local culture have shown that religious practice is often produced through negotiation, accommodation, and reinterpretation rather than through a simple opposition between “religion” and “tradition” (Ibrahim, 2021; Pabbajah, 2020, 2021; Roszi & Mutia, 2018). Research on local wisdom in education likewise demonstrates that cultural philosophies can support tolerance, cooperation, contextual religious learning, and social cohesion (Nawas et al., 2022; Afifuddin et al., 2025; Anggraeni et al., 2023). These studies share the important premise that culture is not external to education. Yet they frequently discuss local wisdom as content to be inserted into a curriculum, while giving less attention to the concrete mediational processes through which cultural forms reorganize perception, conduct, and moral accountability.

The *Ammatoa Kajang* community in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, provides a compelling setting for examining these processes. Its central normative reference is *Pasang ri Kajang* (hereafter *Pasang*), a body of ancestral messages and obligations transmitted primarily through speech and enacted practice. *Pasang* regulates relations with *Turie' A'ra'na* (the local designation for God), other people, customary authority, and the natural environment. It is closely associated with *tallasa' kamase-masea*, an ethic of dignified simplicity, as well as honesty, obedience, collective responsibility, and forest stewardship. Existing studies illuminate important dimensions of *Kajang* life. Environmental research explains how *Pasang* supports forest conservation and a resilient social-ecological system (Daniel et al., 2022; Kamaluddin & Mustolehudin, 2020; Maarif, 2015; Samad et al., 2021; Surtikanti et al., 2017; Syarif et al., 2016; Tajibu, 2020). Legal and political studies show that customary authority and *Pasang* structure environmental justice, political legitimacy, and the regulation of communal resources (Arif et al., 2025; Hijjang, 2005; Kambo, 2021). Communication and ritual studies examine the symbolic meanings of dress, leadership, *Andingingi*, *Akkattere*, and other cultural practices. Research on identity and modernization identifies the negotiations that occur when customary values meet formal education and changing social expectations (Adriyani et al., 2019; Hafid et al., 2023; Sampean & Sjaf, 2020).

More recent literature brings the educational and religious dimensions into sharper focus. Ista et al. (2024) discuss the multicultural Islamic educational meanings of *Je'ne Ta'luka Sumbayang Tang Tappu*. Tahir et al., (2025) interpret *Kajang* environmental practice through eco-Sufism, while Dewi et al. (2025) emphasize the relationship among spirituality, ecology, and social resilience. Najiah et al. (2026) explicitly connect *Pasang* with Islamic character education, and Ichwan et al. (2021) describe its contribution to community character and environmental care. Together, these studies establish that *Pasang* carries religious, ethical, ecological, and educational significance. The present study is similar to that scholarship in three respects. First, it recognizes *Pasang* as a living moral system rather than folklore. Second, it understands Islamic and customary values as mutually interpreted in social practice. Third, it treats the *Kajang* community as an active producer of

knowledge rather than a passive object of modernization. The study differs in its analytical focus where environmental studies tend to explain what norms protect the forest; legal studies explain how customary authority regulates conduct; ritual studies interpret particular symbols; and educational studies tend to identify values or describe their relevance for character formation. These approaches are valuable, but they leave insufficiently explained how heterogeneous cultural forms words, symbols, bodies, meetings, sanctions, leadership, work, and environmental restrictions operate together as educational mediators.

This produces four related research gaps. First, prior work is predominantly value-descriptive where it identifies simplicity, honesty, solidarity, or environmental care but rarely reconstructs the process by which these values move from collective discourse into embodied action. Second, studies commonly isolate one domain, such as ecology, ritual, law, or schooling, although *Kajang* moral learning crosses these domains. Third, the concept of a cultural tool has not been systematically used to distinguish among symbolic, material, social, and institutional mediators within *Pasang*. Fourth, the multicultural significance of *Kajang* education remains underdeveloped. A homogeneous Muslim self-identification does not eliminate diversity e.g., differences of status, origin, belief among visitors, language, generation, and location within and outside the customary core still require practices of recognition and negotiation. The analytical task is therefore to identify both inclusive practices and the boundaries that qualify them. Drawing on sociocultural theory, this study understands cultural tools as historically developed means through which people interpret the world and regulate action (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998).

Language is a key tool, but mediation also occurs through artefacts, bodily routines, role structures, and organized practices. Internalization is consequently not the copying of a rule into an individual mind. It is the transformation of socially organized meaning through participation. In Islamic education, this process connects knowledge with *akhlak*: values become educationally consequential when they inform worship, self-restraint, justice, social responsibility, and care for creation. A multicultural perspective further asks whether education enables dignity, equality, recognition, and participation across difference (Banks & Banks, 2020). This perspective is used critically here; it does not assume that every local practice is automatically inclusive. Therefore, the study addresses the following questions: How does *Pasang ri Kajang* operate as a cultural tool in the internalization of Islamic educational values?; Through what social, symbolic, and institutional mechanisms are these values learned and enacted?; What multicultural educational meanings, tensions, and limits emerge from these practices?

By answering these questions, the article offers a process-oriented account of Indigenous Islamic education. Its principal argument is that *Pasang* is not a single “tool” or a static list of values. It is an ecology of mutually reinforcing mediators that link speech, embodiment, authority, social participation, and place.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Pasang* as Living Indigenous Knowledge

The term *Pasang* refers to messages, prescriptions, prohibitions, and ethical orientations inherited from earlier generations and guarded through customary authority. Its oral character does not make it informal in the sense of being optional. Oral transmission is sustained by recognized interpreters, recurrent meetings, embodied rules, collective memory, and sanctions. Research on

Kajang environmental governance shows that this normative system has practical force because it links cosmology with specific restrictions on resource use (Daniel et al., 2022; Maarif, 2015; Syarif et al., 2016). Research on leadership and communication similarly shows that the legitimacy of *Pasang* depends on performance, credibility, and the moral example of customary officeholders (Kambo, 2021; Rahmayani et al., 2017).

Treating *Pasang* as living Indigenous knowledge has two methodological implications. First, it cannot be adequately studied only as a written statement detached from its speakers, occasions, and territory. Second, outside categories must be tested against emic clarification. For example, some scholarship has used "*Patuntung*" as a religious label, whereas participants in this study explicitly used it for a respected cultural role or expertise and affirmed Islam as their religion. Indigenous methodologies caution researchers against replacing community meanings with externally convenient classifications (Smith, 2021). The analysis therefore retains local terms and reports disagreements rather than forcing them into a unified description.

2.2. Cultural Tools and Internalization in Multicultural Islamic Education

Sociocultural theory proposes that human action is mediated through words, concepts, objects, signs, and institutionally organized practices that carry histories beyond the individual (Vygotsky, 1978; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Rather than viewing learning as an exclusively individual process, this perspective emphasizes how knowledge, identity, and moral understanding develop through participation in culturally meaningful activities. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) argue that cultural learning is better understood through individuals' repertoires of practice than through fixed cultural characteristics, while Nasir (2002) highlights how identity formation is intertwined with participation in meaningful social activities. These perspectives suggest that cultural tools do not merely transmit established values but also mediate how individuals interpret, negotiate, and enact them within particular sociocultural settings. From this perspective, a moral statement becomes educational not merely because it is heard but because it is repeatedly connected to socially consequential activity.

This study distinguishes four overlapping types of cultural tools: symbolic tools, including Konjo terms, proverbs, narratives, and religious interpretations; material and embodied tools, including black clothing, barefoot movement, house forms, and restrictions on technologies; social tools, including observation, imitation, reciprocal labour, hospitality, and intergenerational participation; and institutional tools, including *Ammatoa* leadership, *Passiguppa Pasang* meetings, customary roles, permissions, and sanctions. These categories are analytically distinguishable but function interdependently in shaping moral learning. Symbolic tools communicate cultural meanings, material practices embody collective values, social interactions facilitate learning through participation, and institutional structures regulate their continuity. A black garment, for example, is simultaneously material, symbolic, social, and regulated. Within the *Ammatoa Kajang* community, these interconnected tools provide a means of understanding how customary knowledge becomes embedded in everyday behaviour rather than remaining an abstract set of inherited principles.

Internalization is examined through observable mediational mechanisms: modelling, habituation, participation, dialogic interpretation, and normative reinforcement. Modelling provides a credible example; habituation stabilizes conduct through repetition; participation makes learners responsible contributors; dialogic interpretation connects local concepts with Islamic meanings; and

normative reinforcement links conduct with approval, authority, or sanction. However, internalization should not be understood simply as the passive acceptance of cultural norms. Rogoff et al. (1995) emphasize that individual development and sociocultural participation are mutually constitutive, suggesting that learners develop understanding as they engage in and contribute to community practices. Accordingly, repeated conformity to customary expectations does not necessarily indicate genuine moral internalization, as behaviour may also reflect social pressure or respect for authority. This distinction is particularly important in examining how *Kajang* community members negotiate personal understanding, collective obligations, and customary regulations. This framework allows the analysis to move beyond a catalogue of values toward an explanation of how values acquire durability.

Multicultural education is concerned not only with the presence of different cultural groups but also with the distribution of recognition, dignity, access, and voice (Banks & Banks, 2020). From this perspective, multicultural Islamic education requires more than acknowledging cultural diversity; it involves recognizing local knowledge and practices as meaningful resources for interpreting and enacting Islamic values. Paris (2012) similarly advocates educational approaches that sustain cultural and linguistic diversity rather than subordinating them to dominant norms. In Indonesian Islamic education, local-wisdom approaches have been used to contextualize religious learning and reduce the distance between formal concepts and lived social realities (Nawas et al., 2022; Anggraeni et al., 2023). Mardhiah et al. (2021) further demonstrate the relevance of multicultural and local-wisdom values in developing Islamic religious education competencies. Nevertheless, integrating indigenous traditions into religious education does not automatically guarantee inclusivity, particularly when customary authority and communal expectations influence whose cultural expressions and interpretations are recognized. Current research also warns that multicultural values can be weakened when a centralized curriculum treats local difference as decorative rather than epistemically significant (Afifuddin et al., 2025).

Although previous studies have explored cultural learning, moral internalization, and local-wisdom-based Islamic education, their conceptual connections require further examination within indigenous communities where customary traditions and Islamic values intersect. In particular, understanding how cultural tools mediate moral internalization while simultaneously shaping multicultural relationships remains an important analytical concern. In this article, multicultural meaning is examined across four axes: social rank, religious difference among visitors, cultural-linguistic expression, and communal belonging. The analysis asks whether *Kajang* practices create equality, recognition, and cooperation across these differences. It also attends to boundaries, as inclusion may coexist with strict entry rules, religious self-definition, or asymmetrical customary authority. By connecting cultural mediation, internalization, and multicultural recognition, this study seeks to explain how indigenous educational practices can both sustain collective moral values and shape the possibilities and limitations of inclusion. This avoids romanticizing the community as either perfectly harmonious or irreducibly closed.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Rationale

The study employed a qualitative ethnographic design where the object of inquiry was a shared cultural system expressed through languages, beliefs, bodily practices, social organizations,

material forms, and relations with places. The research questions ask how *Pasang* operates within a community; not how isolated individuals experience a single phenomenon. Prolonged engagement, participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, and sustained attention to emic categories were therefore required (Madden, 2022). Methodological consistency was maintained by using Spradley's ethnographic analytic sequence. Field engagement took place for approximately three months in the *Ammatoa Kajang* customary area in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. Observation covered contexts within and outside the customary core, including everyday interaction, customary and religious activities, educational spaces, social events, routes into *Rabbang Seppang*, and the forest boundary.

3.2. Participants

Thirteen participants were selected purposively based on three selection criteria, i.e., (a) comprehensive knowledge of *Kajang* culture or the Islam-culture relationship, (b) active involvement in relevant customary, religious, educational, social, or youth practices, and (c) sufficient availability for an in-depth interview and follow-up clarification. Participant categories reflect the principal role used in analysis; several individuals held overlapping customary and community roles.

Table 1. Participant Composition and Selection Logic

Participant group	N	Selection indicators	Primary analytical contribution
Customary officeholders, including <i>Ammatoa/Galla</i> role-holders	6	Recognized authority; knowledge of <i>Pasang</i> , customary law, symbols, and territorial rules	Normative meanings, leadership, sanctions, ritual and ecological regulation
Community and religious figures	5	Long-term social/religious involvement; knowledge of community change and Islam, custom relations	Religious interpretation, social ethics, hospitality, reciprocity, generational change
Educator	1	Direct involvement in education serving <i>Kajang</i> learners	Relations between customary identity, schooling, and value transmission
Youth representative	1	Active engagement with community life and intergenerational transmission	Youth interpretation and ecological responsibility
Total	13		

The number was not justified by statistical representativeness. Recruitment ended when the principal cultural domains were recurrent across interviews and could be compared with observations and documents, while follow-up access still allowed ambiguous meanings to be clarified. In qualitative research, such informational sufficiency is more defensible than a numerical

formula, particularly when it is demonstrated through triangulation rather than asserted as “saturation” without evidence (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

3.3. Data Sources, Instruments, and Indicators

The researcher served as the primary instrument with four supporting instruments organized data generation, i.e., (1) a semi-structured ethnographic interview guide; (2) a participant-observation guide; (3) a field-note template recording events, actors, language, actions, context, and reflexive comments; and (4) a document and artefact checklist. The instruments were aligned with the research questions through the indicators shown below:

Table 2. Research Indicators and Evidence Sources

Research indicator	Interview evidence	Observation evidence	Documentary and artefactual evidence
Religious and cultural identity	Terms for God; Islam-custom relationship; emic meaning of <i>Patuntung</i>	Language used in customary/religious settings	Village profile; public inscriptions; institutional records
Meaning and authority of <i>Pasang</i>	Definitions, interpreters, obligations, sanctions	<i>Passiguppa Pasang</i> ; rule enforcement; intergenerational participation	Posted <i>Pasang</i> excerpts; customary and local-government records
Simplicity and embodied identity	<i>Tallasa' kamase-masea</i> ; clothing; barefoot practice	Dress transitions at the boundary; housing; leader conduct	Black woven cloth, house form, boundary signs
Moral and social education	Honesty, responsibility, reciprocity, leadership	Mutual assistance; hospitality; orderly reception of guests	Field notes from social events
Multicultural values	Equality, treatment of different beliefs, outsider relations	Treatment across status and origin; visitor access	Village demographic context; public rules
Ecological responsibility	Forest injunctions and explanations	Entry restrictions; tool restrictions; forest condition	Forest-area information; regulations and signs

The instruments were not standardized scales and no psychometric validation is claimed. Content alignment was strengthened by mapping questions and observations to the research questions and indicators, then revising prompts iteratively when emic terms or contrasts emerged. Credibility was pursued through source and method triangulation, direct observation, focused follow-up questions, comparison of interview accounts with conduct and artefacts, and participant clarification of emerging cultural domains. This validation strategy follows the logic of ethnographic verification and qualitative trustworthiness rather than quantitative instrument testing (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Spradley, 1979).

3.4. Data Generation and Ethics

Ethnographic interviews moved from descriptive questions to structural and contrast questions. Descriptive questions invited participants to explain *Pasang*, roles, routines, and events in their own categories. Structural questions explored relations among identified terms, while

contrast questions examined differences, e.g., simplicity versus poverty, Islam versus an externally attributed "*Patuntung* religion," or equal treatment versus differential responsibility. Interviews were supplemented by participant observation and field notes written as soon as practicable after events. Documents and artefacts included the Tana Toa village profile, local records, public displays of *Pasang*, boundary rules, black woven clothing, house forms, and field documentation produced where photography was permitted. Moreover, inside areas where cameras and electronic devices were restricted, the researcher used handwritten notes. This was both an ethical accommodation and an analytical reminder that research access was governed by indigenous authority. Personal names are not reported where the article uses role-based interview codes. Finally, quotations were translated from Indonesian or Konjo into English and checked against the meanings recorded in the dissertation corpus.

3.5. Data Analysis

The analysis implemented in the current research follows Spradley's four connected stages. Domain analysis identified recurrent semantic fields, including divine authority, *kamase-mase*, honesty, reciprocal solidarity, equality, customary enforcement, and forest stewardship. Taxonomic analysis organized the internal structure of each domain for example, the symbolic, behavioural, and institutional expressions of simplicity. Componential analysis compared attributes across domains and contexts, such as rules applying to residents and visitors, or the relation between religious meaning and customary sanction. Cultural-theme analysis then examined how domains cohered around broader principles of moral self-restraint, equal human dignity, collective responsibility, and accountable relations with creation. The procedure was iterative. Interview segments, observation codes, field-note descriptions, documents, and artefacts were compared rather than analysed as isolated collections. Negative or qualifying evidence was retained. For instance, openness to visitors was interpreted alongside strict dress and access rules; multicultural meaning was therefore formulated as principled hospitality within customary boundaries, not boundary-free pluralism.

4. Results

4.1. *Pasang* Operates as an Ecology of Cultural Tools

The central finding is that *Pasang* did not operate as a document that participants consulted. It operated through a constellation of mutually reinforcing forms. Participants spoke its moral vocabulary; customary officeholders interpreted it; bodies enacted it; social events rehearsed it; sanctions protected it; and the forest materialized its ecological consequences. Four tool forms were analytically distinguishable. First, symbolic-linguistic tools connected Islamic meanings with local categories. Participants identified themselves as Muslim while using *Turie' A'ra'na* "the One who wills" to refer to God in customary discourse. A customary participant explained: "Here the people's religion is Islam. Outside, people say Allah; here I say *Turie' A'ra'na*" (W.PAD.01.PR, 25 January 2025, author's translation). The term did not replace monotheism; it localized its expression and communicated reverence. The same interview also rejected "*Patuntung*" as the name of a separate religion, explaining it instead as a role associated with guidance. This emic correction is educationally important: community members learn to distinguish religious identity from cultural office through local semantic categories.

Second, material and embodied tools made abstract values visible and repeatable. Black clothing (*tope le'leng*), absence of footwear inside the customary core, modest houses, and regulated

movement communicated simplicity, equality, and attachment to the earth. Observation OB.PAD-Bo2 recorded schoolchildren from the inner area wearing black clothing to the boundary, changing into school uniforms, and changing back on their return. The transition did not show a simple replacement of tradition by school. The children navigated two normative spaces through clothing, learning when and how each identity was publicly enacted.

Third, social tools transformed learners from spectators into contributors. At weddings, deaths, planting and harvesting, and house construction, assistance was offered without wages and without being confined to close relatives. Observation OB.GTR-So1 recorded adults and children participating in this labour, including assistance to newcomers. Participation taught *a'lemo sibatu* (unity), *a'bulo sibatang* (strength together), *manyu' siparampe* (helping one who is carried away), and *tallang sipahua'* (raising one who is sinking). A customary participant described these four principles as the core "held in *Kajang*" and the basis for the division of communal responsibility (W.PAD.01.PTS, 26 January 2025).

Fourth, institutional tools authorized interpretation and made values consequential. *Passiguppa Pasang* meetings, held on Monday and Friday nights, brought *Ammatoa*, customary figures, and inheritors of knowledge together to align interpretations (OB.BUD-Bo1). The meetings reduced uncontrolled variation in an oral system. Customary permissions and sanctions reinforced honesty and ecological restraint, while the leader's conduct supplied a moral standard. *Pasang* was therefore neither merely decentralized folklore nor a command issued by one person. It circulated through an institutional ecology.

Table 3. Cultural Tools, Values, and Triangulated Evidence

Tool form	Cultural expression	Mediated Islamic/educational value	Triangulated evidence
Symbolic-linguistic	<i>Turie' A'ra'na</i> ; <i>kamase-mase</i> ; unity and rescue maxims	Monotheism, reverence, humility, solidarity	W.PAD.01.PR; W.TMS.02.KM; W.PAD.01.PTS; customary discourse
Material/embodied	Black clothing, barefoot entry, modest house, walking to <i>Ammatoa</i>	Simplicity, equality, self- restraint, respect for creation	W.PAD.01.GK/PTS; OB.PAD- Bo2; OB.KPM-So3; artefacts
Social/participatory	Reciprocal labour, hospitality, children's involvement	<i>Ta'awun</i> , responsibility, empathy, belonging	W.TMS.02.IGK; OB.GTR-So1; field notes from social events
Institutional	<i>Passiguppa Pasang</i> , exemplary leadership, customary permission and sanction	<i>Amanah</i> , honesty, justice, accountability	W.PAD.01.AM; OB.BUD-Bo1; OB.KPM-So1; local records
Ecological/territorial	Forest boundaries; limits on vehicles, chainsaws, and timber removal	Stewardship, restraint, intergenerational responsibility	W.TPM.05.IS; OB.LIN-Ko1; forest information and signs

4.2. Internalization Occurs through Five Connected Mechanisms

Modelling

The moral force of *Pasang* depended heavily on visible consistency between speech and leadership. Field observation recorded that *Ammatoa* had no official residence or privileged access regime. Visitors of high rank and ordinary visitors alike walked to the residence, observed the same entry rules, and were received without status distinctions (OB.TOL-S01; OB.KPM-S03). One participant summarized the leadership ethic: if the community were destined to experience hardship, the customary leader should experience it first; if the community prospered, the leader should benefit last (W.TMS.02.KM, 16 February 2025). Such conduct transformed simplicity from advice into an inspectable standard. The leader's authority was pedagogical because it was embodied.

Habituation

Values were repeated in mundane conduct: dressing, walking, greeting, sharing work, requesting permission, and limiting consumption. *Tallasa' kamase-masea* was explicitly distinguished from destitution. A community figure stated that the message prohibited arrogance and required submission to the Creator, even when households possessed cattle or extensive gardens (W.TMS.02.ST, 22 March 2025). Another described four standards of dignified sufficiency: work or productive land, a house, food, and adequate clothing (W.TMS.02.KM, 16 February 2025). Repetition trained desire and public conduct around "enough," not around the performance of deprivation. Habituation was also spatial. The boundary of *Rabbang Seppang* required visitors and residents to change how they dressed, moved, and used technology. The territorial rule externalized self-restraint. Because every entrant encountered it, the rule prevented simplicity from becoming an individual lifestyle preference only.

Participation

Participation assigned responsibility before learners could necessarily articulate an abstract moral theory. In collective events, children observed adults, carried food, served guests, and helped with tasks. The dissertation field notes record assistance during marriage celebrations, mourning, planting, harvesting, and construction. This practice was voluntary but normatively expected. Its educational effect came from belonging through contribution: solidarity was learned as something one did with others, not as a slogan.

Dialogic Interpretation

Local and Islamic meanings were related through explanation rather than simple equivalence. Participants connected *kamase-mase* with humility, gratitude, and submission to God; honesty with both Qur'anic prohibition and customary fitness for office; forest care with the shared status of human beings and forests as God's creation. These interpretations did not erase local terminology. Instead, they made Islamic ethical language intelligible through community experience. The process was also dialogic because contested categories could be corrected. When the researcher raised an external characterization of "Islam *Patuntung*," participants distinguished Islam as religion from *Patuntung* as customary expertise. The educational significance lies in the community's ability to interpret itself, negotiate external descriptions, and maintain a differentiated identity.

Normative Reinforcement

Finally, values were supported by consequences. A customary participant explained three intersecting forms of accountability: an act may be a sin under Islam, an offence under state law, and a violation subject to a customary fine (W.PAD.01.AM, 28 January 2025). Honesty was not merely praised; it was a criterion for customary responsibility. Ecological injunctions likewise operated through permissions and restrictions. Normative pluralism increased the density of accountability, although it also concentrated interpretive authority in officeholders. The five mechanisms were complementary. Modelling without participation could produce admiration without competence; habituation without dialogue could become unreflective compliance; dialogue without reinforcement could remain rhetorical. *Pasang* gained durability because these mechanisms converged.

4.3. The Values Internalized are Religious, Social, and Ecological

The domain analysis produced six connected value clusters. Monotheism and reverence appeared in the local naming of God and the orientation of obligations toward divine authority. Simplicity combined sufficiency, humility, and self-restraint. Honesty functioned as both personal virtue and a condition of legitimate leadership. Solidarity involved reciprocal labour and aid. Equality appeared in the suspension of social rank before customary rules. Ecological stewardship required limiting extraction for future life. These were not independent lesson topics. For example, barefoot movement linked simplicity with equality and earth; forest restrictions linked divine accountability with restraint and intergenerational care; reciprocal labour linked humility with social responsibility. The cultural-theme analysis therefore identified an overarching pattern: a good person is one who limits the self so that relations with God, people, customary order, and the environment remain accountable.

Forest practice provided the clearest example of this integration. A youth participant recited a *Pasang* injunction: "Guard the earth and all it contains people and forest. If you cut the forest, you damage yourself and your descendants, because its leaves regulate rain and its roots hold water" (W.TPM.05.IS, 15 February 2025, author's translation). Observation OB.LIN-Ko1 corroborated restrictions on motor vehicles and chainsaws, the use of axes, and the requirement to obtain permission even for timber. Approximately 313.99 hectares of customary forest were treated not simply as an economic reserve but as a moral trust. The injunction taught ecological causality, collective survival, and accountability in one narrative.

4.4. Multicultural Meanings: Equality, Hospitality, Translation, and Solidarity

The multicultural findings did not arise from demographic diversity alone. The village profile contextualized the community as Muslim, while interview and observation data showed how difference was negotiated through status, visitor belief, origin, language, and institutional setting. Equality across rank was the strongest and most consistently triangulated dimension. A community figure explained:

Whoever enters whether a minister or a king must walk in. At Ammatoa's house, that person is treated like someone without office. Rank does not apply there. All human beings are equal; what distinguishes them is their work and character. (W.TMS.02.KM, 16 February 2025, author's translation)

Observation confirmed equal entry requirements and orderly reception without priority based on office (OB.TOL-So1; OB.TOL-Bo3). Equality was therefore not only an attitude; it was built into space and procedure. Hospitality across religious difference was explicitly articulated. The same participant stated that different beliefs were ordinary and that visitors were accepted because they were fellow creations of God; the relevant consideration was their humanity rather than their belief (W.TMS.02.KM). Observation OB.TOL-Ko2 recorded non-discriminatory reception of guests of different beliefs. The educational meaning is an *ukhuwah insaniyyah* orientation: shared creatureliness supports dignity beyond internal membership.

Cultural-linguistic translation constituted a third dimension. The use of *Turie' A'ra'na* showed that Islamic monotheism could be voiced through a Konjo category, while schooling required children to move between customary dress and national school uniform. These practices resisted the assumption that religious or educational inclusion requires cultural sameness. Learners acquired a repertoire for inhabiting more than one normative context.

Solidarity widened belonging through practice. Reciprocal work was not restricted to occupational rank and, according to field observation, could include assistance to newcomers. The principle of helping one who is "carried away" or "sinking" framed vulnerability as a claim on collective action. This is a practical multicultural competence because it creates cooperation before demanding identity agreement.

Table 4. Multicultural educational meanings and analytical limits

Dimension	Empirical expression	Educational meaning	Limit or caution
Social equality	Ministers, officials, researchers, and ordinary visitors follow the same entry rules	Dignity is detached from office and wealth; humility is publicly rehearsed	Responsibilities remain differentiated within a hierarchical customary structure
Religious hospitality	Visitors of different beliefs are received as fellow creations of God	Human fraternity and non-discrimination in encounter	Evidence concerns hospitality and interaction, not sustained institutional interfaith dialogue
Cultural-linguistic recognition	Islamic meanings expressed in Konjo terms; children move between customary and school dress	Learners can translate across cultural settings without abandoning identity	Translation may be contested by external religious or bureaucratic standardization
Cooperative belonging	Unpaid mutual assistance across status, kinship, and newcomer boundaries	Empathy, participation, and shared responsibility are learned through action	Reciprocity creates moral obligations that may be experienced differently by individuals
Ecological interdependence	Forest protection links present conduct to descendants and other forms of life	Multicultural education expands toward ecological citizenship and intergenerational justice	Access and interpretation remain governed by customary authority

The findings therefore support a qualified claim. *Kajang* practice contains substantial resources for multicultural Islamic education, especially equality, hospitality, recognition, and

solidarity. It does not represent unrestricted pluralism. Entry requires compliance with local rules; the community asserts a clear Muslim identity; and knowledge is unequally distributed across roles. Its contribution lies precisely in showing that inclusion can be enacted through principled boundaries, provided those boundaries protect dignity rather than authorize humiliation.

5. Discussion

5.1. From a Value List to an Ecology of Mediation

Previous *Kajang* studies correctly identify *Pasang* as a source of environmental ethics, social order, identity, and character (Daniel et al., 2022; Hafid et al., 2023; Ichwan et al., 2021; Tajibu, 2020). The present analysis extends this work by explaining the mediational architecture connecting these outcomes. *Pasang* is educational because its meanings are distributed across symbolic, embodied, social, institutional, and ecological tools. A proverb can name a virtue, but dress and movement make it visible; a leader models it; communal work supplies practice; meetings stabilize interpretation; and sanctions make violation consequential. This finding refines the notion of “cultural tool.” If *Pasang* were treated as a single verbal tool, the analysis would reproduce the error of equating oral tradition with a text. Sociocultural theory instead suggests that mediated action involves agents acting with historically accumulated means (Wertsch, 1998). The ethnographic data show that these means form an ecology. Their educational power comes from redundancy and convergence: the same orientation toward restraint and responsibility is encountered in several forms. This helps explain why values remain durable even without a codified *Pasang* book.

The finding also qualifies the language of internalization. Internalization is not a one-way transmission from elder to child. Children and adults interpret rules while moving between the customary core, school, government, markets, and digital modernity. Clothing changes at the boundary demonstrate active contextual navigation. This accords with Kozulin & Presseisen’s (1995) account of identity as the product of tension between agency and sociocultural process. *Kajang* learners are formed by customary tools but also use them to position themselves in different settings.

5.2. Islamic Education as Embodied and Place-based Moral Formation

The results support arguments that Islamic education should connect religious knowledge with culturally situated practice (Nawas et al., 2022; Anggraeni et al., 2023). In *Kajang*, values conventionally associated with Islamic character *tawadhu’*, *qana’ah*, *amanah*, *ta’awun*, justice, and stewardship are learned through embodied and communal arrangements. The approach is not a substitute for formal religious knowledge. It demonstrates how ethical concepts acquire social form. The local term *Turie’ A’ra’na* is especially instructive. Some accounts of Islam and local culture emphasize either syncretism or purification. Participants instead articulated a distinction: Islamic identity remained explicit while a local term conveyed reverence and historical continuity. This resembles the negotiated religious consistency reported elsewhere in South Sulawesi (Pabbajah, 2020) but the educational emphasis here is different. Translation allows a learner to connect a theological concept with inherited language. It is a tool of intelligibility and identity, not merely evidence of cultural mixture.

The ethic of *kamase-mase* similarly complicates simplistic readings. Connects it with *zuhud*, while the present data show that residents distinguish simplicity from poverty through standards of

productive work, shelter, food, and clothing (Amin, 2019). This is a critical distinction. Romanticizing material deprivation would be ethically and educationally harmful. The local ethic instead critiques arrogance and excess while protecting dignified sufficiency. Its educational relevance lies in disciplined consumption and equal regard, not in denying legitimate welfare. Ecological findings corroborate research identifying *Kajang* as a strong social–ecological system (Daniel et al., 2022) and a site where religion and forest stewardship intersect (Maarif, 2015; Tahir et al., 2025). The cultural-tool analysis adds that ecological knowledge is transmitted through causal narrative, territorial rules, restricted technologies, permission structures, and intergenerational consequences. This is environmental education enacted as governance. The forest is at once curriculum, protected place, and evidence of collective compliance.

5.3. A Critical Multicultural Reading

Research on multicultural Islamic education often focuses on explicit religious diversity, classroom content, or national curriculum (Afifuddin et al., 2025; Anggraeni et al., 2023; Ista et al., 2024). The *Kajang* case broadens the field by demonstrating that multicultural learning also concerns how a relatively cohesive community treats differences of rank, origin, language, institutional belonging, and visitor belief. The requirement that officials and ordinary visitors walk, remove footwear, and observe the same rules redistributes symbolic status. It creates what might be called procedural equality: the territory temporarily suspends external privilege through a common embodied obligation. This practice is more educationally forceful than a declaration that “all are equal” because the powerful must perform equality. Hospitality toward people of different beliefs adds an ethical foundation: shared creation precedes religious difference in interpersonal reception.

At the same time, the data do not warrant broad claims that *Kajang* is an institutional model of interfaith education. The evidence documents reception, interaction, and a normative statement of human equality, not a long-term interfaith programme or the experience of resident religious minorities. Stating this limit strengthens rather than weakens the multicultural finding. It distinguishes demonstrated hospitality from an untested claim of comprehensive pluralism. Customary hierarchy requires similar scrutiny. The authority that preserves *Pasang* can protect community knowledge from fragmentation and external misrepresentation. It can also make access to interpretation unequal. *Passiguppa Pasang* meetings address inconsistency among recognized interpreters, but not every community member occupies the same position in those deliberations. Multicultural educational use outside *Kajang* must therefore avoid extracting sayings while excluding Indigenous knowledge holders. Collaboration should preserve community authority while opening age-appropriate spaces for questioning, comparison, and learner interpretation.

5.4. Implications for Education

Three implications follow from these findings. First, locally grounded Islamic education should identify the cultural tools through which particular values are already embodied in everyday life before translating those values into formal classroom content. For example, environmental responsibility can be taught by linking a *Pasang* narrative with observed forest regulations, intergenerational consequences, Qur’anic concepts of stewardship, and locally supervised conservation activities, thereby preserving the relationship among language, place, and action. Second, schools serving *Kajang* learners should regard movement between customary and formal

institutions as a pedagogical resource rather than as a tension to be eliminated. The transition in clothing and conduct observed at institutional boundaries, for instance, can provide a basis for critical reflection on identity, context, equality, and national belonging, with the aim of developing culturally secure interpretive competence rather than either fixing learners within a single identity or assimilating them into another. Third, multicultural education should engage learners with practices of inclusion, not merely symbolic representations of diversity. Equal procedures, cooperative labour, dialogue across different cultural and religious vocabularies, and respect for local protocols can cultivate inclusion more effectively than celebratory descriptions of diversity alone. Accordingly, curriculum development should involve customary officeholders, religious figures, educators, youth, and women so that educational content reflects multiple forms of local knowledge and experience, while the perspectives of women in particular warrant more systematic attention in future research.

6. Conclusion

This study answers the first research question by showing that *Pasang ri Kajang* operates as an ecology of cultural tools rather than a static set of propositions. Konjo terms, moral narratives, clothing, barefoot movement, leadership, reciprocal labour, customary meetings, sanctions, and forest restrictions mediate Islamic values across speech, body, institution, and territory. In response to the second question, values are internalized through the interaction of modelling, habituation, participation, dialogic interpretation, and normative reinforcement. These mechanisms transform monotheism, simplicity, honesty, solidarity, equality, and ecological responsibility into socially accountable conduct. The theoretical contribution is a shift from identifying values to explaining the architecture that makes them learnable and durable.

In response to the third question, the multicultural educational contribution of *Kajang* practice lies in procedural equality across social rank, hospitality toward visitors of different beliefs, recognition of local linguistic expression, cooperative belonging, and ecological interdependence. These resources are substantial but bounded. The evidence does not justify portraying the community as free of hierarchy or as an institutional interfaith model. The practical implication is that Islamic education can work with Indigenous cultural tools when community knowledge holders retain meaningful authority and when local practices are examined critically rather than romanticized. The study is limited by its focus on one community, a three-month field period, role-based participant reporting, and the absence of a systematic comparison across gender and learner cohorts. Future research should examine how youth, women, teachers, and families negotiate *Pasang* over time; compare inner- and outer-area educational trajectories; and evaluate collaboratively designed learning activities without reducing living knowledge to decontextualized curriculum content.

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