



Youth as Agents of Strengthening Religious and Cultural Literacy through Local Wisdom in Pantan Cuaca, Gayo Lues

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of young people as agents of strengthening religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom in Pantan Cuaca District, Gayo Lues Regency. The research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design through observation, interviews, and documentation. The informants consisted of youth, religious leaders, traditional leaders, village officials, and community members from Pantan Kota, Tetingi, and Remukut villages. The findings reveal that young people play an active role in strengthening religious literacy through the organization of Islamic study circles (*pengajian*) and *majelis ta'lim*, the provision of religious books and *waqf* copies of the Qur'an, and participation in grave-digging traditions as an expression of religious and social values. In strengthening cultural literacy, young people actively engage in communal work (*gotong royong*) and preserve traditional Gayo arts such as Saman Dance, Didong, and Debus. These activities have generated positive impacts on the community, including strengthening social solidarity and unity, enhancing religious and cultural knowledge, and reducing the potential for conflict, thereby fostering a more harmonious social life. The study concludes that young people hold a strategic position as agents of change who contribute to preserving religious and cultural values rooted in local wisdom amid the challenges of modernization and globalization.

Keywords: *Youth, Religious Literacy, Cultural Literacy, Local Wisdom, Pantan Cuaca*

A. Introduction

The younger generation constitutes a strategic asset of the nation, playing a crucial role in shaping the future direction of social, cultural, and religious development. As a productive segment of society, young people are expected to act as agents of change who contribute to preserving and sustaining religious and cultural values amid rapid societal transformation. However, contemporary social realities indicate that the accelerating forces of globalization, advances in information technology, and changes in patterns of social interaction have introduced new challenges for the younger generation (Nudin et al., 2022). On the one hand, easy access to information provides significant opportunities to expand knowledge and broaden perspectives; on the other hand, it also facilitates the spread of unverified information and foreign cultural values that may not always

align with the characteristics of local communities. This condition may weaken religious understanding and cultural identity, particularly among young people who are the primary users of digital technology. Therefore, strengthening religious and cultural literacy has become an urgent necessity in responding to increasingly complex social changes (Kartolo, S., Adriel, N., Paskah, T. R., 2026).

In the contemporary era, literacy is no longer understood merely as the ability to read and write. Rather, it encompasses the capacity to access, comprehend, analyze, evaluate, and utilize information critically across various contexts of life (Pute et al., 2023). Religious literacy functions to foster moderate and tolerant religious understanding while enabling individuals to critically assess religious information circulating through digital media. Meanwhile, cultural literacy plays a vital role in strengthening community identity, preserving local values, and fostering awareness of cultural diversity as a valuable national asset. Previous studies have largely focused on religious literacy in relation to digital literacy and religious moderation, as well as cultural literacy within formal educational settings (Hesti et al., 2024). However, research specifically examining the role of young people as agents of religious and cultural literacy enhancement based on local wisdom in rural communities remains limited. Accordingly, this study offers a novel perspective by integrating the dimensions of youth, religious literacy, cultural literacy, and the local wisdom of the Gayo community into a comprehensive analytical framework (Luthfia et al., 2024).

Based on this phenomenon, the present study aims to analyze the role of the younger generation as agents of strengthening religious and cultural literacy grounded in local wisdom in Pantan Cuaca District, Gayo Lues Regency. It also seeks to identify the forms of literacy activities undertaken by young people, the factors that support and hinder their implementation, and their impacts on community life (Sari & Septiani, 2024). This research focus is significant because strengthening religious and cultural literacy is believed to enhance social resilience while ensuring the continuity of local values amid the ongoing process of modernization (Nudin et al., 2022).

This study is grounded in the argument that young people occupy a strategic position as agents of social change capable of bridging traditional values and the demands of modernity. Through the enhancement of religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom, young people not only serve as inheritors of the values transmitted by their communities but also as active actors who reinterpret and actualize those values in accordance with contemporary needs without losing their local identity (Sari & Septiani, 2024). Literacy strengthening rooted in local wisdom is expected to increase cultural awareness, reinforce community character, and build cultural resilience in facing the challenges of globalization. Therefore, this

research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of studies on religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom, while also providing practical recommendations for local governments, educational institutions, religious leaders, traditional leaders, and youth organizations in designing youth empowerment programs (Luthfia et al., 2024).

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena based on the natural conditions of the research setting, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument in data collection and interpretation. This research was conducted as a field study, involving direct engagement with the social environment of the community. Through field research, the researcher was able to observe social realities, behaviors, interactions, and community activities more comprehensively, thereby enabling a holistic understanding of the meanings embedded within the phenomena under investigation (Pradiri et al., 2021).

The focus of this study was the younger generation residing in Pantan Cuaca District, Gayo Lues Regency. In addition to youth participants, the study also involved religious leaders, traditional leaders, village officials, and local community members who were considered knowledgeable and experienced regarding the strengthening of religious and cultural literacy. Informants were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives and their possession of information pertinent to the study. The research was conducted in three villages within Pantan Cuaca District, namely Remukut Village, Tetingi Village, and Pantan Kota Village. These locations were chosen due to the researcher's interest in examining the role of young people in strengthening religious and cultural literacy within communities that continue to face various challenges in understanding and developing religious and local cultural values (Pradiri et al., 2021).

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from informants through interviews and field observations. Secondary data were collected from various written sources, including books, scientific journals, articles, previous research reports, official government documents, and other materials relevant to the research topic. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine the social conditions of the community and the activities of young people related to religious and cultural literacy (Prasastiningtyas & Robiyanto, 2021). This technique was employed to obtain factual information regarding the actual situations and conditions occurring in the field. Data analysis in this study followed the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and

Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Nurfajriani et al., 2024).

C. Result and Discussion

1. Youth Activities as Agents for Strengthening Religious and Cultural Literacy Based on Local Wisdom in Pantan Cuaca, Gayo Lues Regency

Young people play a strategic role as agents of change in society. In the context of social and cultural development, youth involvement functions not only as a means of preserving values inherited from previous generations but also as a driving force capable of developing, maintaining, and transforming these values to remain relevant amid contemporary social changes. Therefore, strengthening religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom constitutes an important effort through which young people can preserve community identity while reinforcing social and religious character in the midst of globalization and the rapid advancement of information technology. Religious and cultural literacy is not merely understood as the ability to comprehend religious teachings and cultural traditions but also as the capacity to implement these values in daily life, thereby fostering a harmonious, religious, and culturally grounded society (AS et al., 2025).

In Pantan Cuaca District, Gayo Lues Regency, young people have demonstrated active involvement in various activities aimed at strengthening religious and cultural literacy within the community. These activities represent a tangible form of youth participation in preserving the continuity of local values inherited from the Gayo community. Such initiatives serve as a medium for social learning as well as a mechanism for transmitting religious and cultural values to future generations. This condition aligns with the view that literacy is a social practice involving individuals' ability to understand, communicate, and apply knowledge within community life (Arianto, 2021).

Field research conducted in several villages of Pantan Cuaca District, particularly Pantan Kota Village, Remukut Village, and Tetingi Village, revealed that young people actively function as initiators and organizers of various socio-religious and cultural activities. These activities are intended not only to enhance public understanding of religious and cultural values but also to preserve local wisdom amid ongoing social transformation. Based on observations and interviews, the researcher identified at least five major forms of youth activities in strengthening religious and cultural literacy: (1) organizing Islamic study groups and *majelis ta'lim* (religious learning assemblies), (2) conducting communal mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), (3) participating in the tradition of digging graves for deceased community members, (4) donating books and copies of the Qur'an, and (5) preserving traditional Gayo dance performances. These activities reflect the integration of religious and cultural values that continue to thrive within the Pantan

Cuaca community. The results of an interview with Informant R (Youth Mobilizer of Pantan Cuaca District) indicated:

“We strive to encourage the community, especially young people, to better understand the religious and cultural values that have long been the identity of the Gayo people. Religious and cultural literacy activities are important so that the community does not lose its identity amidst the increasingly rapid pace of social change.”

Similarly, Informant A (Youth Activist of Pantan Cuaca District) stated:

“In my opinion, religious and cultural literacy activities are not only intended to increase public knowledge but also serve as a safeguard against the negative influences of information technology and external cultures that may not always align with the values of the local community.”

These statements indicate that young people perceive the strengthening of religious and cultural literacy as an important strategy for maintaining community identity while enhancing cultural resilience amid ongoing social changes (Pohan et al., 2022). In general, youth activities in strengthening religious and cultural literacy in Pantan Cuaca District can be classified into two broad categories: religious literacy enhancement activities and cultural literacy enhancement activities. Religious literacy activities include organizing Islamic study circles, *majelis ta'lim*, assisting in grave-digging traditions, and distributing Qur'ans and religious books. Meanwhile, cultural literacy activities are manifested through communal cooperation (*gotong royong*) and the preservation of traditional Gayo dance, both of which embody values of solidarity, respect for tradition, and character education within the community.

The existence of these activities demonstrates that young people in Pantan Cuaca are not merely participants but also active agents in strengthening religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom. Through these efforts, they contribute significantly to preserving and sustaining the social, religious, and cultural values that form the foundation of community life.

a. Youth Activities in Strengthening Religious Literacy

1) Organizing Religious Study Circles and *Majelis Ta'lim*

One tangible manifestation of the role of young people as agents of religious literacy strengthening in Pantan Cuaca District is their active involvement in organizing religious study circles (*pengajian*) and *majelis ta'lim*. These activities serve not only as platforms for religious learning but also as important means of moral development, character building, and the reinforcement of Islamic values within the community (Solihat et al., 2023). Through these programs, young people contribute significantly to preserving religious traditions inherited from previous generations while adapting them to the needs of contemporary society.

Majelis ta'lim, as a non-formal Islamic educational institution, plays a strategic role in enhancing religious understanding, strengthening religious identity, and fostering social solidarity within the community. In Pantan Cuaca District, particularly in Remukut, Tetingi, and Pantan Kota villages, young people serve as the driving force behind the implementation of religious study activities. Their involvement extends from planning and venue preparation to providing the necessary equipment and ensuring the smooth execution of the events. This active participation demonstrates that young people are not merely attendees of religious activities but also organizers and facilitators of religious literacy initiatives within the community. The regular implementation of these study circles has contributed to the development of a culture of religious learning and increased public awareness of the importance of Islamic knowledge.

Based on an interview with TZ, a resident of Tetingi Village, one of the most beneficial initiatives for the community has been the youth-led organization of regular religious study circles and *majelis ta'lim*. These activities have become effective platforms for religious education, strengthening social relationships among community members while simultaneously improving their understanding of religious teachings.

A similar statement was expressed by S, a young resident of Remukut Village: "The implementation of religious study circles and *majelis ta'lim* has existed and been carried out for a long time. The group that plays the most active role in organizing these activities is the younger generation. Their responsibilities include preparing the venue and all supporting facilities related to the study sessions, as well as ensuring the smooth conduct of the religious lectures."

Meanwhile, an interesting practice was observed in Pantan Kota Village, where religious study activities are not limited to adults but also involve students, particularly those at the senior high school level. These study sessions are held once a week with the objective of instilling religious values, broadening Islamic knowledge, and improving the quality of worship among community members. This finding was confirmed by S and M, residents of Pantan Kota Village.

2) Donating Religious Books and Endowing Copies of the Qur'an

Another activity undertaken by young people to strengthen religious literacy is the provision of Islamic reading materials and the endowment (*waqf*) of copies of the Qur'an to the community. This activity represents a tangible contribution by the younger generation in improving public access to religious knowledge resources. Religious literacy is not only related to the ability to read religious texts but also to the capacity to understand, internalize, and practice religious values in daily life (Studi Ekonomi Syariah STAI YPBWI Surabaya & Faujiah, 2025). Therefore, the

availability of reading materials is an important factor in supporting the enhancement of religious literacy within society.

The provision of religious books and copies of the Qur'an also reflects the efforts of young people to foster a reading culture within the community. Through these initiatives, community members are given broader opportunities to learn Islamic teachings independently or through educational activities facilitated by local religious leaders (Siregar & Rohman, 2023). Furthermore, the endowment of Qur'ans supports Qur'anic education programs for children and adolescents who are learning to read and understand its teachings.

Based on an interview with informant TZ, the provision of religious books and the endowment of Qur'ans should not be viewed merely as symbolic donations to the community. Rather, these activities aim to enhance the community's religious understanding while encouraging interest in reading the Qur'an, particularly among children and adolescents. TZ explained that the endowed Qur'ans can be utilized by all members of the community and serve as valuable educational resources for both younger and older generations in learning and deepening their understanding of Islam.

3) Grave Digging as a Form of Cultural and Religious Literacy Based on Local Wisdom

Another activity that demonstrates the role of young people as agents in strengthening religious and cultural literacy grounded in local wisdom is their involvement in digging graves whenever a community member passes away. This tradition is still preserved in several villages within Pantan Cuaca District, including Remukut, Tetingi, and Pantan Kota. Unlike many urban areas where grave digging is often carried out by paid workers, the people of Pantan Cuaca continue to uphold a tradition of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), performed voluntarily by village youth.

The practice of grave digging is not merely a physical activity; it also serves as a medium for social and religious education that embodies local wisdom values. This activity teaches young people about social responsibility, solidarity, empathy, concern for others, and the importance of cooperation in communal life. These values constitute an integral part of local culture that has been transmitted from generation to generation and remains relevant in contemporary society (Lukman Maulana et al., 2025). In practice, when a resident passes away, the information is announced through the mosque or *meunasah* (village prayer hall). Subsequently, the youth leader coordinates members to determine the burial location and prepare the necessary equipment. The entire process is carried out voluntarily without expecting any financial compensation from the bereaved family or the village government.

This was confirmed by TZ, a resident of Tetingi Village, who stated:

“The grave digging is carried out by young people, although some older individuals are also involved, particularly family members of the deceased who participate in digging the grave of their relatives. This practice has existed in Tetengi for a long time. They are not paid; at most, the family may provide drinking water, but even that is not expected because the youth organization already has its own funds or community cash reserve.”

Similarly, S, a resident of Remukut Village, explained:

“The grave-digging activities in Remukut Village and generally throughout Pantan Cuaca District differ from those commonly found in large cities. Whenever a resident passes away, young people immediately gather and prepare the necessary tools for digging the grave. They receive no payment whatsoever; rather, the activity is carried out on the basis of cooperation, mutual assistance, and the cultivation of social care among community members.”

Based on these interviews, it can be understood that the tradition of grave digging performed by young people represents an actualization of religious and cultural values deeply embedded within the Pantan Cuaca community. This activity not only assists families experiencing bereavement but also functions as a means of character education for younger generations by instilling values of empathy, social concern, mutual cooperation, responsibility, and community solidarity. Therefore, this tradition can be viewed as an important form of strengthening religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom that continues to be well preserved in Pantan Cuaca District.

b. Youth Activities in Strengthening Cultural Literacy Based on Local Wisdom

1) Mutual Cooperation (Gotong Royong) as a Medium for Strengthening Cultural Literacy and Community Social Values

One of the cultural activities that continues to be preserved by the younger generation in Pantan Cuaca District is *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). This activity is manifested in various forms, such as cleaning village environments, maintaining public roads, repairing social facilities, and conducting community service activities in mosque areas. The tradition of *gotong royong* not only aims to maintain environmental cleanliness but also serves as a means of transmitting local cultural values that emphasize togetherness, solidarity, social responsibility, and concern for the surrounding environment. In the context of Indonesian culture, *gotong royong* represents a form of social capital that strengthens social cohesion and fosters closer relationships among community members (Arief & Yuwanto, 2023).

In Pantan Cuaca District, the involvement of youth in *gotong royong* activities demonstrates their role as agents of local cultural preservation. Through these activities, young people not only practice cultural values inherited from their

ancestors but also transmit them to future generations. This activity constitutes an important component of cultural literacy, as it provides direct understanding of the values of togetherness, deliberation, and cooperation that characterize the Gayo community (Arief & Yuwanto, 2023).

In addition to being carried out in residential areas, *gotong royong* activities are also commonly conducted in mosques. Youth actively participate in cleaning mosque courtyards, prayer halls, ablution areas, and other supporting facilities. These activities not only reflect environmental awareness but also embody a dimension of religious literacy by instilling an understanding of the importance of cleanliness as an integral part of Islamic teachings.

In Muslim communities, mosques function not only as places of worship but also as centers for education, social development, and community empowerment. Therefore, the involvement of young people in maintaining the cleanliness and comfort of mosques represents a form of strengthening religious literacy that is integrated with local cultural literacy (Tasrim et al., 2023).

Beyond environmental and mosque cleaning activities, the younger generation also actively assists the community in various customary and social events. Their participation can be observed in the implementation of *sinte murip* (life-cycle ceremonies), such as wedding celebrations, circumcision ceremonies, thanksgiving events, as well as *sinte mate* (death-related ceremonies), including *tahlilan* gatherings and communal prayer activities. During these events, young people voluntarily contribute to the preparation, implementation, and completion of activities without expecting any material compensation. This tradition reflects the enduring values of mutual cooperation and social solidarity within the Pantan Cuaca community.

An interview with informant M, a community leader, revealed:

“The younger generation greatly contributes to the implementation of community activities. They always unite and work together in helping people who are in need. Their presence makes community activities easier to carry out and ensures that they are completed successfully. The youth never ask for rewards or payment for what they do. They help sincerely, motivated by solidarity and togetherness in supporting the community, both in *sinte murip* and *sinte mate* activities.”

This statement indicates that the younger generation plays a strategic role as agents in strengthening cultural literacy based on local wisdom through the practice of *gotong royong*, which continues to be maintained in the social life of the Pantan Cuaca community.

2) Preservation of Saman Dance, Debus, and Didong as Instruments of Cultural Literacy

Another activity undertaken by the younger generation to strengthen cultural literacy is the preservation of various traditional arts, including Saman Dance, Debus, and Didong. These activities are commonly found in Remukut Village, Pantan Kota Village, and Tetingi Village. The preservation efforts are carried out through regular training sessions, the development of arts groups, and performances at customary ceremonies as well as community events.

Saman Dance is one of the cultural heritages of the Gayo community that has gained recognition both nationally and internationally. This dance not only showcases harmonious and synchronized movements but also embodies religious values, moral education, discipline, cooperation, and social solidarity. The verses recited during the performance are rich in religious messages and life values that have been transmitted from generation to generation. Therefore, Saman Dance serves as an important medium for strengthening both cultural literacy and religious literacy among young people (Rayani et al., 2025).

In addition to Saman Dance, young people are actively involved in preserving Debus, a traditional performance art that demonstrates physical and spiritual resilience through acts of invulnerability to sharp objects and fire. This art form possesses strong historical and spiritual significance within Acehese society. Through the preservation of Debus, young people not only maintain a traditional artistic practice but also gain an understanding of the values of courage, perseverance, and faith embedded within it.

Didong is another important cultural expression that contributes to the enhancement of cultural literacy among the Gayo people. Didong combines elements of literature, vocal performance, and movement through poetic verses containing advice, educational messages, historical narratives, and social criticism. As a traditional communication medium of the Gayo community, Didong functions as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values to younger generations. By learning and performing Didong, young people develop a deeper understanding of their local cultural identity and the heritage passed down by their ancestors.

The preservation of Saman Dance, Debus, and Didong by the younger generation demonstrates that cultural literacy is not merely the ability to know about culture, but also the capacity to appreciate, practice, and transmit cultural traditions to future generations. Through these artistic activities, young people act as both custodians and innovators of local culture amid the growing influence of modernization (Rayani et al., 2025).

Interview findings with informant TZ Zulkifli further emphasized this point: "Saman Dance and Didong must continue to be promoted and practiced on a sustainable basis. These activities are not only intended to preserve traditional arts but also to introduce Gayo cultural values to younger

generations so that they are not lost amid the rapid development of the modern era.”

Meanwhile, AA and M, serving as the village heads (Reje) of Pantan Kota and Tetingi Villages, respectively, expressed their strong appreciation for the enthusiasm of young people in preserving local traditional arts. Their support is demonstrated not only through village policies but also through direct involvement in various cultural activities organized by youth groups.

2. The Impact of Youth Activities as Agents of Strengthening Religious and Cultural Literacy Based on Local Wisdom in Pantan Cuaca District, Gayo Lues Regency

Impact refers to the influence generated by activities, actions, or programs on individuals or communities, either in the form of changes in knowledge, attitudes, or social behavior (B et al., 2023). In the context of this study, various activities carried out by young people in Pantan Cuaca District have demonstrated a significant contribution to strengthening religious and cultural literacy rooted in the local wisdom values of the Gayo community. These activities not only function as a means of preserving culture and enhancing religious knowledge but also serve as instruments for shaping social character, creating a more religious, harmonious, and culturally conscious society. Cultural literacy based on local wisdom has proven to strengthen public understanding of cultural identity while encouraging active participation in preserving it.

The role of youth as agents of religious and cultural literacy strengthening is reflected in various activities, including Qur’anic recitations, *majelis ta’lim* (Islamic study circles), community mutual assistance (*gotong royong*), the tradition of assisting in grave digging, the provision of religious books and copies of the Qur’an, and the preservation of traditional arts such as the Saman dance, Didong, and Debus. These activities serve as mechanisms for transmitting religious and cultural values from one generation to the next, thereby maintaining the continuity of the community’s social identity. Furthermore, youth participation in activities based on local wisdom reinforces their sense of belonging to regional culture and increases collective awareness of the importance of preserving Gayo cultural heritage.

One of the most prominent impacts of these activities is the enhancement of social interaction within the community. Youth-initiated programs bring together people of different ages and social backgrounds in collaborative spaces. Social interactions established through religious and cultural activities foster closer relationships among community members, strengthen social solidarity, and encourage mutual cooperation and assistance in everyday life. This indicates that religious and cultural literacy functions not only to improve knowledge but also as an instrument for strengthening social cohesion.

From a sociological perspective, social interaction refers to reciprocal relationships among individuals, between individuals and groups, and among groups within a society. Such interactions may produce various forms of social relations, including cooperation, accommodation, solidarity, and the formation of collective identities. In Pantan Cuaca, youth activities predominantly generate associative forms of interaction, such as cooperation, mutual assistance, collective work, and problem-solving through deliberation. Consequently, religious and cultural literacy activities undertaken by young people have contributed to creating a more harmonious and conducive social environment.

The findings indicate that the impacts can be categorized into two major dimensions. First, the impact on strengthening religious literacy is reflected in the increased public understanding of Islamic teachings, greater awareness in performing religious obligations, increased participation in religious activities, and the development of a culture of religious learning through Qur'anic recitations and *majelis ta'lim*. The availability of religious books and copies of the Qur'an provided by young people has also expanded community access to religious knowledge (Hendra et al., 2023).

Second, the impact on strengthening cultural literacy is evident in the growing public awareness of the importance of preserving Gayo local culture, particularly through the continued practice of the Saman dance, Didong, Debus, and the tradition of mutual cooperation. These activities serve as media for cultural learning among young people and as mechanisms for transmitting local wisdom values to society in a sustainable manner. Through the active involvement of youth, local culture is preserved not merely as a tradition but also as a social identity that must be maintained and developed amid the challenges of modernization (Anita & Triana, 2025).

According to Z, a resident of Remukut Village, the activities organized by young people in Pantan Cuaca District have provided tangible benefits to the community. He explained that *majelis ta'lim* and Qur'anic recitation activities have helped community members acquire a better understanding of Islam and enhance their religious knowledge in everyday life. Moreover, cultural activities such as the Saman dance and Didong have fostered a greater appreciation of Gayo culture and strengthened efforts to preserve regional cultural heritage.

Similarly, AB, a village elder (*tetue gampong*) from Tetingi Village, stated that the most noticeable impact of youth activities has been the strengthening of religious and cultural values in social life. According to him, community service and other social activities initiated by young people have enhanced social cohesion, strengthened relationships among community members, and fostered a spirit of mutual assistance. He also emphasized that youth

involvement in religious and cultural activities plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony in Tetingi Village.

Based on the findings and interviews conducted with residents of Pantan Kota, Tetingi, and Remukut villages, it can be concluded that youth activities aimed at strengthening religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom have had a substantial impact on community life. Young people not only act as organizers of religious and cultural activities but also function as agents of social change who contribute to creating a more harmonious, knowledgeable, and culturally rooted society. These findings support the view that youth are agents of social transformation with a strategic role in promoting positive change within society.

a. Strengthening Community Unity and Social Solidarity

One of the most significant impacts perceived by the community from the activities of the younger generation is the strengthening of social unity and solidarity. Various activities, such as Islamic study gatherings, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), commemorations of Islamic holy days, and the preservation of local traditions, have served as effective means of fostering closer relationships among community members. These activities have cultivated a collective awareness that social life requires cooperation, tolerance, and togetherness in order to create a peaceful and harmonious environment. The efforts of the younger generation to promote religious values and local culture have indirectly become a form of social education that encourages the community to maintain harmony and unity. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that the strengthening of culture and local wisdom can enhance social cohesion and preserve social harmony within communities (B et al., 2023).

The interview with Informant Z revealed:

"The activities carried out by the younger generation provide an excellent example for the community, especially for older people, that unity is essential in society because it is one of the keys to creating a peaceful and secure community. Islam also teaches people to remain united and prohibits division among fellow human beings."

The interview findings indicate that the younger generation has become a role model for the community in fostering unity. Through their various socio-religious activities, they have encouraged community members to become increasingly aware of the importance of togetherness in maintaining harmonious social life.

b. Strengthening Religious and Cultural Knowledge among the Community

Another impact observed is the enhancement of community knowledge regarding religion and local culture. Activities initiated by the younger generation, such as organizing Qur'anic study groups, religious assemblies (*majelis taklim*),

providing religious reading materials, and promoting local cultural preservation programs, have created broader learning opportunities for the community. These initiatives enable community members to acquire new knowledge while reinforcing their understanding of religious and cultural values that have been passed down from generation to generation. The religious and cultural literacy promoted by young people serves as an important means of preserving the continuity of the community's cultural identity while simultaneously strengthening religious understanding. This finding is consistent with previous research, which suggests that cultural literacy and local wisdom programs play a significant role in enhancing public understanding of culture and encouraging the preservation of local values (B et al., 2023).

An interview with MK, the Imam of Tetingi Village, revealed:

"Through the activities carried out by the younger generation, people have become more aware of the importance of knowledge for both individuals and society. The initiatives implemented by young people have increased the community's enthusiasm for seeking knowledge and made learning more accessible. They have established places for learning, such as religious study groups, and provided reading materials related to religion and culture. As a result, community members have strengthened their knowledge and understanding of religious teachings as well as cultural values."

The interview findings indicate that the younger generation has successfully created learning spaces that are easily accessible to the community. These conditions provide opportunities for people to continue learning and to deepen their understanding of religious teachings and local cultural traditions, which constitute essential aspects of their daily lives and social identity.

c. Reducing Conflict and Enhancing Social Harmony

The activities carried out by the younger generation have also contributed to reducing the potential for conflict within the community. The spirit of unity, cooperation, and social concern demonstrated by young people serves as a tangible example for society in resolving various problems peacefully. Their involvement in social and religious activities not only strengthens relationships among community members but also fosters a more harmonious and conducive social environment. Local wisdom combined with religious values has become an important instrument in maintaining social stability and preventing the emergence of conflict within society. Research has shown that strengthening local wisdom values plays a significant role in promoting peace and resolving social conflicts within communities (Astri, 2011). This finding is supported by an interview with informant S, a community leader of Pantan Kota Village:

"The activities of the younger generation have brought peace and tranquility to the community. Young people set an example for society through the unity

they demonstrate in all aspects of life. Through their activities, the community has become increasingly distant from conflicts among fellow members."

A similar view was expressed by M, the Imam of Remukut Village:

"The younger generation plays a very important role in creating comfort and harmony within the community. They possess a high sense of social concern and actively help reconcile members of society who are in conflict. As a result, people feel ashamed to continue maintaining disputes with one another."

These interview findings indicate that the younger generation functions not only as implementers of religious and cultural literacy activities but also as social mediators who help create a peaceful and harmonious society. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that young people in Pantan Cuaca District play a highly strategic role as agents in strengthening religion- and culture-based literacy grounded in local wisdom. Their involvement in Qur'anic study groups, *majelis ta'lim* activities, the provision of religious books, communal work (*gotong royong*), and the preservation of traditional arts demonstrates that literacy is understood not merely as the ability to read and write, but also as social practices that instill religious and cultural values in everyday life. These activities provide evidence that the younger generation is capable of integrating Islamic values with Gayo local culture as a foundation for building a religious and culturally conscious society.

The researcher also observed that the success of the younger generation in organizing various socio-religious activities has had a tangible impact on strengthening social solidarity and community cohesion. Collective activities have brought together people from different age groups in productive spaces of interaction, thereby reinforcing brotherhood, social concern, and the spirit of mutual cooperation. This condition indicates that young people function not only as program implementers but also as driving forces capable of fostering collective awareness among community members to preserve unity and maintain the values of togetherness that characterize Gayo society.

Furthermore, the researcher argues that the younger generation's efforts in strengthening religious and cultural literacy make a significant contribution to preserving local identity amidst the pressures of modernization and globalization. Through the preservation of *Saman* dance, *Didong*, *Debus*, and various socio-cultural traditions, young people not only safeguard existing cultural heritage but also transform it to remain relevant to contemporary developments. Therefore, the role of the younger generation as agents of change should continue to receive support from the government, religious leaders, traditional leaders, and the wider community so that the transmission of religious and local cultural values can be

sustained and serve as social capital for the future development of Pantan Cuaca society.

D. Conclusion

The younger generation in Pantan Cuaca District, Gayo Lues Regency, plays a significant role as agents in strengthening religious and cultural literacy based on local wisdom. This role is manifested through various activities involving the community directly, both in religious and cultural spheres. Religious literacy is promoted through the organization of Qur'anic studies and *majelis ta'lim* (Islamic study groups), the provision of religious books, Qur'an endowment programs (*waqf*), and participation in grave-digging traditions as a form of practicing social and religious values. Meanwhile, cultural literacy is strengthened through communal work (*gotong royong*) and the preservation of traditional Gayo arts such as the Saman dance, Didong, and Debus. These activities demonstrate that the younger generation serves not only as successors to religious and cultural values but also as key actors in preserving and developing them amid the challenges of modernization.

This study also reveals that the activities carried out by the younger generation in strengthening religious and cultural literacy have had tangible impacts on the community. These impacts are reflected in the increased public understanding of religious teachings, the growing awareness of the importance of participating in religious activities, and the broader access to religious learning resources. At the same time, the cultural activities initiated by young people have enhanced community awareness regarding the importance of preserving and safeguarding local Gayo culture as a social identity that should be passed on to future generations. Therefore, the strengthening of religious and cultural literacy by the younger generation functions not only as a means of education but also as an effort to preserve the existence of local values within society.

Furthermore, the most significant impacts experienced by the community include stronger social cohesion and solidarity, increased knowledge of religion and culture, and the creation of a more harmonious and less conflict-prone society. Through various social, religious, and cultural activities, the younger generation has successfully created spaces for interaction that strengthen relationships among community members and foster the spirit of mutual cooperation, social concern, and togetherness. Their presence as initiators and drivers of religious and cultural literacy activities has also positioned them as role models in building a peaceful, religious, and culturally rooted society. Consequently, the younger generation in Pantan Cuaca can be regarded as a strategic asset that plays a crucial role in

maintaining social resilience, strengthening local cultural identity, and fostering a harmonious and value-based society amid the challenges of globalization.

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