

BEYOND THE WALLS: Representing *Penginyongan* Cultural Heritage in Islamic Academic Libraries

Feby Lestari Supriyono & Eni Nur Aeni

Universitas Jenderal Soedirman
Jl. Profesor DR. HR Boenyamin No.708, Dukuhbandong, Banyumas, Jawa Tengah 53122, Indonesia
e-mail: feby1982@unsoed.ac.id; eni.aeni@unsoed.ac.id

Juairiah & Siti Wahdah

Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin
Jl. A. Yani KM.4,5, Kel. Kebun Bunga, Banjarmasin, Kalimantan Selatan 70235, Indonesia
e-mail: juairiah84@uin-antasari.ac.id; sitiwahdah@uin-antasari.ac.id

Wahyu Triani

Universitas Sebelas Maret
Jl. Ir. Sutami No.36, Jebres, Kec. Jebres, Kota Surakarta, Jawa Tengah 57126, Indonesia
e-mail: wahyu.triani@student.uns.ac.id

Abstract: This article examines the role of Islamic academic libraries in representing and reconstructing local cultural heritage, with particular reference to *Penginyongan* culture in Banyumas, Central Java. Amid the pressures of globalization and cultural homogenization, the preservation of local identity increasingly intersects with Islamic institutional frameworks. This study aims to analyze how cultural representation is produced, negotiated, and legitimized within an Islamic epistemic context. Employing a qualitative interpretive case study at the UIN SAIZU Library, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The analysis draws on Stuart Hall's theory of representation and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, contextualized within Islamic principles of knowledge preservation (*hifẓh at-turāts*) and public benefit (*mashlahah*). The findings reveal three key dynamics: first, library collections serve as institutional mechanisms that legitimize *Penginyongan* culture within academic and religious discourse; second, curatorial and spatial practices reflect a dialogical integration of Islamic values and local wisdom; and third, these practices facilitate the reconstruction of cultural identity across diverse audiences. This study argues that Islamic academic libraries function as cultural intermediaries that actively shape meaning, strengthen cultural resilience, and redistribute cultural capital among marginalized communities.

Keywords: Islamic academic libraries, cultural representation, *Penginyongan* heritage, cultural capital, local wisdom

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Introduction

Culture is a living entity that continuously moves, transforms, and seeks space for expression amid the currents of change. *Penginyongan* culture, historically known as Banyumasan culture, occupies a unique position as a marker of collective identity among communities in the southwestern region of Central Java, particularly Banyumas. Its distinctiveness emerges from a productive tension between Javanese Court culture (Negarigung) and Sundanese culture. Cruz et al. demonstrated that peripheral cultures are capable of reversing center-periphery dynamics through active negotiation and representation rather than being defeated by dominant central cultures.¹ Banyumas's crossroads position paradoxically gave rise to an authentic, egalitarian culture manifesting in direct language, grounded performing arts, and a social value system upholding honesty without pretense.

The cultural identity of *Penginyongan* is explicitly expressed through the word “inyong,” meaning “I” or “me,” distinguishing its speakers from other Javanese communities. The *Penginyongan* language, commonly referred to as the ngapak dialect, is not merely a communication tool but a representation of living culture. Drawing on Hall's perspective, language functions as a system of representation that constructs meaning within and through culture.² Its prominent phonetic feature, the unambiguous pronunciation producing a terminal /k/ sound, is the origin of the “ngapak” designation. Although initially derogatory, *Penginyongan* people reclaimed the term as an act of cultural resistance and identity reinforcement.

Penginyongan culture encompasses rich heritage spanning tangible dimensions, including keris, the begalan ritual, and performing arts costumes, and intangible dimensions expressed through Ebeg, Lengger, Calung arts, the Cowongan rain-summoning tradition, and the Mendoan culinary tradition, all officially recognized by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. Lenzerini affirmed that intangible cultural heritage constitutes the primary vehicle of humanity's cultural diversity, yet simultaneously renders it highly vulnerable to extinction under globalization.³ The “cablaka” value system, reflecting directness and freedom from pretense, represents the most concrete expression of *Penginyongan* philosophy, placing harmony with nature and honesty as principal governing principles of communal existence. The local motto “Adoh Ratu Cedhak Watu,” meaning “far from the king and close to the stone,” further encapsulates Banyumas's historical condition as a region distant from royal power, enabling an independent cultural identity often conceptualized as a marginal survival culture. Framed within Hall's theory of identity, this condition does not signify inferiority but describes identity as a continuous process of becoming, shaped within historical and cultural frameworks.⁴

Globalization presents an increasingly tangible external threat to this cultural dynamism. Walter demonstrated that globalization triggers shifts not only in material conditions but also in the non-material cultural values of exposed communities,⁵ while

Allred et al. found that cultural identity becomes the core of indigenous resilience amid pressures of lifestyle change.⁶ This condition directly confronts the *Penginyongan* community, as Indonesia's 2020 Population Census Long Form reveals that regional language use among the Post Gen-Z generation has reached only 61.7%, compared to 85.24% among the Pre-Boomer generation, an intergenerational decline of nearly 24 percentage points.⁷ Kumar and Niglio affirmed that without systematic preservation efforts indigenous cultural heritage risks permanent extinction,⁸ while Roy cautioned that heritage is vulnerable to neglect when communities lose cultural literacy in sustaining these assets as part of their collective identity.⁹

Prior studies affirm that libraries serve as critical institutions for cultural heritage preservation. Evidence from Nigeria, Northern Thailand, and the United Kingdom demonstrates that public and independent libraries actively bring heritage into contemporary community life, with community involvement and organizational culture serving as primary keys to sustainability.¹⁰ Librarians play a crucial role in preserving and disseminating local knowledge through active community partnerships,¹¹ while university libraries bear particular urgency in preserving indigenous manuscripts.¹² At a theoretical level, Leguina et al. conceptualized public libraries as reserves of cultural and digital capital grounded in Bourdieu's theory of distinction, enabling active distribution of cultural capital to marginalized communities.¹³ In the Banyumas context, Sumbogo and Mutmainnah affirmed that efforts to strengthen *Penginyongan* cultural identity remain widely open for exploration from various perspectives.¹⁴

Despite these contributions, three significant gaps remain. Existing research predominantly focuses on Africa and East Asia, leaving Islamic libraries in Southeast Asia virtually unexplored. No study has examined how Islamic institution-based libraries manage the intersection between Islamic values and indigenous local wisdom in their representational practices. Furthermore, no research has simultaneously employed Hall's theory of Representation and Bourdieu's theory of Distinction to analyze cultural preservation in libraries, despite this combination offering a richer perspective capturing both cultural meaning production and capital distribution.

One library that effectively assumes this role is the Library of the State Islamic University (UIN) Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, hereafter referred to as the UIN SAIZU Library. Located in Purwokerto, the heart of the Banyumas region, this library has a strong geographical, cultural, and academic position to serve as a node for the preservation and development of *Penginyongan* culture. This research is guided by three research questions: how do its collections and physical spaces represent *Penginyongan* cultural identity; how does the library manage the dialogic relationship between Islamic values and local wisdom; and how does the community reconstruct its cultural values through library collections and services. The library's "Pojok Penginyongan," which evolved into the "Museum and Penginyongan Library," positions it as the only university library in Banyumas Regency with a dedicated *Penginyongan*-themed space, grounded in the proposition that an Islamic library

rooted in local wisdom actively operates as an agent of representation that constructs, reproduces, and distributes Penginyongan cultural capital. By employing Hall's and Bourdieu's frameworks in tandem, this study contributes both a practical documentation of *Penginyongan* heritage and a theoretical advancement in understanding libraries as agents of cultural representation and capital distribution within the Indonesian and Southeast Asian context.

Method

This study applies a qualitative-interpretive case study to examine the manifestation of *Penginyongan* cultural identity within the (Universitas Islam Negeri Prof. KH. Saifuddin Zuhri) UIN SAIZU Library. As a state Islamic university, UIN SAIZU reflects a unique intersection of religious identity and regional context in Purwokerto. Conducted over eighteen months (2023–2024), data were collected from interviews, cultural artifacts, and institutional documents through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, including exhibition spaces, manuscripts, and QR code-based digital systems.

In accordance with Creswell's emphasis on information-rich participants,¹⁵ informants were selected via purposive sampling. Two key actors were interviewed: the former Rector as the intellectual conceptualizer of cultural integration, and the Head of the Library as the implementing actor. To ensure methodological rigor, the study employs triangulation across three dimensions: data source triangulation (interviews, artifacts, and reports), methodological triangulation (cross-validation of techniques), and investigator triangulation (peer debriefing and member checking) to verify the credibility of the research conclusions.

Data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña,¹⁶ comprising three iterative phases: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative analysis model involving data condensation, data display, and interpretation to identify patterns in how *Penginyongan* cultural identity is represented through library collections and spatial arrangements. During condensation, raw data were systematically organized through coding. In the display phase, data were arranged into matrices and diagrams to identify relationships. Finally, emerging findings were continuously cross-checked against sources through triangulation to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the final interpretations.

Results and Discussion

UIN SAIZU Library as a Representational Space for *Penginyongan* Cultural Collections

The fundamental inquiry of this study concerns how the collections and physical spaces of the UIN SAIZU Library represent *Penginyongan* cultural identity. Findings indicate that this representation is not a spontaneous occurrence but rather the result of deliberate

institutionalization. Contemporary library paradigms suggest that these institutions serve as active spaces bringing cultural heritage into modern life, acting as transformative agents that shape collective identity rather than remaining passive repositories.¹⁷

This institutionalization process originated from a vision of institutional distinction formulated in 2019. Regional identity in universities is often formed through institutional processes embedded in local narratives and social practices, where institutions actively shape their environment through power structures within the relation of the organization and its locality.¹⁸ At UIN SAIZU, *Penginyongan* culture is formally integrated into statutes, academic guidelines, and research policies. Mr. Roqib explained the rationality behind this decision:

“Standar akreditasi menuntut setiap perguruan tinggi memiliki kekhasan yang membedakannya dari yang lain. Dari situlah saya menemukan bahwa lokalitas budaya Penginyongan, dengan cakupan wilayah yang jauh lebih luas dari satu provinsi, merupakan distingsi yang autentik dan strategis bagi UIN SAIZU.” (“Accreditation standards require each university to have a distinctiveness that sets it apart. That is where I found that the locality of *Penginyongan* culture, covering a geographic scope far broader than former residency, constitutes an authentic and strategic distinction for UIN SAIZU”).¹⁹

Such transformations in Indonesian Islamic higher education are increasingly propelled by glocalization, which is the synthesis of global pressures and local adaptations.²⁰ Consequently, universities build strong regional identities by integrating local wisdom into international academic frameworks.²¹ A novel dimension of this study is the transformation of an academic library into an arena for negotiating cultural identity. The library does not merely store cultural materials but actively constructs meanings about *Penginyongan* identity through the selection and display of cultural collections.²²

This critical dimension is evident in the adoption of the term “*Penginyongan*” over “*Ngapak*,” which is often perceived as derogatory. Peripheral cultures actively negotiate identity through naming and symbolic representation.²³ Mr. Roqib elaborated on the choice of nomenclature:

“Nama “Penginyongan” dipilih karena ia merangkul seluruh wilayah yang menggunakan kata inyong sebagai penanda diri — meliputi delapan kabupaten dan kota — tanpa mendahulukan salah satu wilayah di atas yang lain. Istilah ngapak ditolak karena selama ini digunakan sebagai bahan ejekan oleh penutur dari luar komunitas.” (“The name “*Penginyongan*” was chosen because it encompasses all territories using the word *inyong* as a personal marker — covering eight regencies and cities — without privileging one area over others. The term *ngapak* was rejected because it has historically been used as a mockery by speakers from outside the community).”²⁴

By rejecting “*Ngapak*,” the community reclaims control over its self-representation.²⁵ This act of cultural reappropriation is further legitimized by the involvement of cultural figures like Ahmad Tohari, rooting the identity in the community rather than just bureaucratic authority. This representation also serves as a response to globalization, which often triggers a backlash in the form of strengthened local identities.²⁶ With the declining number of young *Penginyongan* speakers,²⁷ institutions must consciously undertake the transmission of local knowledge.²⁸

The physical manifestation of this vision is the Museum and Library of *Penginyongan*, which integrates print, audio-visual, and three-dimensional artifacts. Mr. Aris, the Head of the Library, stated:

“Kami tidak ingin terbatas pada koleksi tertulis saja. Cita-citanya adalah memadukan perpustakaan yang menyimpan literatur dengan museum yang menampung benda-benda budaya fisik — dari kesenian Begalan hingga keris — sehingga keduanya bersinergi mendukung kegiatan akademik sekaligus menjadi pusat kajian budaya Penginyongan.” (“We do not wish to be limited to written collections alone. Our aspiration is to combine a library that holds literature with a museum that houses tangible cultural objects — from Begalan art to the keris — so that both synergistically support academic activities while serving as a center for *Penginyongan* cultural studies”).²⁹

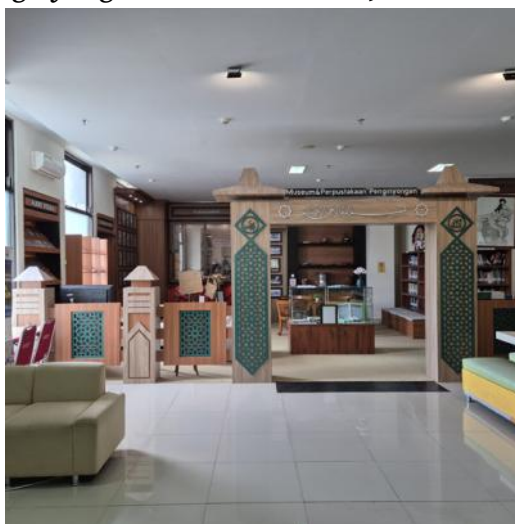


Figure 1. The entrance to the “Penginyongan Museum and Library” at UIN SAIZU Library (Source: Research Documentation, 2025)

Figure 1 illustrates the physical manifestation of this service. This space serves as a reserve of cultural capital, consolidating previously uninstitutionalized cultural assets into a public academic hub.³⁰ The library’s integrative vision acknowledges that intangible heritage cannot be reduced to text alone.³¹ Effective preservation of indigenous knowledge requires diverse systems of representation.³² As shown in Table 1, the collection spans monographic foundations, audio-visual performance recordings, and physical artifacts.

Table 1. Featured *Penginyongan* Cultural Collections at UIN SAIZU Library

No	Title	Form	Description
1	Kesenian Tradisional Begalan	Book	One of the collection of Penginyongan monograph literature
2	Islam dalam Tradisi Begalan	Book	One of the collection of Penginyongan monograph literature
3	Banyumasan: Sejarah, Budaya, Bahasa, dan Watak (Banyumasan: History, Culture, Language, and Character)	Book	One of the collection of Penginyongan monograph literature
4	Sejarah Islamisasi di Banyumas (The History of Islamisation in Banyumas)	Book	One of the collection of Penginyongan monograph literature
5	Duplikat Manuskrip Dawuhan Kitab 1-11 (Duplicate of the Dawuhan Manuscript Books 1-11)	Book	One of the collection of Penginyongan monograph literature
6	Melestarikan Tari Ebeg Banyumasan sebagai Upaya Memelihara Kesenian Rakyat	Periodical	Penginyongan Article in a journal
7	Batur dan Raden	Periodical	Penginyongan Article in a journal
8	Representation of Banyumas History and Ancient Traditions: Between the Role of Women and the Preservation of Customs by the State	Periodical	Pojok Penginyongan Journal
9	Ancas	Magazine	Pojok Penginyongan Magazine
10	Proceedings: International Seminar Language Maintenance and Shift (LAMAS) 7	Periodical	Proceedings Pojok Penginyongan
11	Calung campur sari banyumasan langen sari	Audio Visual	Audio visual of typical Banyumasan culture
12	Lengger Cilik dan Kuda Kepang Panca Krida Budaya Randegan Wangon-Banyumas	Audio Visual	Audio visual of typical Banyumasan culture
13	All-Night Wayang Kulit Performance in the Banyumasan Style	Audio Visual	Audio visual of typical Banyumasan culture
14	Gallery of photos of the graves of Islamic missionaries in the Penginyongan region	photos	Photos of Islamic missionary graves
15	Gallery of Historical Photos of Banyumas Regency	photos	Historical photo of Banyumas
16	Keris	Artifact	Traditional weapon of Banyumas
17	Traditional Clothing	Artifact	Traditional clothing of Banyumas
18	Traditional Household Tools	Artifact	Traditional household tools of Banyumas
19	Collection of Punakawan Shadow Puppets	Artifact	Punakawan shadow puppets
21	Ebeg	Artifact	Performance property of Banyumas ebeg art
22	Collection of Punakawan Shadow Puppets	Artifact	Punakawan shadow puppets
23	Begalan	Artifact	a set of "begalan" ritual tools from the Penginyongan community

The collection development, particularly for artifacts like the Begalan equipment, was achieved through communal movements. Mr. Roqib noted:

“Pengumpulan benda-benda budaya tidaklah mudah, tetapi melalui pendekatan yang masif kepada komunitas, akhirnya banyak yang bersedia menyumbangkan atau menghibahkan koleksi mereka — keris, tombak, dan berbagai perlengkapan tradisional lainnya.” (“Collecting cultural objects was not easy, but through a broad community approach, many people were willing to donate their collections — keris, spears, and various other traditional items”).³³

The Dialogic Relation Between Islamic Values and *Penginyongan* Local Wisdom in Library Representational Practices

The second research inquiry examines how the UIN SAIZU Library, as an Islamic institution, manages the relation between Islamic values and *Penginyongan* local cultural wisdom in its collection representation practices. The findings of this study are theoretically original as they demonstrate that an Islamic library, instead of functioning as a space that strictly filters local culture based on religious norms, transforms into a space that builds a dialogic bridge between these two traditions in an organic and productive manner. This reality challenges the common assumption that often positions religious institutions as barriers to the sustainability of local traditions, a dichotomy that is irrelevant in the *Penginyongan* context. Meaning is never inherently attached to an object or practice but is always constructed through a system of representation that works within a specific historical and cultural context.³⁴

Mr. Roqib explicitly stated the epistemological foundation of this dialogic relation in an in-depth interview. This statement also confirms UIN SAIZU’s institutional commitment to an objective and inclusive scientific approach toward local cultural heritage. A critical-humanist approach to culture always rejects single determinism, whether religious or ethnic, and chooses a dialectical approach that places contradiction as a starting point for understanding the production of meaning.³⁵ Mr. Roqib expressed his epistemological view as follows:

“Setiap kebudayaan memiliki karakteristik dan kebijaksanaannya sendiri. Klaim sepihak bahwa tradisi lokal tertentu bersifat menyimpang bukanlah sikap ilmiah dan tidak kondusif bagi pengembangan perguruan tinggi yang sehat. Yang harus dilakukan adalah mengkaji dan mengembangkannya, bukan menghakiminya.” (“Every culture has its own characteristics and wisdom. A unilateral claim that a particular local tradition is deviant is neither a scientific stance nor conducive to healthy university development. What must be done is to study and develop it, not to judge it”).³⁶

This epistemological attitude is consistent with the findings that Islamic higher education institutions that successfully navigate the intersection between universal Islamic values and local cultural identity are those that develop inclusive and dialogic epistemological frameworks, rather than defensive and exclusive ones.³⁷ In the

Penginyongan Islamic tradition, local wisdom orientations such as the Ebeg tradition have been successfully integrated into Islamic studies synergistically without losing the essence of locality. The Banyumas community has historically shown an extraordinary capacity to internalize new values, including Islamic values, into existing cultural frameworks through adaptive acculturation mechanisms.³⁸ The Banyumas community demonstrates a strong capacity to absorb new values, including Islam, through adaptive acculturation.³⁹ This process forms cultural memory, where communities build cohesive identities by integrating diverse layers of meaning into a sustainable and coherent collective narrative.⁴⁰

Mr. Roqib also emphasized that the egalitarian character of *Penginyongan* embedded in its language system creates conditions conducive to dialogue with Islam, an argument that has significant linguistic and sociological implications. This perspective positions language structure as a determining factor for the cultural openness of a community. Mr. Roqib explained his argument:

“Penginyongan mewarisi pengucapan Jawa asli yang tidak mengenal stratifikasi bahasa sekompleks Mataraman. Tidak ada krama inggil yang mempersulit komunikasi terbuka. Justru sifat egaliter ini yang membuat masyarakat Penginyongan lebih mudah menerima nilai-nilai luar, termasuk Islam, tanpa kehilangan identitasnya.” (“*Penginyongan* preserves the original Javanese pronunciation, which does not know the complex language stratification of Mataraman. There is no krama inggil that complicates open communication. It is precisely this egalitarian character that makes the *Penginyongan* community more receptive to external values, including Islam, without losing its identity”).⁴¹

The egalitarian Banyumasan *Ngapak* dialect has long enabled cross-status communication, supporting the acceptance of egalitarian Islamic teachings in the *Penginyongan* community.⁴² Its use is an intentional identity marker distinguishing speakers from other Javanese groups.⁴³ Successful language revitalization links usage with collective cultural pride, while behavioral psychology approaches, especially in education, help prevent language decline among youth.⁴⁴ Peripheral cultures can negotiate with dominant ones through inherent values, not only resistance.⁴⁵ In *Penginyongan*, linguistic egalitarianism facilitates inorganic acculturation with Islam.⁴⁶ Representation operates within tensions of power and resistance, as seen in communities like Jalawastu, where Islam and local customs harmonize through respectful negotiation.⁴⁷



Figure 2. “The Bawor Puppet positioned between Dawuhan Kuno Manuscript 1 (Arabic/Pegon script) and Dawuhan Kuno Manuscript 2 (Javanese Script)” (Source: Research Documentation, 2025)

Bawor is positioned between Dawuhan Kuni manuscripts in Arabic/Pegon and Javanese scripts (Figure 2), visually demonstrating the dialogic relation between Islam and *Penginyongan* culture. This display asserts their harmonious coexistence, with the Pegon manuscript symbolizing cultural synthesis, Arabic script conveying Javanese history. Integrating such artifacts strengthens public understanding of historical continuity.⁴⁸ Bawor represents *cablaka*, honesty, openness, and authenticity, core to *Penginyongan* identity and resilience.⁴⁹ *Cablaka* is not just an individual trait but a collective cultural ethos embedded in the way the *Penginyongan* people interact and view the world. Indigenous communities that succeed in maintaining their identity amidst globalization pressures are those that have strong yet adaptive value systems, and this *cablaka* value functions as an identity anchor. This curatorial arrangement is an intentional act of representation and power, shaping what is valued in public narratives.⁵⁰ This curatorial arrangement is an intentional act of representation and power, shaping what is valued in public narratives.⁵¹ It reflects an epistemological stance that *Penginyongan* identity emerges from the coexistence and integration of Islamic and local cultural traditions.

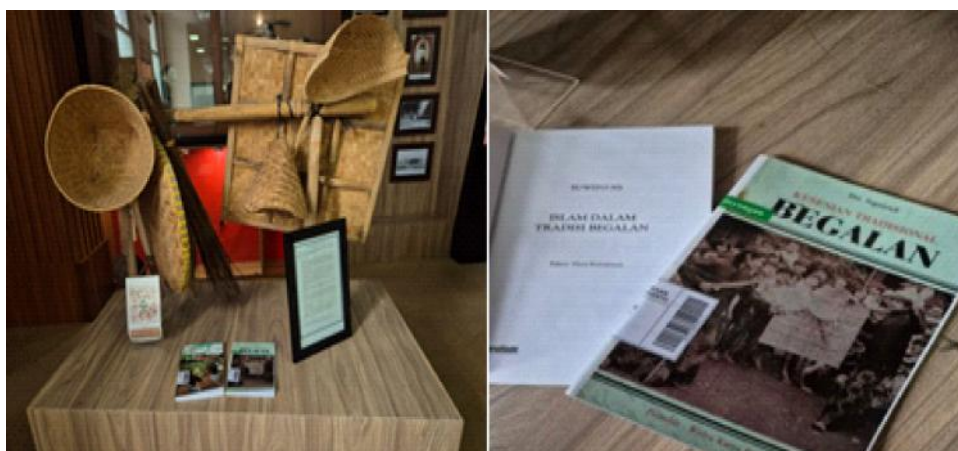


Figure 3. The book collections on “Islam in Begalan Tradition” and “Traditional Begalan Art” (Source: Research Documentation, 2025)

Figure 3 shows the UIN SAIZU Library represents Begalan tradition through an integrated approach combining physical artifacts, printed texts, and digital access via QR codes. Begalan, a Banyumas wedding ritual, blends performance elements with moral and Islamic teachings, symbolized through everyday objects such as *ilir*, *cething*, *centhong*, *irus*, *siwur*, *tampah*, *pari*, *kendil*, and a broomstick. This multi-perspective strategy enables deeper understanding, allowing users to interpret cultural values through diverse academic lenses.⁵²

Participatory approaches that merge tangible heritage with digital accessibility are crucial for sustainable revitalization.⁵³ By strengthening community ownership, this method ensures intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge beyond institutional limitations.⁵⁴ This library's integration of physical and digital collections reflects an awareness of the need for layered documentation, expanding access while enriching cultural appreciation.⁵⁵ Effective preservation today depends on systematic documentation supported by digital technology and emerging tools such as artificial intelligence.⁵⁶

In the context of preserving cultural heritage that increasingly relies on digital technology, UIN SAIZU Library shows awareness of the importance of multi-layered documentation. The integration between physical collections and digital representations not only expands the range of access but also creates a deeper cultural appreciation experience. Preserving indigenous knowledge in the current era requires the strategic use of digital technology. Institutions that succeed in building a strong digital ecosystem for their cultural heritage are those that start from systematic documentation of their physical collections.

From Bourdieu's perspective, the presence of the Pegon manuscript and Bawor represents a reconversion of local cultural capital into recognized academic capital. This aligns with global trend that blur boundaries between libraries, archives, and museums, fostering holistic cultural ecosystem.⁵⁷ Participatory and community-centered approaches become essential for libraries aiming to create meaningful social impact.⁵⁸ Ultimately, the dialogic relationship between Islam and *Penginyongan* culture offers a replicable model.⁵⁹ committed to cultural sustainability must balance preservation and innovation while building community trust.⁶⁰ These findings highlight a key theoretical contribution: Islamic university libraries can simultaneously advance religious and cultural missions, as both are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory.

The dialogic relation between Islam and *Penginyongan* culture offers a model that can be adapted by similar institutions. Libraries that carry a mission of cultural sustainability must be able to navigate the tension between preservation and innovation. Libraries that are most successful in the mission of preservation are those that manage to build themselves as a space of trust for the community, a space where the community feels that its heritage is respected. The theoretical novelty offered by these findings is that Islamic university libraries do not have to choose between a religious mission and a local cultural preservation mission, because both missions mutually reinforce and sustain each other.

Community Reconstruction of *Penginyongan* Cultural Values Through Library Presence

The third research inquiry examines how the *Penginyongan* community reconstructs and reinterprets its cultural values through library collections and services. These findings transcend the library's physical existence, touching upon how the institution triggers processes of personal and collective identity reconstruction. Cultural identity is not an essence given once and for all but a position that is never finished, constantly formed, and negotiated within changing social spaces.⁶¹ In this framework, the library is an institution that actively intervenes in identity formation through the selection and distribution of cultural capital.

A significant theoretical finding is the identity reconstruction experienced by Mr. Roqib, the primary architect of this cultural movement. Despite being from East Java and not a native *Penginyongan* speaker, he became the most persistent advocate for the institutionalization of *Penginyongan* culture at UIN SAIZU. This proves that a library based on local wisdom functions as an open space for identity negotiation for anyone willing to engage empathetically with the community. Mr. Roqib affirmed:

“Saya bukan orang asli Penginyongan, tapi prinsip saya adalah di mana bumi diinjak, di situ langit dijunjung. Setelah sekian lama hidup, berkarya, dan bergaul dengan masyarakat Banyumas, saya merasa bertanggung jawab untuk mengangkat harkat dan martabat budaya mereka. Gerakan ini bukan proyek pribadi, melainkan komitmen intelektual dan moral.” (“I am not originally from *Penginyongan*, but my principle is: wherever the ground is trodden, there the sky is upheld. After living, working, and associating with the Banyumas community for so long, I feel a responsibility to elevate the dignity of their culture. This movement is not a personal project, but an intellectual and moral commitment”).⁶²

This illustrates the concept of identity as a “process of becoming” not solely determined by primordial factors.⁶³ Peripheral cultures can attract outsiders through the allure of authentic values,⁶⁴ and identities formed through conscious choice often result in stronger commitments than those merely inherited.⁶⁵

A critical aspect of this reconstruction is addressing the cultural inferiority felt by *Penginyongan* speakers. Mr. Roqib observed:

“Tidak sedikit penutur bahasa Penginyongan yang merasa minder dengan logat mereka sendiri. Di berbagai ruang publik, aksen ini kadang mendapat respon yang meremehkan. Padahal, bahasa Penginyongan merupakan anugerah dan keunggulan — ia justru merepresentasikan akar Jawa yang paling otentik sebelum mengalami standardisasi Mataraman.” (“Not a few *Penginyongan* speakers feel inferior about their own accent. In various public spaces, this accent sometimes receives a dismissive response. Yet the *Penginyongan* language is a gift and an advantage — it represents the most authentic Javanese roots before Mataraman standardization”).⁶⁶

This reflection reflects “symbolic violence,” where dominance works through internalized values, leading communities to judge themselves by external standards. Declining regional language use and fewer young speakers confirm this impact, while weakened early pride undermines identity resilience.⁶⁷ Globalization intensifies this shift, making language revitalization inseparable from rebuilding cultural confidence. Behavioral interventions in schools help reshape perceptions, highlighting institutional roles in breaking cultural inferiority.⁶⁸

Globalization triggers shifts in how communities treat their own heritage. Revitalizing regional languages in the 21st century is inseparable from rebuilding cultural confidence. Behavioral psychology interventions in schools have proven effective in changing negative perceptions toward ancestral languages, highlighting the role of institutions in breaking cycles of cultural inferiority.

The UIN SAIZU Library acts as an agent of cultural resilience by reproducing collective memory and serving as a “space of trust.”⁶⁹ Identity reconstruction occurs through three paths: academic (research policies sustaining local knowledge), symbolic (use of Banyumasan identity markers), and communal (artifact donation movements). The “visium” concept complements this by envisioning future cultural sustainability.⁷⁰ The convergence of libraries, archives, and museums creates cultural laboratories, while academic-library synergy generates multiplier effects for identity well-being.⁷¹

Identity reconstruction is transmitted through two complementary paths. The first is the academic path, where mandatory research policies ensure local knowledge is constantly updated. The second is the communal path, through the artifact donation movement which transforms community members into active participants.

The movement also introduces the “visium” concept to complement the museum, a space that imagines *Penginyongan* culture 25 years into the future. This resonates with the idea of cultural memory being dual-oriented: backward for continuity and forward for sustainability. The convergence of libraries, archives, and museums in digital humanities opens roles for institutions as cultural laboratories. Creative spaces that help communities navigate tradition and innovation often redefine conventional library boundaries.

Representations through symbols also function as cultural resistance, strengthening solidarity. However, challenges remain, including limited institutional synergy due to funding constraints. Engaging youth is crucial; digital technology and AI, including 3D documentation of artifacts, can bridge local heritage with younger generations and ensure its continuity.⁷²

Conclusion

This study examines how *Penginyongan* cultural identity is represented through an Islamic library grounded in local wisdom. The findings reveal that the UIN SAIZU Library constructs this representation via three mechanisms: first, using multimodal collections

as semiotic anchors to legitimize marginalized local knowledge into institutional cultural capital; second, designing physical spaces that facilitate a dialogue between Islamic values and local wisdom, such as the fusion of Javanese limasan architecture with Arabic calligraphy; and third, serving as a cultural nexus where identity is reconstructed as an open, participatory process.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature by synthesizing representation and distinction theories to position the library as an active producer and distributor of indigenous cultural capital. Furthermore, it introduces a distinctive Southeast Asian institutional model where Islamic and indigenous values engage dialogically rather than confrontationally, challenging the assumption that religious settings constrain local cultural expression.

However, the study is limited by its single-site focus and reliance on two key informants, which warrants caution regarding generalizability. The current representation also prioritizes cultural elements consonant with Islamic values, potentially omitting more complex theological dimensions. Future research should involve multi-generational perspectives and comparative studies across analogous institutions to further illuminate the dynamics of indigenous representation in Islamic academic contexts.

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