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Implications of the Existence of Customary Rules for The Preservation of Local Wisdom Values

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Abstract:
Customary rules constitute an important element of community life, functioning to regulate social behavior while safeguarding cultural values transmitted across generations. Their continued existence plays a strategic role in maintaining and preserving local wisdom amid the challenges posed by modernization and globalization. This study aims to analyze the implications of the existence of customary rules for the preservation of local wisdom values within society. The study employs a qualitative approach using library research. Data were obtained by collecting scientific literature in the form of journal articles, scholarly articles, and documents relevant to the research topic. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis through the processes of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the existence of customary rules has positive implications for the preservation of local wisdom through social regulation, cultural value transmission, reinforcement of community identity, and environmental conservation. Customary rules provide a means of maintaining mutual cooperation, social solidarity, deliberation, collective responsibility, and respect for the environment, all of which constitute elements of community local wisdom. Despite challenges arising from technological development, globalization, and social change, customary rules continue to play an important role in sustaining local cultural values. Therefore, synergy among communities, customary institutions, younger generations, and the government is necessary to support the continuity of customary rules as an instrument for preserving local wisdom.

Keywords: Cultural preservation, customary rules, existence, indigenous communities, local wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is characterized by a diversity of cultures, ethnic groups, languages, customs, and value systems that have developed within community life. This diversity has led Indonesia to be recognized as a multicultural country with a rich cultural heritage distributed across its many regions (Islahuddin & Mukhtar, 2025). Such cultural diversity has generated various social systems and norms that serve as guidelines for community life, including customary

rules that continue to be maintained to the present day (Huda et al., 2025).

Within Indonesian society, customary rules are an inseparable part of social systems that have developed across generations. Customary law emerges and develops from within communities as a guideline for regulating social relations, communal life, and the resolution of various problems that arise within customary communities (Dominika & Hastuti, 2023). The existence of customary law demonstrates that communities possess their own mechanisms for maintaining social order in accordance with the values and culture embraced by their communities (O'Brien, 2021).

The continued existence of customary law plays an important role in sustaining the culture and local wisdom inherited from previous generations. Customary-law communities possess traditions, norms, and legal systems that have persisted across generations and have become distinctive identities that differentiate them from other social groups (Sahara & Susanto, 2023). In addition, customary institutions function as guardians of tradition and preservers of community cultural values, thereby helping to maintain local wisdom amid changing times (Syahrul et al., 2024; Yusri Ar et al., 2026).

Local wisdom represents traditional knowledge articulated through values, norms, and social practices that develop within a community (Sumarwati, 2022). These values emerge from communities' long-term experiences of interacting with both their natural and social environments (Daniel et al., 2022; Islahuddin & Mukhtar, 2025). Local wisdom functions not only as the cultural identity of a community but also as a guide for living harmoniously and sustainably.

Customary rules and local wisdom are closely interconnected because customary rules serve as instruments that regulate and simultaneously safeguard the continuity of local-wisdom values in community life (Rahayu et al., 2024). In principle, local wisdom can be inherited and learned by anyone because it contains universal values that remain relevant to social life (Akmal, 2021). Nevertheless, the continued application of these values within society requires the support of strong social systems, including customary rules that continue to be respected and practiced by the community.

Various studies indicate that customary rules make a substantial contribution to maintaining a balanced relationship between humans and the environment (Widianingsih et al., 2023). Among the Baduy indigenous community, behavior grounded in local wisdom influences patterns of natural-resource management, thereby helping to sustain environmental conservation (Jasmine et al., 2023). Local wisdom practiced by indigenous

JICeL
Journal of Islamic Culture and Literature
Volume 5, No. 2, August 2026
DOI:

communities has been shown to create a balance between the use of natural resources and sustainable environmental-conservation efforts (Abas et al., 2022; Chandra et al., 2022).

The role of customary rules in environmental conservation is also evident among the Baduy indigenous community, which uses customary law as a system of cultural control in everyday life. Values of simplicity, honesty, mutual cooperation, and harmony with nature remain key principles maintained by indigenous communities as part of their cultural identity (Purwanti, 2024). This condition demonstrates that customary rules function not only as instruments of social law but also as mechanisms for transmitting cultural values and local wisdom to subsequent generations (Kelly et al., 2024).

Beyond environmental concerns, the existence of customary rules also contributes to safeguarding community cultural identity. Customary traditions embody social values such as mutual cooperation, social solidarity, moral responsibility, and cooperation, which form foundations of community life (Fauzi et al., 2023; Hatapayo et al., 2026). In Javanese society, customary-law values such as gotong royong, unggah-ungguh, tepo seliro, and rukun continue to be maintained as guidelines for establishing harmonious social relations (Karang, 2025). These conditions demonstrate that customary rules function as a medium for transmitting cultural values that reinforce the collective identity of a community.

Nevertheless, globalization, modernization, and technological advancement present challenges to the continuity of customary rules and local-wisdom values (Yletyinen et al., 2022). Rapid social change has the potential to shift the role of customary law in community life (Dominika & Hastuti, 2023). Social change, technological development, and globalization may also lead to the loss of some forms of local wisdom that have long constituted the identity of indigenous communities (Sahara & Susanto, 2023). At the same time, various local traditions increasingly face the threat of erosion as younger generations show declining interest in their own regional cultures (Hatapayo et al., 2026; Mei, 2024).

Despite these challenges, various indigenous communities in Indonesia remain capable of maintaining customary rules as instruments of cultural preservation. Among the Tenganan Pegringsingan customary community in Bali, awig-awig continues to provide a foundation for natural-resource management and sustainable environmental conservation (Abhiseka et al., 2025; Robins et al., 2022). Balinese customary law also demonstrates a dynamic capacity to respond to social change, allowing it to remain relevant within modern community life (Ravensbergen, 2023).

Based on previous studies, research on customary law has

generally focused on environmental conservation, the existence of customary institutions, or the continuity of cultural traditions within particular communities. However, studies that specifically examine the implications of the existence of customary rules for the comprehensive preservation of local-wisdom values remain relatively limited. This study is therefore important because it analyzes how the continued existence of customary rules contributes to maintaining, transmitting, and preserving local-wisdom values amid the ongoing challenges of modernization and globalization.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method. The qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to understand and analyze the implications of the existence of customary rules for the preservation of local-wisdom values on the basis of relevant scholarly studies. Library research was conducted by examining, collecting, and analyzing various sources of literature related to customary law, customary rules, customary institutions, and local wisdom as they have developed within Indonesian society.

The data used in this study consist of secondary data obtained from scholarly journal articles, previous research, books, and other scientific documents addressing the existence of customary rules and the preservation of local wisdom. The literature includes studies of customary law among the Baduy, Balinese, Javanese, Adolang, and Banda Naira communities, as well as other research relevant to the topic. The sources were selected on the basis of topical relevance, source credibility, and their relationship to the focus of the study.

Data were collected through documentation by identifying, reading, reviewing, and categorizing information obtained from the selected literature. The collected data were then analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis by describing, comparing, and interpreting findings from previous studies in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role and implications of the existence of customary rules in sustaining local-wisdom values.

The stages of data analysis consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by selecting information relevant to the focus of the study. The data were subsequently presented in narrative form to describe the relationship between customary rules and the preservation of local-wisdom values. The final stage involved drawing conclusions from the synthesis of the analyzed literature, thereby producing an overview of the implications of the existence of customary rules for the continuity of local wisdom amid the challenges of modernization and globalization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

JICeL
Journal of Islamic Culture and Literature
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DOI:

The Existence of Customary Rules in Community Life

The literature review indicates that customary rules continue to maintain a strong presence in various indigenous communities in Indonesia. Their existence serves not only as a guideline for community behavior but also as a social instrument for maintaining order, solidarity, and the cultural identity of a community. Customary rules transmitted across generations are capable of shaping patterns of community life that are consistent with collectively held values.

Across various indigenous communities, customary rules are implemented through customary institutions and customary leaders who possess authority to safeguard prevailing norms and traditions. The existence of customary institutions is an important factor in maintaining local cultural values because such institutions act as a bridge between earlier generations and their successors. This finding is consistent with Yusri Ar et al. (2026), who found that the continuity of customary institutions is strongly influenced by community awareness, the commitment of customary stakeholders, and the consistent implementation of customary activities.

The continued existence of customary rules to the present day indicates that communities still regard them as part of their social and cultural identity. Despite changes brought about by modernization, many indigenous communities continue to maintain customary rules because they are considered capable of preserving balance in interpersonal relationships as well as relationships with the surrounding environment.

The Role of Customary Rules in Preserving Local-Wisdom Values

Based on the literature analysis, customary rules play a highly important role in the preservation of local-wisdom values. They function as a medium for transmitting values that shape ways of thinking, behaving, and acting within community life. Through customary rules, values such as mutual cooperation, social responsibility, solidarity, deliberation, and respect for the environment can continue to be maintained from one generation to the next.

The preservation of these values occurs not only through oral transmission but also through the social and cultural activities that communities continue to practice. Customary traditions that are periodically performed provide an effective means of instilling cultural values in younger generations, thereby preventing local wisdom from being interrupted by changing times.

The findings of this study indicate that the stronger the existence of customary rules within a community, the greater the opportunity for local-wisdom values to survive. Conversely, a weakening of the role of customary rules may reduce the cultural practices that have historically functioned as media for transmitting community cultural values.

This finding is consistent with Hatapayo et al. (2026), who state that customary traditions function not only as cultural heritage but also as a means of

maintaining collective community identity through the internalization of mutual cooperation, social solidarity, and moral responsibility.

Implications of Customary Rules for Environmental Preservation and Social Life

One tangible form of local wisdom maintained through customary rules is environmental management. Various indigenous communities in Indonesia possess rules that regulate the prudent use of natural resources in order to maintain ecosystem balance. These rules indirectly foster collective awareness of the importance of protecting the environment as an integral part of community life.

Among the Baduy indigenous community, for example, customary values governing the relationship between humans and nature are capable of creating sustainable patterns of natural-resource management. This indicates that customary rules are not oriented solely toward social interests but also possess an ecological dimension that contributes to environmental conservation. This finding supports Jasmine et al. (2023), who explain that indigenous local wisdom influences patterns of natural-resource management and thereby contributes to maintaining environmental sustainability.

In addition to environmental implications, customary rules also affect community social life. Their existence can strengthen social relationships through the cultivation of togetherness, mutual respect, and mutual cooperation. These values constitute important forms of social capital for creating harmonious and sustainable community life.

Challenges to Preserving Local Wisdom in the Modern Era

Although customary rules continue to play an important role in preserving local wisdom, their continuity is influenced by various challenges. Globalization and technological development have changed community mindsets and lifestyles, particularly among younger generations. Wider access to information has made it easier for communities to encounter and adopt external cultures that may differ from local cultural values.

These conditions may reduce younger generations' interest in learning and preserving customary traditions inherited from their ancestors. If not properly anticipated, this situation may result in a decline in local cultural practices that have long served as mechanisms for transmitting local-wisdom values.

Nevertheless, the literature reviewed in this study indicates that customary rules retain the capacity to adapt to changing times without losing their fundamental values. Such adaptation is evident in the efforts of indigenous communities to maintain cultural traditions while adjusting their implementation to continuously changing social conditions. Therefore, synergy among indigenous communities, customary institutions, government, and younger generations is an important factor in ensuring the future continuity of

Volume 5, No. 2, August 2026
DOI:

customary rules and local-wisdom values.

Based on the analysis, the existence of customary rules can be understood to have significant implications for the preservation of local-wisdom values. Customary rules function not only as systems of norms governing community life but also as mechanisms for transmitting cultural values, strengthening social identity, and preserving the environment. The continued implementation of customary rules contributes to sustaining local values such as mutual cooperation, social solidarity, deliberation, respect for the environment, and collective responsibility.

Accordingly, the stronger the existence of customary rules within a society, the greater the opportunity for local-wisdom values to remain alive and develop amid modernization and globalization. Conversely, the weakening of customary rules may reduce the effectiveness of cultural-value transmission processes that have long constituted a foundation of indigenous community life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the review, it can be concluded that the existence of customary rules has significant implications for the preservation of local-wisdom values in community life. Customary rules function not only as guidelines for regulating social relationships but also as a means of transmitting cultural values across generations. Through the continued existence of customary rules, local-wisdom values such as mutual cooperation, social solidarity, deliberation, collective responsibility, respect for the environment, and appreciation of tradition can be maintained and passed on to subsequent generations.

The findings also indicate that customary rules contribute to safeguarding community cultural identity while supporting the sustainability of environmental management. Customary institutions, customary leaders, and community participation are important factors in maintaining the continuity of customary rules amid ongoing social change. Although modernization, globalization, and technological advancement create challenges for the preservation of local culture, customary rules continue to demonstrate an ability to adapt without abandoning the fundamental values underlying indigenous community life.

Therefore, the preservation of customary rules should continue to be supported through the active involvement of communities, younger generations, customary institutions, and government so that local-wisdom values remain sustainable and relevant in responding to changing times. In this way, the existence of customary rules is not merely a cultural legacy of the past but also an important instrument for safeguarding identity, social resilience, and the sustainability of community life in the future.

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