

Unequal Learning Access and Distributed Intergenerational Learning in the Islamic *Atib Ko Ambai* Tradition

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ABSTRACT

Atib Ko Ambai brings communal remembrance of God, customary knowledge, and intergenerational learning into the religious life of a Malay Muslim community in Riau, Indonesia. Its continuity raises a question that participation alone cannot answer: who can access the relationships through which ritual knowledge becomes meaningful. This focused ethnography examines how Kubu Babussalam organizes access to learning. Six field visits between February and July 2026 combined observation, documentation, and interviews with ten purposively selected participants, including four young people with contrasting involvement. Triangulation of sources and methods, reflexive documentation, and examination of divergent evidence supported iterative coding, cross-participant comparison, and theoretical interpretation. A Community of Practice informed the analysis of participation and access, while Freirean dialogical education highlighted opportunities for questioning and interpretation. Knowledge circulated among customary and religious leaders, elders, and families, yet the four youth cases encountered different combinations of invitations, responsibilities, and explanations. Limited involvement could coexist with willingness to learn. The study develops distributed intergenerational learning as a case-specific analytical construct connecting the distribution of pedagogical functions with learners' access to them. Experiential-imitative and dialogical-intentional transmission describe complementary analytical mechanisms, with evidence for the latter comprising both explanatory encounters and participants' requests for further dialogue. Domestic conversation and digital documentation appeared as supporting pathways. The findings suggest that sustaining this Islamic tradition involves making its religious and cultural meanings accessible alongside maintaining its performance.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) remains viable only when communities continue to practice, interpret, and transmit its knowledge, skills, and meanings to succeeding generations. From a living-heritage perspective, transmission is integral to how a practice retains social meaning, rather than an activity appended after preservation. The continuity of an Islamic tradition involves more than repeating its visible form. It also depends on how people learn the recitations, responsibilities, relationships, and interpretations that make participation meaningful. *Atib Ko Ambai*, practiced in Kubu Babussalam, Rokan Hilir, Riau, offers a setting for examining this educational problem. Earlier research describes a communal ritual involving dhikr, or remembrance of God, prayer, grave visitation, and collective activity associated with river travel. It connects the practice with respect for earlier religious figures, social solidarity, and relations between Islam and adat, the community's

customary norms.¹ Understanding its continuity therefore requires attention to the people who can enter these relationships and learn from them.

Existing scholarship offers several explanations of *Atib Ko Ambai*. Badri and Yesicha examine ritual communication, including language, social roles, and norms governing interaction.² Wulandari considers tahlil, the affirmation of God's oneness, through scholarly interpretation and local understanding.³ Tambunan et al. investigate participants' religious experience and the communal meanings of dhikr.⁴ Ma'wa et al. describe changes in performance and understanding alongside concerns about declining interest.⁵ These studies establish the tradition's religious and social significance. They provide less detailed comparison of the opportunities through which differently positioned young people acquire its knowledge. Reduced involvement may warrant concern, but it does not by itself establish whether someone rejects the tradition, lacks time, receives little information, or has limited contact with those able to explain it.

This distinction matters for studying Islamic education beyond formal institutions. Eickelman connects Islamic education with the social reproduction of culturally valued knowledge.⁶ Sahin argues for an educational inquiry that attends critically to the relationships and practices through which religious formation occurs.⁷ In Indonesian settings, Yusuf et al. analyze community and social structure through the Baritan tradition,⁸ while Maharani et al. examine Islamic value formation through educational activities for Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia.⁹ These different settings show why collective religious life deserves educational attention. They also raise a more specific question for *Atib Ko Ambai*. How does a shared religious tradition become differently accessible to members of the same younger generation?

Learning through participation is well established. Lave and Wenger explain how access to experienced practitioners and shared activity supports legitimate peripheral participation.¹⁰ Wenger develops the relationship between learning, practice, and identity.¹¹ Studies of informal learning likewise show how observation and contribution can organize

¹ Ali Badri and Chelsy Yesicha, "Komunikasi Ritual Ziarah Kubur 'Atib Ko Ambai,'" *Medium: Jurnal Ilmiah Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi* 7, no. 1 (2019): 40–52. [Google](#)

² Badri and Yesicha, "Komunikasi Ritual Ziarah Kubur 'Atib Ko Ambai.'" [Google](#)

³ W. Wulandari, "Zikir Tahlil Dalam Praktik Atib Koambai Pada Masyarakat Kecamatan Kubu Babussalam, Kabupaten Rokan Hilir, Riau Dalam Perspektif Ulama Tafsir," *Yasin: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Sosial Budaya* 3, no. 5 (2023): 1051–63, <https://doi.org/10.58578/yasin.v3i5.1549>.

⁴ M. A. Tambunan et al., "The Atib Koambai Tradition in Riau and the Ethos of Dhikr: A Phenomenological Study of Local Islamic Interpretation," *Jurnal Indo-Islamika* 15, no. 2 (2025): 333–48, <https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v15i2.46867>.

⁵ C. K. Ma'wa et al., "The Existence of the Atib Koambai Cultural Tradition in the Babussalam Rokan Hilir Community," *Journal of Education Technology Information Social Sciences and Health* 2, no. 2 (2023): 1509–12, <https://doi.org/10.57235/jetish.v2i2.632>.

⁶ Dale F. Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and Its Social Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20, no. 4 (1978): 485–516, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500012536>.

⁷ Abdullah Sahin, "Critical Issues in Islamic Education Studies: Rethinking Islamic and Western Liberal Secular Values of Education," *Religions* 9, no. 11 (2018): 335, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9110335>.

⁸ Muhammad Yusuf et al., "Tradisi Baritan Masyarakat Muslim Pedesaan Wonosobo: Dialektika Komunitas-Struktur Perspektif Victor Turner," *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 147–68, <https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v2i2.597>.

⁹ Arfi Putri Maharani et al., "Internalizing Islamic Values in a Multicultural Context: A Case Study of Identity Preservation among Indonesian Migrant Children in Malaysia," *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2026): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v5i1.1876>.

¹⁰ Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>.

¹¹ Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). [Google](#)

learning within family and community activities.¹² In heritage research, Lee traces exchanges of tacit and explicit knowledge around Cantonese opera,¹³ and Abdul Aziz et al. examine relationships among participation, cultural knowledge, and heritage conservation in Melaka.¹⁴ These contributions support an account of cultural learning grounded in social engagement rather than information transfer alone.

Participation, however, does not guarantee equivalent opportunity. Fuller et al. demonstrate the importance of learners' histories and the conditions of practice,¹⁵ while Roberts identifies limitations in accounts that understate power and difference within communities.¹⁶ Billett distinguishes what a setting makes available from how individuals engage with it.¹⁷ A community can therefore possess extensive cultural knowledge without making all of that knowledge equally reachable. Barron's learning ecology perspective helps trace learning across relationships, activities, and settings.¹⁸ This inquiry adopts a narrower focus within that wider ecology, examining which pedagogical functions particular people and spaces provide and how young participants access them.

Intergenerational transmission also extends beyond a single encounter between an elder and a younger learner. Arbi et al. identify genealogical relationships and informal apprenticeship in the transmission of the Gendong dance in Riau.¹⁹ Hausknecht et al. show how intergenerational digital storytelling can bring Elders, younger participants, cultural knowledge, and media production together.²⁰ The comparative relevance lies in organizing relationships rather than assuming these traditions share the same meanings. Digital documentation may widen exposure, but evaluating participation requires attention to young people's capacities, roles, and influence, as well as their access to technology.²¹

Community of Practice provides the principal analytical framework for this study. It highlights legitimate entry, interaction with knowledgeable members, practical responsibility, and access to a shared repertoire. Freire's dialogical education has a more specific supporting function. It helps examine whether younger participants can ask questions, receive

¹² Barbara Rogoff et al., "Firsthand Learning Through Intent Participation," *Annual Review of Psychology* 54, no. 1 (2003): 175–203, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145118>.

¹³ L. Y. S. Lee, "Community of Practice: The Making of Knowledge Dynamic in Intangible Cultural Heritage," *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality* 17, no. 3 (2022): 338–50, <https://doi.org/10.1108/CBTH-11-2021-0278>.

¹⁴ Nurul Aini Abdul Aziz et al., "Community Participation in the Importance of Living Heritage Conservation and Its Relationships with the Community-Based Education Model towards Creating a Sustainable Community in Melaka UNESCO World Heritage Site," *Sustainability* 15, no. 3 (2023): 1935, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15031935>.

¹⁵ Alison Fuller et al., "Learning as Peripheral Participation in Communities of Practice: A Reassessment of Key Concepts in Workplace Learning," *British Educational Research Journal* 31, no. 1 (2005): 49–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192052000310029>.

¹⁶ Joanne Roberts, "Limits to Communities of Practice," *Journal of Management Studies* 43, no. 3 (2006): 623–39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00618.x>.

¹⁷ Stephen Billett, "Workplace Participatory Practices: Conceptualising Workplaces as Learning Environments," *Journal of Workplace Learning* 16, no. 6 (2004): 312–24, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13665620410550295>.

¹⁸ Brigid Barron, "Interest and Self-Sustained Learning as Catalysts of Development: A Learning Ecology Perspective," *Human Development* 49, no. 4 (2006): 193–224, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000094368>.

¹⁹ Arbi Arbi et al., "From Sacred Ritual to Public Performance: Genealogical Transmission and Cultural Hybridity of the Gendong Dance in the Akit Community, Indonesia," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 9, no. 1 (2025): 93–108, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v9i1.38073>.

²⁰ Simone Hausknecht et al., "Sharing Indigenous Knowledge through Intergenerational Digital Storytelling: Design of a Workshop Engaging Elders and Youth," *Educational Gerontology* 47, no. 7 (2021): 285–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2021.1927484>.

²¹ Y. Zhang et al., "An Assessment Framework for Digital Participatory Practices Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage Management," *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 70 (2024): 408–21, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2024.10.014>.

explanations, and interpret inherited meanings.²² This use does not presume that the community is oppressive or that religious authority should be displaced. It distinguishes participation in a practice from opportunities to discuss its significance.

The article develops distributed intergenerational learning as an analytical construct grounded in this case. It connects the distribution of pedagogical functions across knowledge holders, social spaces, practices, and supporting resources with the unequal access described by four youth participants. The construct does not claim that distributed learning or unequal participation is newly discovered. It specifies how these processes intersect in the transmission of an Islamic community tradition. The study aims to explain how *Atib Ko Ambai* knowledge is learned across generations, how access differs among the four youth cases, and how experiential participation and deliberate explanation contribute to those learning opportunities.

The participation of young people needs to be examined within this relational process. Heritage studies frequently attribute declining youth participation to waning interest, changing orientations, or the pressures of modernization. Such explanations do not always distinguish attitudes toward a tradition from access to the learning processes through which that tradition becomes meaningful. Hu and Md Noor, for instance, distinguish knowledge, attitudes, and practices in their study of young people's engagement with intangible cultural heritage.²³ This distinction matters: a young person may recognize a tradition and hold a positive attitude toward it while still lacking sustained contact with knowledge holders, opportunities to assume a role, spaces to ask questions, or invitations to participate. From a Community of Practice perspective, this concerns legitimate entry points and participation trajectories, since proximity to both the practice and its experienced members shapes the learning opportunities available to newcomers.

Digital mediation adds a further pathway to this transmission ecology. Documentation, social media, short-form video, and digital storytelling can extend access to records of cultural practice and to community narratives. Zhang, Ikiz Kaya, and van Wesemael emphasize the importance of participatory design when young people engage with heritage through digital practices,²⁴ while Lin and Chen show that heritage-related short videos can be associated with young people's cultural identification.²⁵ Digitalization, however, does not produce deep learning on its own: cultural knowledge is often tacit, embodied, relational, and context-dependent. Digital media are therefore better understood as infrastructure that can support, rather than replace, interaction with family members, elders, customary leaders, and religious leaders.

The *Atib Ko Ambai* tradition of Kubu Babussalam, Rokan Hilir, Riau, offers a productive context for examining these issues. The tradition brings together dhikr, prayer, customary rules, social relations, respect for earlier community figures, collective memory, and intergenerational transmission of procedures. Previous studies have addressed the history and ritual communication of *Atib Ko Ambai* and its religious dimensions; Wulandari, Tambunan et al. community participation and preservation; shifts in its continuity and

²² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 50th Anniversary Edition* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018). [Google](#)

²³ J. Hu and S. Md Noor, "Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Intangible Cultural Heritage among Youth in Sichuan, China: A Cross-Sectional Study," *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* 16, no. 4 (2026): 907–28, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-10-2023-0174>.

²⁴ Zhang et al., "An Assessment Framework for Digital Participatory Practices Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage Management." <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2024.10.014>.

²⁵ H. Lin and Q. Chen, "The Associative Pathways Linking Intangible Cultural Heritage Short Videos to Youth Rural Cultural Identity: An Experiment Based on Eye-Tracking and Structural Equation Modeling," *Frontiers in Psychology* 17 (2026): 1831646, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1831646>.

participants' orientations; and its promotion through social media.²⁶ These studies illuminate important facets of the tradition, yet none places its educational mechanisms at the center of analysis: how community members learn, who holds which forms of knowledge, how that knowledge moves, and why some young people gain stronger access to learning than others.

B. METHODS

The study used focused ethnography to examine the social organization of learning access within *Atib Ko Ambai* in Kubu Babussalam, Rokan Hilir, Indonesia. This design suited a bounded educational question explored through concentrated, repeated encounters rather than continuous residence. Knoblauch identifies short field visits and intensive engagement with a specific social practice as characteristic of focused ethnography.²⁷ Higginbottom et al. similarly emphasize a clearly delimited cultural setting and research problem.²⁸ The unit of analysis was the arrangement of relationships and opportunities through which ritual knowledge became accessible. Individual participants provided contrasting positions within that arrangement.

Fieldwork took place between February and July 2026 across six visits and involved approximately 150 hours of observation. Engagement encompassed routine community activity, family and intergenerational interaction, ritual preparation and performance, youth interaction, informal encounters, and follow-up observation. Sites included homes, local prayer spaces, preparation and ritual settings, community meeting places, and village institutional settings. Observations attended to task allocation, interaction with experienced participants, demonstrations, questions and explanations, recitation and prayer, and the use of mobile phones for documentation. These settings made learning before and after the ceremonial event visible.

We purposively selected ten participants for their roles in the transmission process. Table 1 identifies their roles without implying demographic representation. The two active youth participants repeatedly joined preparation or performance, assumed concrete responsibilities, and interacted with family members or recognized knowledge holders. The two less-active participants knew of the tradition but described infrequent involvement or more peripheral positions. Classification drew on reported participation histories and was compared with observations and accounts from other participants. It did not measure the strength of religious commitment or establish fixed types of young people.

²⁶ Eka Prasetawati and Habib Shulton Asnawi, "Wawasan Islam Nusantara; Pribumisasi Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Di Indonesia," *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 3, no. 1 (2018): 219–58, <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v3i1.283>.

²⁷ Hubert Knoblauch, "Focused Ethnography," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* Vol 6 (September 2005): No 3 (2005): The State of the Art of Qualitative Research in Europe, <https://doi.org/10.17169/FQS-6.3.20>.

²⁸ Gina Higginbottom et al., "Guidance on Performing Focused Ethnographies with an Emphasis on Healthcare Research," *The Qualitative Report*, ahead of print, January 14, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2013.1550>.

Table 1. Participant Positions Represented in The Study

Participant codes	Number	Position relevant to the inquiry
TA-1	1	Customary leader with procedural and customary knowledge
AG-1	1	Religious leader with knowledge of prayer, dhikr, and religious interpretation
ST-1 and ST-2	2	Elders contributing lived experience and collective memory
GM-A1 and GM-A2	2	Young participants with recurring involvement and practical responsibilities
GM-N1 and GM-N2	2	Young participants with less frequent involvement or peripheral positions
PD-1	1	Government representative involved in institutional facilitation
PR-1	1	Female family member contributing an account of domestic transmission

Sample adequacy rested on the specificity of the research aim, the relevance of these positions, the depth of interviews, and their combination with repeated observation. This rationale follows information power rather than a numerical claim of saturation.²⁹ The four youth cases support a contextual comparison, not an estimate of the prevalence of unequal access. The single domestic account likewise cannot establish a general pattern of women's participation.

Interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and took place in participants' homes, prayer spaces, or the village hall. They were conducted in the Kubu Malay variety and recorded on a mobile phone with permission. The semi-structured guide addressed initial encounters with the tradition, sources of knowledge, involvement, explanations of procedures and meanings, relationships between generations, barriers to participation, and views on documentation. Observational and documentary materials complemented these accounts. The article presents English quotations, while participant codes maintain continuity between quotations and analytical claims.

The lead researcher's familiarity with Rokan Hilir supported access and contextual understanding, but also risked treating local meanings as self-evident. Reflexive notes recorded after visits distinguished descriptions from preliminary interpretations and identified matters requiring further questioning. Participants explained familiar practices rather than allowing the researcher's prior knowledge to stand in for their accounts. This position combined cultural proximity with analytical distance, consistent with Dwyer and Buckle's account of the relationship between insider and outsider positions.³⁰

Analysis moved iteratively between interview material, field descriptions, reflexive notes, and documentation. Initial coding identified activities and conditions close to the empirical material, including accompanying parents, observing experienced participants, receiving invitations, taking on responsibilities, asking questions, and lacking information. Related codes were then grouped around access to people, settings, responsibilities, and explanation. This movement from coding to interpreting patterns aligns with the flexible

²⁹ Kirsti Malterud et al., "Sample Size in Qualitative Interview Studies: Guided by Information Power," *Qualitative Health Research* 26, no. 13 (2016): 1753-60, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>.

³⁰ Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009): 54-63, <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105>.

thematic approach discussed by Braun and Clarke.³¹ It did not involve calculating theme frequencies as measures of importance.

Comparisons examined how these conditions differed across participant positions, with particular attention to GM-A1, GM-A2, GM-N1, and GM-N2. We compared accounts of participation with descriptions of understanding, belonging, work, time, and willingness to become involved. Divergent evidence prompted reconsideration of interpretations. For example, willingness to join despite limited participation remained evidence against equating low involvement with rejection. The analysis revisited the associated interview and observational material rather than assigning that account to a predetermined deficit category. Theory informed interpretation through a sequence of explicit analytical questions. Community of Practice directed attention to who could enter activities, receive responsibilities, interact with experienced members, and encounter religious and customary repertoires. Freirean dialogical education focused on opportunities for explanation, questioning, and interpretation. These perspectives sensitized the inquiry without supplying fixed coding categories. Their role became more pronounced as they compared and interpreted descriptive patterns. The researchers developed experiential-imitative and dialogical-intentional transmission to distinguish overlapping emphases in the material. The former concerned proximity, observation, participation, and repetition. The latter concerned deliberate explanation and opportunities for dialogue, including opportunities participants said they needed. Distributed intergenerational learning was developed through the subsequent synthesis of these patterns.

Table 2. Selected Steps in Reasoning Visible

Empirical material	Initial focus	Analytical interpretation
TA-1 described learning by watching parents and gradually joining the practice.	Accompanying, observing, joining, repeating	Experiential-imitative transmission through family proximity
GM-N1 expressed willingness to participate if explanation and invitation were available.	Limited understanding alongside willingness and conditional entry	Low involvement did not establish rejection of the tradition
GM-N2 described uncertainty about how to ask questions.	Difficulty entering explanatory conversation	Access included permission and confidence to seek interpretation
PR-1 described discussion at home after the ritual.	Knowledge circulating beyond the event	A domestic pathway supported by one participant's account
Observations recorded mobile phones being used for photographs and video.	Recording and retaining representations of practice	Documentation as supporting infrastructure, without evidence of independent online learning

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Relational Transmission and Experiential Socialization in *Atib Ko Ambai*

Atib Ko Ambai emerged in the field material as a religious and customary practice learned through relationships rather than a designated course or a single teacher. Participants encountered it by accompanying family members, helping with preparation, observing experienced practitioners, joining the ritual, and discussing its meanings. These encounters connected practical responsibilities with prayer, dhikr, local memory, and expectations about appropriate conduct. The practice's educational significance lay in these connections,

³¹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>.

although access to them differed among participants. TA-1 located learning within repeated family participation, *"We learned from our parents by watching them from childhood. There were no special classes. We joined in, watched how things were done, and gradually came to understand"*.³²

ST-1 similarly recalled learning through accompanying parents without initially recognizing the activity as learning. During preparation, observations showed that younger participants carrying practical responsibilities spent time alongside experienced members, watched tasks being performed, and received situational guidance. Practical involvement created occasions to encounter knowledge as it was being used. Other young people remained physically present but peripheral to these exchanges. They could see an activity without taking responsibility for it or joining the conversation. Attendance consequently offered a different level of access from supported participation. Figure 1 illustrates the shared physical setting of participation, showing children and adults alongside one another aboard boats. Such proximity provides a context for observational learning, although the photographs alone cannot establish participants' access to guidance or their understanding of the practice.



Figure 1. Shared settings of Participation in Atib Ko Ambai

2. Role-Based Knowledge Differentiation across Customary and Religious Authorities

Knowledge was differentiated across social roles. TA-1 contributed explanations of customary procedure, AG-1 of prayer and religious meaning, and the elders of lived experience and collective memory. Family relationships provided early exposure and opportunities for subsequent conversation. The government representative described a facilitating position rather than authority over ritual interpretation. The pattern suggested that learning required access to several kinds of expertise, with different people able to explain different aspects of the practice. It did not establish an exhaustive inventory of everything any individual knew. PR-1 described a route through which knowledge continued to circulate outside the principal event, *"Women may not always be present in the main part of the ritual, but they can still learn through the family. After the event, people usually talk about what happened at home."*³³

This account identifies family conversation as a possible continuation of ritual learning. It does not establish how common that route was, whether women had equivalent access to

³² Interview with TA-1 (Customary Leader), 18 February 2026

³³ Interview with PR-1 (Female Family Participant), 20 April 2026

religious explanation, or how domestic learning differed across households. Its analytical value is to show that the visible ritual setting did not exhaust the reported spaces of transmission.

The four youth cases illustrated different combinations of access. GM-A1 and GM-A2 described recurring involvement, family connection, practical responsibility, and contact with knowledgeable community members. GM-N1 and GM-N2 described more peripheral involvement, limited information or invitations, competing demands, and fewer opportunities for explanation. Work and time appeared among the constraints, including for active participants. The comparison therefore concerned configurations of opportunity rather than a simple division between committed and uninterested youth. GM-A1 connected participation with belonging, *"I feel part of the community because I take part in this activity. If young people do not join in, eventually they will no longer know the tradition"*.³⁴ GM-N1 expressed a different position, *"I know the tradition exists, but I do not really understand what it means. If someone explained it and invited me, I would actually like to take part"*.³⁵

The latter account is consequential because limited participation coexisted with willingness to learn. Invitation and explanation were described as conditions under which involvement might become possible. This does not show that an invitation would necessarily produce sustained participation. It does show why behavior alone is an inadequate measure of this participant's orientation towards the tradition. Across the four cases, broader access occurred alongside more detailed accounts of meaning and stronger expressed belonging among active participants. The material does not establish which came first or whether access, understanding, and belonging reinforced one another over time.

Learning also involved interpreting Islamic and customary meanings. AG-1 explained the significance of moving beyond procedural familiarity.

What matters is that young people do not only know how to take part, but also understand the values within it, remembering God, praying, respecting their parents, and maintaining good relations with the community.³⁶

TA-1 described custom and religion as lived together in the community. Taken together, these accounts identify prayer, remembrance, respect, and social responsibility as learning content. They are participants' articulations of the tradition's significance, not independent evidence that every participant acquired those values or acted on them. A learner might become familiar with ritual movements and sequences while having fewer occasions to discuss their religious or historical meanings. The distinction between procedural access and interpretive access therefore arose within the empirical material.

3. Dual Modes of Transmission: Experiential-Imitative and Dialogical-Intentional Dynamics

Older and younger participants also identified limits to relying on prolonged proximity alone. ST-2 recalled watching and joining parents in earlier life, but suggested that more explanation was now needed because children were not always alongside them. This was a retrospective account of changing experience, not a longitudinal measurement of community change. GM-N2 articulated a present difficulty in entering dialogue, *"Sometimes we want to ask questions, but we are not sure how. If there were activities specifically for young people, it might be easier to ask"*.³⁷

³⁴ Interview with GM-A1 (Active Youth), 18 March 2026

³⁵ Interview with GM-N1 (Less Active Youth), 18 February 2026

³⁶ Interview with AG-1 (Religious Leader), 23 May 2026

³⁷ Interview with GM-N2 (Less Active Youth), 18 February 2026

The analysis distinguishes experiential-imitative transmission from dialogical-intentional transmission within these accounts. Experiential-imitative transmission describes learning through proximity, observation, participation, and repetition. Dialogical-intentional transmission describes deliberate efforts to make meanings discussable through explanation and questioning. Evidence for the latter included both reported explanatory encounters and requests for opportunities that were not yet readily available. The two labels therefore identify analytical emphases with uneven empirical support, rather than two fully established programs or sequential stages. Observation could involve conversation, and explanation could occur during practical activity.

Mobile phones were observed being used to photograph and record activities. Such documentation preserved representations of the practice and suggested possible resources for later explanation. The material did not trace who subsequently viewed the recordings, how they interpreted them, or whether viewing altered participation. Digital media consequently occupy a supporting position in this account. Table 3 brings together the practice's defining features and the distribution of knowledge described by participants. It accounts for what *Atib Ko Ambai* comprises before the discussion turns to its broader educational significance.

Table 3. *Atib Ko Ambai* as a Religious Practice and an Intergenerational Learning Setting

Dimension	Features of the practice	Evidence and boundary
Nature of the tradition	Communal Islamic remembrance and prayer intertwined with local customary practice and memory	Leader and elder accounts. Earlier research documents grave visitation and river-based collective activity
Implementation	Preparation, ritual participation, and subsequent conversation provide different occasions for learning	Observations across these phases. This is not a complete ceremonial manual.
Participants and responsibilities	Customary and religious leaders guide different aspects, elders contribute experience, and younger participants enter with varying responsibilities	Accounts across the ten participants and observations of involvement
Knowledge held within the community	Customary procedures, prayer and dhikr, religious interpretation, local memory, and norms of conduct are associated with different holders	TA-1, AG-1, and elder accounts. Categories indicate observed specialization, not exclusive ownership.
Learning spaces	Ritual settings, preparation activities, homes, and informal conversation connect practice with explanation	Observations and participant accounts. The domestic pathway is supported particularly by PR-1.
Conditions of learner access	Family proximity, information, invitation, responsibility, time, and opportunities to ask questions shape contact with knowledge	Comparison of GM-A1, GM-A2, GM-N1, and GM-N2
Religious and social meanings	Remembrance of God, prayer, respect for parents, relations between adat and Islam, and community responsibility	Participants' stated meanings rather than independently measured learning outcomes

Dimension	Features of the practice	Evidence and boundary
Supporting resources	Institutional facilitation and photographs or video can support organization and documentation	PD-1 and observations. Online learning effects were not investigated.

4. Public Ritual Continuity versus Dispersed Individual Understanding

The findings extend discussion of *Atib Ko Ambai* from the meanings a ritual carries to the relationships through which people can learn those meanings. Badri and Yesicha make communicative roles and norms visible,³⁸ while Wulandari examines religious understandings of tahlil.³⁹ Tambunan et al. explain the shared religious experience of dhikr.⁴⁰ The present material is compatible with these accounts but qualifies the level at which shared meaning can be assumed. A tradition may offer recognized communal meanings while individual participants have unequal opportunities to hear them explained. Its public continuity and the distribution of understanding therefore require separate examination.

Community of Practice clarifies why practical responsibilities mattered. Learning occurred through mutual engagement with experienced members and access to a repertoire of actions, recitations, stories, and norms.⁴¹ Legitimate peripheral participation helps interpret observation as a possible route into deeper involvement rather than a deficient position in itself.⁴² The educational issue arises when participants have few opportunities to move beyond watching. In these cases, invitations, guidance, and responsibilities made the difference between sharing a setting and entering its learning relationships. The findings do not establish deliberate exclusion by leaders. They identify unevenly available routes into practice.

This distinction should not be presented as a correction to a theory that ignored access. Fuller et al. already demonstrate that participation depends on contextual conditions and learners' prior experience.⁴³ Roberts questions assumptions of harmonious communities,⁴⁴ and Handley et al. emphasize the heterogeneity of participation, identity, and practice within wider social contexts.⁴⁵ *Atib Ko Ambai* gives these concerns a specific religious and educational form. Access to customary procedure, devotional explanation, and historical memory involved different relationships. Recognition as a community member did not ensure equal access to all of them.

The comparison with Billett is useful because it distinguishes opportunities offered by a social setting from individuals' engagement with those opportunities.⁴⁶ His workplace analysis concerns a different institutional context, so it cannot be transferred directly to ritual life. It nevertheless helps clarify why the youth accounts cannot be explained solely by either personal interest or community provision. GM-N1 expressed willingness but identified a

³⁸ Badri and Yesicha, "Komunikasi Ritual Ziarah Kubur 'Atib Ko Ambai.'" Google

³⁹ Wulandari, "Zikir Tahlil Dalam Praktik Atib Koambai Pada Masyarakat Kecamatan Kubu Babussalam, Kabupaten Rokan Hilir, Riau Dalam Perspektif Ulama Tafsir." <https://doi.org/10.58578/yasin.v3i5.1549>.

⁴⁰ Tambunan et al., "The Atib Koambai Tradition in Riau and the Ethos of Dhikr: A Phenomenological Study of Local Islamic Interpretation." <https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v15i2.46867>.

⁴¹ Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Google

⁴² Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>.

⁴³ Fuller et al., "Learning as Peripheral Participation in Communities of Practice." <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192052000310029>.

⁴⁴ Roberts, "Limits to Communities of Practice." <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00618.x>.

⁴⁵ Karen Handley et al., "Within and Beyond Communities of Practice: Making Sense of Learning through Participation, Identity and Practice," *Journal of Management Studies* 43, no. 3 (2006): 641–53, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00605.x>.

⁴⁶ Billett, "Workplace Participatory Practices: Conceptualising Workplaces as Learning Environments." <https://doi.org/10.1108/13665620410550295>.

missing invitation and explanation, while other accounts included work and time constraints. Access was a plausible explanation. Competing priorities, mobility, or genuine disinterest remain possible explanations beyond what these four cases establish.

5. Distributed Intergenerational Learning as an Analytical Framework for Heritage Transmission

Distributed intergenerational learning brings this relationship into a single analytical account. The construct describes how pedagogical functions are dispersed across knowledge holders, spaces, transmission practices, and supporting resources, then examines how particular learners gain access to those functions. Customary leaders, religious leaders, elders, and families were not interchangeable sources. Practical preparation, ritual participation, and family conversation did not offer identical learning possibilities. The distinctive analytical move connects this differentiation to the contrasting opportunities young participants encountered. Distributed knowledge, in this case, did not imply equally accessible learning.

The construct remains closely related to established approaches. Barron's learning ecology examines learning across settings and relationships, including learners' own pursuit of opportunities.⁴⁷ Community of Practice explains participation, identity, and learning within social practice. Intergenerational research foregrounds relationships between people with different experience and generational positions. Distributed intergenerational learning draws these concerns together around a bounded question of access to particular pedagogical functions. Its value depends on whether that focus clarifies an empirical case. The present study offers such an interpretation for *Atib Ko Ambai*, not evidence that the construct outperforms these broader frameworks.

Comparative heritage research supports this interpretation while indicating its limits. Lee's study of Cantonese opera foregrounds the creation and exchange of tacit and explicit knowledge among practitioners.⁴⁸ Abdul Aziz et al. examine community participation and heritage knowledge in Melaka.⁴⁹ Their settings and methods differ from this focused ethnography, but both show how participation supports cultural continuity. *Atib Ko Ambai* adds a comparison within a small group of learners who inhabit one community yet reach different parts of its knowledge resources. Arbi et al. similarly show how genealogical relationships and informal apprenticeship sustain Gendong dance knowledge.⁵⁰ The comparison suggests that family connection can support continuity while raising questions about access for people without sustained proximity to knowledgeable relatives.

Both transmission mechanisms require careful attention. Rogoff et al. explain how attentive observation and contribution support learning in shared endeavors,⁵¹ while Rogoff situates these practices within the organization of family and community participation.⁵² These accounts help explain the educational importance of accompanying parents and undertaking practical responsibilities. However, Paradise and Rogoff caution against treating such learning as essentially nonverbal.⁵³ The distinction developed here is therefore not

⁴⁷Barron, "Interest and Self-Sustained Learning as Catalysts of Development." <https://doi.org/10.1159/000094368>.

⁴⁸ Lee, "Community of Practice: The Making of Knowledge Dynamic in Intangible Cultural Heritage." <https://doi.org/10.1108/CBTH-11-2021-0278>.

⁴⁹ Abdul Aziz et al., "Community Participation in the Importance of Living Heritage Conservation and Its Relationships with the Community-Based Education Model towards Creating a Sustainable Community in Melaka UNESCO World Heritage Site." <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15031935>.

⁵⁰ Arbi et al., "From Sacred Ritual to Public Performance." <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v9i1.38073>.

⁵¹ Rogoff et al., "Firsthand Learning Through Intent Participation." <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145118>.

⁵² Barbara Rogoff, "Learning by Observing and Pitching In to Family and Community Endeavors: An Orientation," *Human Development* 57, nos. 2–3 (2014): 69–81, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000356757>.

⁵³ Rogoff, "Learning by Observing and Pitching In to Family and Community Endeavors." <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145118>.

between silent imitation and verbal instruction. It concerns the relative emphasis on learning through recurring participation and making interpretation deliberately available, with both often occurring together.

Freire's dialogical education sharpens the latter issue.⁵⁴ GM-N2's uncertainty about asking questions concerns access to an interpretive relationship, not simply lack of information. A knowledgeable person may be present while a learner remains unsure whether or how to approach them. Dialogue requires an occasion for the learner's question to enter the exchange. Applied cautiously, this perspective suggests that explanation should respond to younger participants' concerns rather than assume that procedural exposure is sufficient. It does not establish that a Freirean intervention occurred, that critical consciousness developed, or that these interviews alone can characterize the community's authority relations.

6. Contextualizing *Atib Ko Ambai* within Indonesian Islamic Pedagogies and *Adat-Islam* Dynamics

The religious content of these exchanges is central to the contribution. AG-1 linked learning with remembrance of God, prayer, respect, and community relations. Sahin's call for conceptually clear educational inquiry is relevant because ritual continuity and educational formation are related without being identical.⁵⁵ Eickelman likewise highlights the social organization through which culturally valued knowledge is reproduced.⁵⁶ In this case, religious explanation was held within relationships carrying recognized authority. Broadening access would involve enabling younger members to enter those relationships and discuss their meanings, while respecting the community's own understanding of the practice.

The findings also offer a point of comparison within Indonesian Islamic studies. Yusuf et al. interpret Baritan through relations between community and social structure.⁵⁷ Here, the question concerns differences in access within an apparently shared communal setting. Maharani et al. describe Islamic value formation through curricular and non-formal activities in a migrant learning center.⁵⁸ *Atib Ko Ambai* involves a less formally organized arrangement, in which learning responsibilities are dispersed, and invitations may be implicit. Together, these studies suggest a useful distinction between identifying the religious values present in an activity and examining the arrangements through which participants can encounter, question, and understand them. The current data support the latter inquiry without measuring successful value internalization.

Digital mediation should remain proportionate to the evidence. Hausknecht et al. describe a deliberately organized intergenerational storytelling workshop, in which media production is connected to relationships with Elders.⁵⁹ Nisa examines religious communication among Indonesian Muslim youth through online and offline research.⁶⁰ Both studies investigate processes that observing a recording device alone cannot establish. Zhang et al. likewise assess digital heritage participation through capacities, decision-making, and

⁵⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 50th Anniversary Edition*. Google

⁵⁵ Sahin, "Critical Issues in Islamic Education Studies."

⁵⁶ Eickelman, "The Art of Memory."

⁵⁷ Muhammad Yusuf et al., "Tradisi Baritan Masyarakat Muslim Pedesaan Wonosobo: Dialektika Komunitas-Struktur Perspektif Victor Turner," *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 147–68, <https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v2i2.597>.

⁵⁸ Arfi Putri Maharani et al., "Internalizing Islamic Values in a Multicultural Context."

⁵⁹ Hausknecht et al., "Sharing Indigenous Knowledge through Intergenerational Digital Storytelling: Design of a Workshop Engaging Elders and Youth."

⁶⁰ Eva F. Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Da'wa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia," *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, nos. 1–2 (2018): 68–99, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340085>.

outcomes.⁶¹ In *Atib Ko Ambai*, researchers observed recording, but did not trace subsequent learning from those recordings. Digital documentation is therefore a potential resource within the transmission arrangement, not a demonstrated remedy for unequal access.

For community education, the findings suggest attention to invitations, meaningful responsibilities, and opportunities for explanation before assuming that increased publicity will deepen learning. A practical implication would be to connect newcomers with appropriate knowledge holders and allow questions around preparation and post-ritual discussion. This follows from participants' accounts, but its effectiveness remains untested. Zhang et al. distinguish several dimensions of youth participation in heritage management, helping clarify why an opportunity to be present should not be equated with substantive involvement.⁶² Any educational response should also preserve the possibility that young people have different priorities and may choose different degrees of participation.

The central contribution is thus an empirical distinction between a community's distribution of knowledge and individual learners' access to it. Earlier *Atib Ko Ambai* scholarship establishes ritual communication, devotional meanings, and concerns about continuity. The four youth cases show why those shared resources cannot be assumed to generate comparable learning opportunities. Existing social learning scholarship anticipates unequal participation, but this study specifies the combination of family proximity, customary and religious authority, practical responsibility, and explanatory access through which that inequality was experienced. The two transmission mechanisms clarify how learning can occur within this arrangement, while the domestic and digital findings identify supporting pathways whose reach remains less certain.

These interpretations have clear limits. Ten purposively selected participants from one setting cannot represent the community as a whole. The four youth cases provide analytical contrast but not prevalence estimates, and differences between them cannot establish causal direction. Six episodic visits captured selected encounters rather than continuous social life or long-term change. Retrospective accounts of earlier generations may compress variation, while expressed willingness does not demonstrate future participation. A single female family participant cannot support general claims about gender, and the absence of systematic digital observation restricts conclusions about mediated learning. Cultural familiarity supported interpretation but could also leave assumptions insufficiently questioned. These boundaries delimit the contribution and inform the research priorities in the conclusion.

D. CONCLUSION

Atib Ko Ambai sustained opportunities to learn Islamic and customary knowledge through family proximity, practical responsibility, ritual participation, and explanation. Among the four youth cases, these opportunities were unevenly accessible, and limited involvement could coexist with willingness to learn. Distributed intergenerational learning describes the relationship between dispersed pedagogical functions and learners' different routes to them. Experiential-imitative and dialogical-intentional transmission identify complementary emphases within this arrangement, with the latter also capturing participants' requests for greater explanatory access. The study adds a specific educational question to accounts of ritual continuity, asking how younger community members can reach the relationships through which religious practice becomes intelligible and meaningful. Further research should compare a wider range of young participants, including those who decline involvement, and follow changing access over time. Comparative studies could examine whether the proposed construct clarifies learning in other traditions beyond what

⁶¹ Zhang et al., "An Assessment Framework for Digital Participatory Practices Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage Management." <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2024.10.014>.

⁶² Zhang et al., "An Assessment Framework for Digital Participatory Practices Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage Management." <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2024.10.014>.

existing social learning approaches explain. Research involving women across generations and household positions would allow a fuller account of domestic transmission. Digital ethnography could establish whether recordings lead to discussion, participation, or new learning relationships. These inquiries would test the reach of the present interpretation while keeping the religious and social particularity of each practice in view.

E. DECLARATIONS

1. Author Contribution

Adruni Arifina: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data collection, formal analysis, interpretation of findings, writing the original draft, visualization, and reviewing and editing the manuscript. **Fanny Zakkiyah MR:** Methodology, investigation, data collection, formal analysis, interpretation of findings, validation, and manuscript review and editing. **Andika Pratama:** Investigation, data collection, data curation, validation, interpretation of findings, and manuscript review and editing. **Md. Nizamul Haque:** Supervision, validation, conceptual input, interpretation of findings, critical review and editing of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the study's intellectual development, reviewed the manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. All authors agree to be accountable for their respective contributions and for the integrity of the published work

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This research received no external funding from government agencies, commercial organizations, private institutions, or other funding bodies. The authors conducted the study using their own institutional and research resources.

3. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no financial, professional, personal, or institutional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the study's design, conduct, analysis, interpretation, or reporting.

4. Declaration of AI Use

The authors used ChatGPT in a limited supporting role during manuscript preparation, primarily for language refinement, improved academic expression, editorial assistance, and initial identification of potentially relevant literature. The authors independently verified all references, arguments, interpretations, and factual information included in the manuscript. Artificial intelligence was not used to generate research data, replace field observations or interviews, autonomously interpret participants' accounts, or make research decisions. The authors take full responsibility for the manuscript's accuracy, originality, academic integrity, analysis, interpretation, and final content.

5. Additional Information

Not applicable.

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