

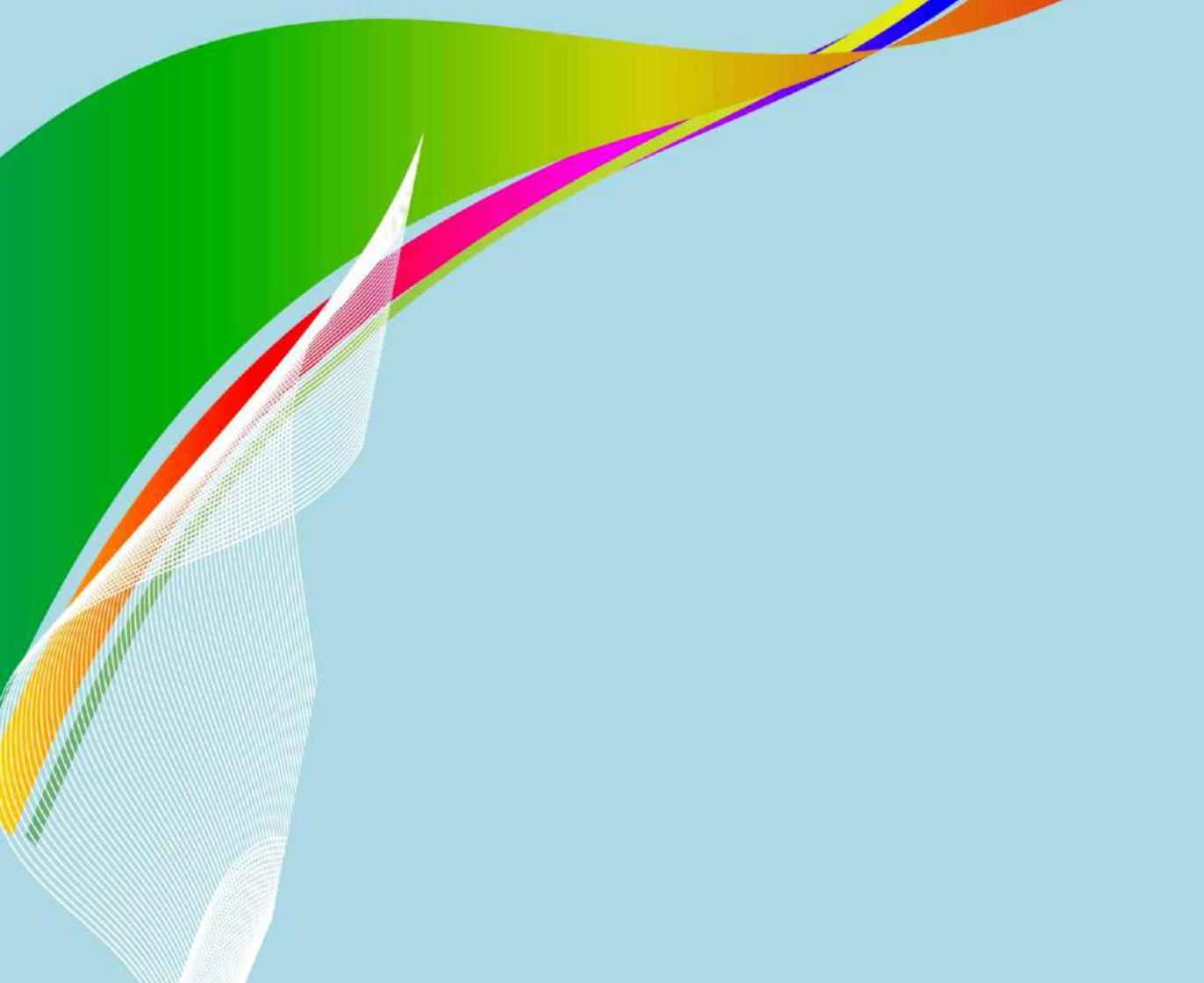
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**Borneo Black Orchid Symbolism:  
Cultural and Islamic Intersections for Global Insights**

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## BORNEO BLACK ORCHID SYMBOLISM: CULTURAL AND ISLAMIC INTERSECTIONS FOR GLOBAL INSIGHTS

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### Abstract

*The Bornean Black Orchid is a rare and unique plant that grows exclusively in Kalimantan. However, no scientist or practitioner has yet attempted to explore its potential as a symbol of identity for organizations, social institutions, or government entities. This research aims to uncover the potential of the Bornean Black Orchid as an inspiration for the development of Islamic higher education with global benefits. The study employs a qualitative method with a philosophical approach, examining the existence of the Bornean Black Orchid and its relevance to a model for developing educational materials in higher education. Data were collected through direct observation at Selimbau Orchid Park and in-depth interviews with managers and the local community. The symbols derived from the orchid are interpreted philosophically to inform a higher education development model that integrates Islamic principles with Bornean culture. Contributions from experts and practitioners were gathered through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The research findings are as follows: 1) The Bornean Black Orchid is not only rare and unique but also embodies the original identity of the people of Kalimantan, reflecting superior characteristics; 2) The patterns of the Bornean Black Orchid can serve as a model for developing educational materials in higher education; 3) The characteristics of the Bornean Black Orchid can inspire the establishment of an Islamic university that is both exceptional and globally impactful.*

**Keywords:** Bornean Black Orchid; World Class University; Islam.

## A. Introduction

The Borneo Black Orchid, scientifically known as *Coelogyne pandurata*, is an exquisite flower native to the island of Borneo. Renowned for its captivating beauty, the orchid is distinguished by its fragrant aroma. It is found in nearly all regions of the island, flourishing particularly on large trees in sandy soil, especially in coastal areas such as Pelalawan. Notably, the Borneo Black Orchid holds protected status under Government Regulation No. 7 of 1999, which recognizes it as a vital part of Kalimantan's (Borneo's) natural wealth (Indonesia, 1999).

Uniquely, this flower grows exclusively on the island of Borneo and cannot be cultivated or grown elsewhere. As a result, it is considered a rare plant found solely on Borneo, earning its name, the Borneo Black Orchid. In West Borneo, it is commonly found in the Kapuas Hulu Regency, particularly around the Selimbau District (Interview with Abang Muhammad Walidad, Manager of the Borneo Black Orchid Conservation in Selimbau, November 12, 2023).

Borneo (Kalimantan), the largest island in Indonesia, is renowned for its vast forests, earning it the title of the "world's lungs". This natural wealth holds great promise for boosting the nation's economy. Borneo is also distinguished by its unique culture, characterized by the harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature. The Indigenous Dayaks, the island's original inhabitants, contribute significantly to its rich cultural heritage (Darmadi, 2016). The diversity within Dayak culture stems from the various groups residing in specific regions, which have eventually formed distinct sub-tribes (Darmadi, 2017). The cultural mosaic of Borneo has been further enriched by external influences, including settlers from different parts of the world in coastal areas. Malays, along with sub-groups such as the Madurese, Chinese, Bugis, Javanese, and others, have contributed their unique cultural elements to Borneo's collective identity (Atmaja & Fachrurozi, 2019). In this research context, Borneo's culture is defined as encompassing both indigenous traditions and the naturalized cultures introduced to the island. The diverse local wisdom that has emerged reflects a dynamic acculturation process sapa by the distinctive natural and cultural elements of Borneo (Darmadi, 2017).

The influx of foreign traditions and cultures into the Borneo region began along the coast and rivers, where migrants settled and brought their customs with them. Meanwhile, the native Dayak people resided in the island's interior. Despite the differences, the Dayak people welcomed the presence of these migrants and formed mutually beneficial relationships. The Dayak communities living inland often entrusted their children to coastal communities to pursue education. Periodically, they would travel to the coast to visit their children and bring forest products as offerings. In return, they obtained food, clothing, and other daily necessities from the coastal areas. This symbiotic relationship between the native people of Borneo and the coastal migrants has endured for centuries (Interview with Amru Chanwari, Chair of the Simpang Kingdom Foundation, North Kayong, December 29, 2022).

The conquest-based model proved less effective in disseminating Islam in West Kalimantan, as Islamic influence remained primarily confined to the vicinity of kingdoms (Hermansyah, 2010). This limited the religion's reach into inland areas inhabited by indigenous Borneo tribal communities. However, a significant shift occurred with the arrival of scholars who taught Sufism, facilitating a more extensive diffusion of Islam throughout the region, including the interior (Hermansyah; Mahrus, 2017). As a result, the development of Islam in Borneo has taken on a Sufistic character, reflecting a distinctive manifestation of Sufistic Islam unique to the region (Syarif, 2020).

In their 2023 research, *Historical Map of IAIN Pontianak Policy Direction*, Andry Fitriyanto and Septian Utut Sugiyanto provide comprehensive insights into the Vision and Mission of IAIN Pontianak. They examined the IAIN Pontianak symbol/ logo through a philosophical lens, utilizing Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis method, specifically the Triangle of Meaning. One key conclusion from their study is that the IAIN Pontianak symbol holds profound relevance to the institution's Vision and Mission. This significance arises from the symbol's elements, which encapsulate the scientific, Islamic, and cultural visions of Borneo (Fitriyanto & Utut, 2023).

To date, limited research has been conducted on the Vision and Mission of IAIN Pontianak, in contrast to other Islamic religious universities such as UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim



Malang, and UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Among these, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta stands out as a notably influential institution, particularly due to its *Integration and Interconnection* concept, widely known as M. Amin Abdullah's "Spider Web" concept. This innovative framework has garnered significant attention from researchers (Aminuddin, 2010); (Muslih, 2017); (Sari & Amin, 2020); (Lubis et al., 2023).

The models of Islamic scientific development mentioned above have not incorporated the unique characteristics of their respective regions. Highlighting regional distinctiveness is crucial to showcasing the advantages of local wisdom across Indonesia, which possesses extraordinary qualities with potential global benefits. In the context of the Borneo region, the development of Islamic educational institutions must remain rooted in the original characteristics of its people. In this regard, the Borneo Black Orchid holds significant potential as a symbol of identity for establishing world-class Islamic universities with a distinctly Bornean perspective. By embracing this unique identity, such institutions can make meaningful contributions to society while reflecting the rich cultural and natural heritage of Borneo.

In some study, found that every higher education institution has its symbols as signs (in semiotic studies) to show the uniqueness of its identity. In Her research on 12 Universities in Padang City, West Sumatra, in 2016, Rani Dwi Setia E found 29 symbols on the logos they used. These symbols are interpreted according to the interpretation and orientation of each initiator, to then become the basis for the movements and steps they take. It is essential for the success of the university's development (E, 2016). Symbolism is also used in university sustainability reports to show the public that the university is worthy of consideration (Sudaryati, 2024).

For instance, the symbol of the *Gunungan* (a central element in the Javanese *Wayang* tradition) used by UIN Walisongo Semarang highlights the university's commitment to developing Islam as taught by the *Wali Songo* (the nine Islamic saints of Java) (Akbar, 2024). UIN Walisongo actively strives to align its vision and mission with the meaning conveyed by this symbol, grounding its development of higher education in both Islamic values and local culture (Adinugraha, Ema Hidayanti, Agus Riyadi, 2018). The



university's vision and mission significantly influence the design of its logo, ensuring that the chosen symbols align with its institutional identity and objectives (Qur'ana & Sidik, 2020).

Therefore, conducting a study on the unique characteristics of Borneo is essential for establishing a global vision and mission for Kalimantan's higher education institutions. Such a study can identify key symbols that represent the region's identity, which can then be incorporated into the design of a higher education institution's logo, creating a recognizable and distinctive public identity. This research article aims to reveal an Islamic scientific development model by exploring and describing the characteristics of the Borneo Black Orchid, positioning it as a symbolic foundation for these institutions.

## **B. Method**

This research employed a qualitative methodology, utilizing various data collection methods such as interviews, documentation, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). It adopted a philosophical approach to analyze the significance of the Borneo Black Orchid as a foundational model for scientific development in Islamic universities, with the aim of creating institutions that are both superior and beneficial to the global community. Data collection included direct observation, thorough documentation, and in-depth interviews to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Observations focused on examining the characteristics of the Borneo Black Orchid, including its shape, development, and growth patterns. The data gathered from these observations will inform the creation of a model for developing an Islamic knowledge framework in higher education, rooted in the local wisdom of Borneo. This development model will be visually represented through a cross-sectional depiction of the Borneo Black Orchid, symbolizing the integration of regional identity into the structure of Islamic education.

Data from observations of the Borneo Black Orchid will be meticulously documented as required. The collected data will include detailed depictions of the flower's shape, particularly its cross-sections, which will be compared with other orchid species found in Kalimantan. This documentation aims to visually capture the unique appearance of the Borneo Black Orchid, which



will then be philosophically interpreted to conceptualize a pattern of scientific development. The resulting model is envisioned to represent an approach that is both superior and beneficial on a global scale.

The findings from observations and documentation were further validated through in-depth interviews with practitioners managing the Borneo Black Orchid. The primary expert consulted in this research was Abang Muhammad Walidad, a conservation manager in Selimbau, Kapuas Hulu Regency. Additionally, consultations were conducted with representatives of the Selimbau traditional stakeholders, including Pangeran Natakesumah and Baharuddin, M. Si. These consultations provided valuable insights, ensuring the research findings align with both practical management perspectives and traditional cultural contexts.

The data gathered from the two informants mentioned above were comprehensively compiled and analyzed to extract their philosophical values. These values are intended to contribute to the development of a scientific system that aligns with the unique characteristics of the Bornean people. Subsequently, the philosophical values and distinctive traits of the Borneo Black Orchid were further reviewed and refined through consultations with experts from IAIN Pontianak, ensuring the relevance and applicability of the findings within an academic framework.

The interviews were conducted specifically with key informants, including lecturers from IAIN Pontianak who teach courses related to Islam and Local Culture or similar subjects. These lecturers were carefully selected to ensure representation from all four faculties and the postgraduate school at IAIN Pontianak. Furthermore, the research incorporated insights from other scholars recognized for their expertise in local identity and culture. This approach enriched the study by integrating diverse perspectives, thereby enhancing the depth and comprehensiveness of the findings.

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection and selection. Field data, particularly related to the Borneo Black Orchid, along with insights from interviews with IAIN Pontianak scholars, were organized and classified to identify the most relevant information for this research. Once preliminary conclusions were drawn, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was

held with Islamic experts from IAIN Pontianak. This group included five representatives, comprising one expert from each of the four faculties and one from the postgraduate program, to ensure a comprehensive and multidisciplinary perspective.

### C. Result and Discussion

This study seeks to explore the natural wealth of Borneo as a source of inspiration for developing world-class higher education institutions. Among Borneo's unique treasures is the beauty and distinctiveness of the Black Orchid, a natural asset not found on other islands. The characteristics and striking appearance of the Borneo Black Orchid reflect the authentic identity of the Borneo people, making it a compelling symbol and inspiration for the advancement of exceptional higher education institutions rooted in local identity and wisdom.

#### 1. Result

##### a. Characteristic of Borneo black orchid

Orchids, celebrated for their rarity, are among the most valued flowers, often protected by government regulations due to their limited presence in the wild. Cultivating orchids poses a significant challenge because of their complex and specific natural habitat requirements. Their appeal, however, extends beyond their rarity, as they are admired for their extraordinary beauty. These enchanting blooms are highly prized by flower collectors and enthusiasts worldwide.

*"This flower is unique, beautiful, and rare. Many people come here to see its beauty. They really want to own and maintain this flower, but it is tough for it to grow anywhere else. Its current condition is very critical". "Therefore, the government issued a regulation that this flower is protected by law, so it cannot be easily brought or kept". (Interview with Abang Muhammad Walidad, in Selimbau, December 10, 2024).*

Abang Muhammad Walidad, the initiator and manager of Black Orchid cultivation in the Selimbau District, Kapuas Hulu Regency, highlights the global recognition of this flower. According to him, the



cultivation of Black Orchids has received support from the international community, including assistance from institutions in England, France, and the United States. These organizations, such as the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), headquartered in Switzerland, have contributed to the cultivation efforts. In the Selimbau District, approximately 5 hectares of land are dedicated to cultivating Bornean Black Orchids, with additional support provided by the Kapuas Hulu Regional Government (Interview with Abang Muhammad Walidad, Selimbau, December 10, 2024).

The Borneo Black Orchid is an epiphytic plant, meaning it grows by attaching itself to other plants, and it is predominantly found in the Kalimantan region. In West Kalimantan, Black Orchids are commonly located in the Kapuas Hulu Regency area (Mira, 2022), thriving on large trees in dense forests with sandy soil. Irawati, as cited by Serliana et al., highlights that the Black Orchid is a distinctive plant native to Kalimantan, primarily found in the forests of West Kalimantan (Mukarlina & Linda, 2017).

There are two variants of Black Orchid Flowers. *The first variant* features a black center, as shown in the image, while the surrounding petals are lighter in color. This type is native to Kalimantan but has also been widely cultivated in other regions of Indonesia. *The second variant* is characterized by a uniform dark purple hue across its entire cross-section. Although fundamentally purple, its deep coloration gives it a nearly black appearance. This variety has slightly rounded leaves, resembling those of the Moon Orchid, but with a black coloration. It is commonly found in Papua and is known as the Papuan Black Orchid (*Cymbidium Kiwi Midnight 'Geyserland'*). Additionally, Kalimantan is home to other orchid species, such as the Moon Orchid (*Phalaenopsis*), which is recognized for its striking reddish-white petals. These orchids contribute to the region's rich botanical diversity.



*Figure 1. Types of orchids' flowers*

The Borneo Black Orchid flower stands out distinctly from other orchid species, including those sharing the name “Black Orchid”. Despite the shared name, there are clear differences between the Borneo and Papuan varieties. The Borneo Black Orchid is more accurately described as a Green Orchid due to its predominantly green coloration, which sets it apart. In contrast, the Papuan Black Orchid is characterized by a dominant black hue, giving it a darker and more uniform appearance.



*Figure 2. Cross-section of borneo black orchid flowers (private doc.)*

The Borneo Black Orchid features a distinctive two-tiered structure, resembling a bee in flight. Its petals add to its aesthetic charm with beautifully folded edges. The pollen is centrally positioned above the black section of the petals, enhancing its unique appearance. The early stages of the flower are concealed by green leaves, which unfurl as the flower blooms. Once in full bloom, elongated leaves droop gracefully around the flower, resembling additional petals. Typically, 3 to 6 petal-like leaves grow around the flower, further enhancing its beauty. Despite its relatively short blooming period of just 3-5 days, the Black Orchid emits a highly fragrant aroma.



Blooming occurs annually in April, and during this time, the surrounding area is enveloped in its delightful fragrance, making it a truly remarkable natural phenomenon.

According to Abang Muhammad Walidad, the Borneo Black Orchid grows very slowly, producing only four leaves per year. Currently, it is listed in the Critically Endangered category under Appendix I of CITES, signifying its precarious status. In West Kalimantan, the Borneo Black Orchid is primarily found in the Kapuas Hulu Regency area. Abang Muhammad Walidad, a key figure in the conservation of this orchid, initiated efforts through the Riak Bumi Foundation, which he founded in Gudang Village, Selimbau District. This conservation initiative is supported by the Regional Government of Kapuas Hulu Regency and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), based in Switzerland. The Borneo Black Orchid is protected within the Selimbau District, in a dedicated area spanning approximately 5 hectares known as *Taman Anggrek Alam Selimbau* (Selimbau Black Orchid Natural Garden). To ensure the orchid's preservation, the area is strictly protected, with restrictions on its use for plantations, residential development, or other activities (Interview with Abang Muhammad Walidad, Selimbau, December 11, 2023).



Figure 3. The original habitat of the borneo black orchid flower is in the selimbau black orchid park (Photo doc. Abang Muhammad Walidad)

The Borneo Black Orchid carries profound symbolic significance for the development of Islamic higher education in Kalimantan. *First*, its

structure, with five protective petals, reflects the Five Pillars of Islam and the foundational principles of Islamic Sharia, making it a meaningful representation of Islamic values. *Second*, the distinctively colored pistils, located at the core of the flower, symbolize the indigenous people of Kalimantan, who predominantly reside in the island's interior, highlighting the deep cultural and spiritual identity of the region. *Third*, the flower's captivating shape and distinctive fragrance, enjoyed by people in Kalimantan and beyond, represent the inclusivity and universal benefit of Islamic knowledge and education. *Fourth*, the overall structure of the flower can also be seen as a metaphor for the tree of Islamic knowledge, symbolizing growth, continuity, and the ability to provide global benefits. This symbolism underscores the need for deeper exploration to implement these values in higher education and Islamic life in Kalimantan, contributing meaningfully to the global community. This preference is grounded in the flower's captivating fragrance and its growth and development on the island of Borneo, making it a native plant of the region. The elongated petals of the Black Orchid flower are symbolically interpreted as representing a scientific field. Simultaneously, the central part is understood to signify the methodology, approach, and essence of preaching.

b. Models for Development of the Top Islamic Scientific System

Since 2002, many Indonesian Islamic Universities (*PTKI*) have developed distinctive scientific visions to define their academic identities. For instance, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta has embraced the *Interconnection Concept*, emphasizing the integration and interconnectedness of various fields of knowledge. UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta is known for its commitment to *Open and Dialogical Science Interaction*, fostering an inclusive and interactive scientific environment. UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang symbolizes its vision with the *Tree of Knowledge*, representing growth and interconnected learning. UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung identifies with the *Wheel of Knowledge* symbol, which illustrates the continuous advancement of education. UIN Alauddin Makassar adopts the metaphorical concept of the *House of Civilization* to frame its vision, while UIN Sunan Ampel uses the



*Twin Towers* as its defining symbol. Finally, UIN Walisongo Semarang highlights the *Diamond* as a representation of the precious and multifaceted nature of knowledge (Sari & Amin, 2020).

On Borneo Island, there are four government-run Islamic universities: UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, UIN Sultan Aji Samarinda, IAIN Palangkaraya, and IAIN Pontianak. In 2024, West Kalimantan alone is home to one university, one private institute, and five Islamic colleges. South Kalimantan also has one university and ten Islamic colleges, while Central Kalimantan hosts one university and three colleges. Similarly, East Kalimantan features one university and ten Islamic colleges. In total, Borneo has four universities, one private institute, and 18 private Islamic colleges. Despite the significant presence of Islamic universities, both public and private, none of these institutions have adopted the Borneo Black Orchid as their identity, missing an opportunity to highlight this unique and culturally significant symbol.

One Islamic university attempting to align its identity with Borneo is IAIN Pontianak. However, it has chosen the Moon Orchid Flower as its symbol rather than the Borneo Black Orchid. This choice is problematic because the Moon Orchid is not a plant unique to Kalimantan; it can grow in many regions across Indonesia. In contrast, the Borneo Black Orchid is endemic to Kalimantan and cannot thrive elsewhere, making it a more fitting and meaningful symbol for the university. Given that IAIN Pontianak aspires to be recognized as a superior Islamic university in Borneo, the decision to use the Moon Orchid undermines its vision. Adopting the Borneo Black Orchid as its identity would better reflect the university's connection to the region and highlight the distinctiveness of Kalimantan's natural and cultural heritage.

## 2. Discussion

This research draws on the theory of Stuart Hall (1932–2014), a renowned Jamaican cultural and social theorist whose work has profoundly shaped the understanding of identity. Hall's conceptual framework emphasizes the complex and dynamic nature of identity, considering variables such as culture, race, class, and gender (Stuart Hall, 1996). Within this framework, Hall introduces several key classifications, including Identity as a Continuous Process,



the Deconstruction of Identity, Identity Culture, and the interplay of identity within the contexts of class, race, and gender (Stuart Hall, 1996).

Hall challenges the notion of identity as fixed and unchanging. He argues that identity is shaped by ongoing social, cultural, and historical processes, highlighting its dynamic and evolving nature (Hall, 1996). According to this perspective, an individual's identity is not predetermined by innate characteristics but is instead influenced by interactions with various environmental factors, such as culture, politics, and power dynamics (Stuart Hall, 1996). Hall further expands on this idea by exploring subcategories such as Identity as a Social Construction, the Deconstruction of Fixed Identity, and the roles of Culture, Representation, and Power in shaping identity.

In the concept of identity deconstruction, Stuart Hall underscores the importance of dismantling static and fixed notions of identity. He argues that identity is shaped through complex interactions involving elements such as language, culture, and historical experiences (Grossberg, 1986). Rather than being predetermined, identity is seen as the product of dynamic social, cultural, and historical processes (Hall, 1990).

The Borneo Black Orchid and Bornean identity are inseparably linked, with the orchid serving as a symbol of the region's cultural and natural heritage. To maximize its significance, the Borneo Black Orchid must be reimagined as a source of benefit for the people of Borneo, Indonesia, and the global community. This reconstruction aims to highlight the unique contributions of Borneo to the world. For Indonesia, Borneo has long been a key contributor to national development, providing substantial economic benefits through its rich forest and mining resources. More recently, Borneo has gained prominence as a national icon with the establishment of the National Capital Region (IKN) in East Kalimantan.

To make a more meaningful impact, it is essential to establish a superior institution rooted in a distinctive cultural identity. Higher education institutions that incorporate Borneo's unique identity as the foundation for their vision and mission are crucial to achieving this goal. Additionally, an in-depth exploration of Borneo's characteristics is necessary. A focused study of Borneo's cultural heritage and its connection to Islamic values should serve



as a primary consideration in shaping these institutions, ensuring their relevance and contribution to both the region and the broader community.

a. Characteristic of Borneo Culture

Borneo's rich cultural heritage offers immense potential for advancing educational institutions and shaping a distinct identity. The diversity of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, each with its unique traditions and heritage, underscores the region's vast opportunities for development. By conducting research and analysis of these cultural treasures, new forms of local knowledge can emerge, contributing to the enrichment of education and scholarship. West Kalimantan, in particular, is home to nine major ethnic groups: Malay, Dayak, Chinese, Bugis, Madurese, Javanese, Sundanese, Minang, and Banjar (Haba, 2012). Further exploration of these groups and their cultural variations holds the promise of deeper insights and expanded opportunities for scientific inquiry (Hariyanto et al., 2024; Yusriadi, 2008).

The Malay ethnic group serves as an insightful case study, particularly in West Kalimantan, where they are divided into two primary categories: the "Old Malays" or "Indigenous Malays" and the "New Malays". These distinctions highlight their unique conversion histories and the various factors that have shaped their identities (Bahari, 2017). Geographically, Malay communities exhibit notable variations. For example, the Pontianak Malays share cultural and historical ties with the Riau-Semenanjung Malays, while the Sambas Malays are closely connected to the Brunei, Banjar, and Berau Malays. Similarly, the Ulu Malays, who reside in Sanggau, Sintang, and Kapuas Hulu, are linked with the Malays of Sarawak. Each of these groups possesses distinct characteristics, making them easily identifiable and providing valuable insights into the broader cultural landscape of the Malay ethnic group (Purba et al., 2014; Yusriadi, 2007, 2015, 2020).

The people of Borneo are known for their openness and acceptance of immigrants, often seeking to learn from them to improve their way of life. Research by Zaenuddin et al. on interior communities in West Kalimantan highlights their remarkable hospitality and inclusiveness. For instance, when hosting Muslim guests, these communities go to great lengths to show respect



for Islamic beliefs. They use special tableware, kept aside for years and separate from their everyday utensils, to honor their guests' dietary restrictions and ensure they are not served anything forbidden in Islam. This thoughtful gesture reflects their deep understanding of what is permissible for their Muslim visitors. Meanwhile, Muslims in the region predominantly reside in coastal areas, where they are closely associated with Malay ethnicity (Prasojo et al., 2019).

Islam plays a pivotal role in shaping the identity of various ethnic groups (Kurniawan, 2019; Sahrasad et al., 2024), such as the Malays, Chinese, and Dayaks. While Malay culture and Islam are distinct, their connection is deeply interwoven (Ibrahim, 2018a; Inayatillah et al., 2022), forming a cornerstone of Malay society's development. Similarly, Islam has significantly influenced the cultural practices of the Chinese and Dayak communities, resulting in the emergence of Islamic Dayak groups, such as the Senganan and Kebahan, as well as Muslim Chinese communities in West Kalimantan. These examples illustrate the intricate intersection of religious and ethnic identities (Isman, 2015), contributing to the region's rich cultural diversity within a framework of unity. This dynamic emphasizes the importance of tolerance and mutual respect in fostering harmony amid differences in West Kalimantan (Yusriadi et al., 2021).

To recognize the diversity of community identities and cultures, the educational institution and its vision-mission formulation team must strategically incorporate Borneo's culture as a foundational element for its core focus and institutional development. The institution's vision should aim to establish itself as an educational center rooted in the Borneo context. This vision is reflected in the curriculum through the inclusion of Local Culture courses, which are strategically integrated into undergraduate and master's programs. Students undertake these courses in the early semesters, underscoring the institution's commitment to fostering a deep understanding of Borneo's culture and heritage.

#### b. Islam and Borneo

Borneo is closely associated with the Dayak identity, widely regarded as the indigenous people of the island (Antonius Eko, 2014). While the Dayak



initially practiced animism, the arrival of external religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism prompted many to adopt these faiths (A. Rahman et al., 2022; Prasajo, 2017).

Researchers at IAIN Pontianak have conducted various studies on Islam and local culture in West Kalimantan. Notable among these is Yusriadi's exploration of the Berandep culture among the Dabong community in Kubu Raya. Berandep refers to a form of collaborative effort among residents during the planting and harvest seasons in rice fields. The majority of the Dabong people are ethnic Malays, and Berandep is a distinctive feature of their farming practices (Yusriadi, 2017). Yusriadi has also studied *Belale'* within the Lemukutan community (Yusriadi, 2015); (Prasajo & Lia., 2020). In addition, Zaenuddin investigated the lives of the Dayak Muslim ethnic community in the interior of West Kalimantan. His research highlights the continued significance of the Dayak identity for the people of Katab Kebahan in Melawi Regency, despite challenges posed by globalization. While it is common in West Kalimantan to refer to Dayaks who convert to Islam as Malay, the Katab Kebahan Dayak community maintains its ethno-religious Identity as Muslims (Prasajo, 2011). Wahab and Erwin Mahrus have shared insights into the *Saprahan* tradition practiced by the Sambas Malay community (Wahab et al., 2020). Wahab and Erwin Mahrus have provided insights into the *Saprahan* tradition practiced by the Sambas Malay community (Wahab et al., 2020). Similarly, Syamsul Kurniawan and Bayu Suratman have discussed the local wisdom of the Sambas Malay community, emphasizing its role in character education (Kurniawan & Suratman, 2018), see also: (Suratman, 2019). Ibrahim, meanwhile, examined the intricate relationship between Islam and Malay culture in the interior regions of West Kalimantan (Ibrahim, 2018b).

Any scholars agree that Sufism's approach to preaching is notably moderate. This is evident in the *da'wah* (preaching) methods employed by early Islamic preachers in the archipelago, which consistently accommodated local traditions and cultures rather than eradicating them upon conversion to Islam (Suwendi et al., 2024). This inclusive approach played a crucial role in

successfully introducing Islam to a region previously influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism (Elmansyah, 2016; Ijudin et al., 2022). In West Kalimantan, the development of the Muslim community gained significant momentum with the arrival of Sufi preachers, whose distinctive methods proved highly effective. Among these methods, Sufism emerged as the most influential, fostering the growth of Islam even in remote areas and underscoring its success in spreading the faith (Patmawati; Elmansyah, 2019).

In this context, numerous books with Sufi nuances have been discovered in West Kalimantan. Investigations into several manuscript collectors in the region have uncovered collections of influential works, including the Book of Fathul 'Arifin (attributed to Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas) and "Syarah Al-Hikam" by Sheikh Muhammad As'ad Selakau (Hermansyah, 2013). Other notable manuscripts include Haji Abdul Malik Kru'i's Sufism manuscript in Jongkong, Kapuas Hulu (Hermansyah et al., 2010), and the Manuscript of the Twenty Attributes in Semitau (Faizal Amin, 2015). The Islamic construction of West Kalimantan is characterized as Sufistic Islam, as evidenced by various manuscripts examined by scientists.

c. Borneo black orchid flower as a scientific identity

The Borneo Black Orchid can serve as a scientific identity symbolizing the advancement of native Bornean science. Researchers have proposed a significant concept that Islamic higher education institutions can adopt to benefit both the country and the world. This concept is inspired by the cross-sectional shape of the flower, which resembles a flying honeybee, with its leaves forming the petals. The flower's elements are imbued with symbolic meanings: the cross-sectional shape represents purpose (*da'wah*: methodology and approach), the leaves (petals) symbolize the development of science in the domains of Iman (faith), Islam (practice), and Ihsan (excellence), and the stem serves as the foundation for the advancement of Islamic science, rooted in the *Al-Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah*. This symbolic framework illustrates a system of scientific development inspired by the unique structure of the Borneo Black Orchid.



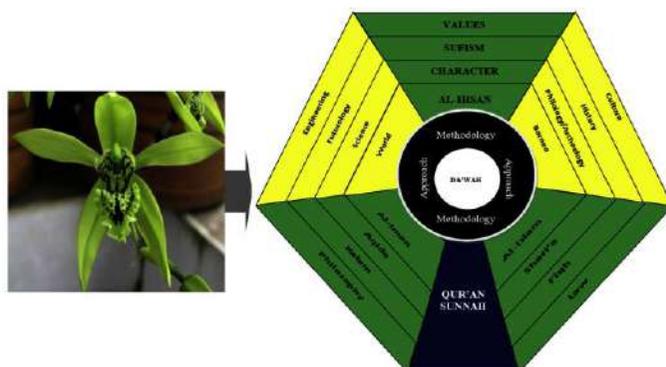


Figure 4. Borneo black orchid and the symbol of scientific development

The image derived from the scientific development design can be interpreted as follows.

First, the Islamic Higher Education Institution of Borneo must establish five foundational bases for scientific development: Iman, Islam, Ihsan, Borneo, and the world. These bases must be firmly upheld with the Qur'an and *al-Sunnah* as the primary foundation. All fields of study within the institution should employ methodologies and approaches relevant to these foundational principles. The culmination of research and study across these five bases is directed toward the preaching of *Amar Ma'ruf Nahyi Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). The Qur'an and *al-Sunnah* serve as the starting point for constructing the pillars of science, providing guidance and direction for scholarly endeavors (Abdurrahman et al., 2022; Nurani & Maulana, 2023).

Second, as an Islamic educational institution, it must base its scientific studies on three main pillars: Al-Iman, Al-Islam, and Al-Ihsan. To strengthen the pillar of Iman, studies on Aqidah (creed) must be developed, building on the work of earlier scholars. The study of Aqidah will evolve into the study of Kalam (Islamic theology). As a further extension of Kalam, the study of philosophy and its branches becomes a mandatory field of inquiry. To reinforce the pillar of Islam, higher education institutions must systematically explore the study of Sharia. This study is deeply interconnected with Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and Usul Fiqh (principles of jurisprudence), which will lead to advancements in understanding human rights and law. Moving

towards a more universal perspective, the study of law in its various forms must be rigorously explored. To strengthen the pillar of Ihsan, studies in Akhlaq (morals) must be prioritized, as is customary in advanced Islamic institutions (Bahri et al., 2024; Farida, 2024). Tasawwuf (Sufism) is the most urgent field of study to be developed. Its expansion into general ethics will significantly support the development of Akhlaq and Tasawwuf, ultimately producing knowledge that embodies universal values.

*Third, Borneo.* The Borneo is a unique issue, playing a significant role in determining the welfare of the world. Known as the “world’s lungs” and home to the future capital city, Borneo holds strategic importance. It directly borders other countries and is rich in diverse cultures and natural resources. The study of Borneo has developed progressively, focusing on its culture and history. However, many aspects remain underexplored, particularly the artifacts and manuscripts preserved within the region. A dedicated field of historical study is essential to uncover the wealth of knowledge contained in these resources. Comprehensive philological and archaeological studies of Borneo are urgently needed to better understand its cultural and historical significance. These efforts would provide invaluable insights into the region’s heritage and its contributions to the broader global context.

*Fourth, the World.* The advancement of science and technology will pave the way for the development of *Futurology*, integrating perspectives from social sciences, religious sciences, and exact sciences. The concept of *Futurology* can evolve into applied engineering across various branches of knowledge (Syahbudin et al., 2023). This form of engineering will be highly sought after by the global community. Thus, the scientific vision of Borneo, represented in the broadest scope, encompasses studies in Law, Philology and Archaeology, Ethics, Engineering, and Philosophy. These fields collectively aim to benefit the world. For instance, the field of Law plays a pivotal role in ensuring security and comfort for humanity. The enforcement of Law instills a sense of safety and stability in any society. Moreover, robust legal concepts can make profound contributions to addressing the needs of the global community.

*Fifth is Philology.* Many manuscripts in Kalimantan, particularly in West Kalimantan, remain underexplored and have yet to be fully



developed into meaningful contributions. Various pieces of artifact-related information have been uncovered in manuscripts studied by academics at IAIN Pontianak. These artifacts warrant further investigation through the lens of archaeological science, which can provide deeper insights into their historical and cultural significance.

*Sixth, Ethics.* Sixth is Ethics. Many local pearls of wisdom reflect ethical values shaped by the Borneo community's long history of interaction with nature and humanity. Academics at IAIN Pontianak have studied these ethical values within a cultural framework. However, the findings remain largely descriptive and narrative accounts of visible local wisdom. With deeper exploration and proper publication, these studies could offer valuable lessons and help establish a comprehensive value system (Fatchiatuzahro et al., 2024; Nugraha et al., 2024). As for engineering, the term in this context refers to efforts to develop both hardware and software systems derived from the study of the five primary pillars of Islamic Borneo science: Faith, Islam, Ihsan, Borneo, and the World. This engineering aims to transform the conceptual insights of these pillars into practical tools and solutions for societal benefit.

d. Borneo black orchid flower for global insight

The Borneo Black Orchid is a rare and nearly extinct plant amidst the rich biodiversity of Kalimantan. As with all of God's creations, its existence is not without purpose, holding significance for the people of Kalimantan and the global community. A deeper exploration of its purpose and meaning is essential, particularly through various perspectives. One such perspective is philosophical, offering insights into its symbolic and existential significance.

This scientific development model is crucial for other universities to adopt, as it highlights their unique characteristics. For instance, the Corpse Flower in Sumatra or the Papuan Black Orchid can serve as symbols of identity. Exploring the philosophy behind these natural elements is vital in defining the distinct identity of a higher education institution. However, such an endeavor requires a genuine commitment and love from academics for the local natural resources surrounding their institution.

Efforts like these will undoubtedly contribute to environmental preservation, particularly by helping to protect the Borneo Black Orchid from extinction. Higher education institutions can play a key role by conducting ongoing research into the sustainability of the Borneo Black Orchid and other natural biological treasures. Through such initiatives, educational institutions actively contribute to the preservation of Kalimantan's natural environment for the benefit of the global community. Moreover, the exploration of the Borneo Black Orchid can serve as a robust defense against the pressures of cultural and educational hegemony, reinforcing local identity and values.

Many universities worldwide have adopted natural symbols as part of their identity. Stanford University, for instance, features a tree positioned above the letter "S" in its logo, accompanied by a distinctive color. The tree symbolizes the spiritual foundation that supports the campus's development, while the color represents the cardinal symbol. Given the deep meaning behind this logo, Stanford enforces strict rules regarding its use (S. University, 2024). Similarly, other renowned universities incorporate natural symbols into their logos. The University of Toronto uses a tree at the top of its emblem (Toronto, 2025), the Australian National University features a water symbol as the backdrop for its logo (A. N. University, 2025), and several universities in the Middle East include date palms in their logos. These logos reflect the unique identity of their regions and embody the mission of growth and development rooted in their respective environments.

Therefore, the Borneo Black Orchid can serve as a symbolic representation for higher education institutions. Rooted in the philosophy of the Black Orchid, the scientific development model of Islamic higher education can be further expanded into a multicultural education curriculum and initiatives for cultural preservation.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The island of Borneo possesses unique characteristics distinct from those of other islands, as reflected in its rich biodiversity. One of its most distinctive flora is the Borneo Black Orchid, a flower found nowhere else in



the world. This flower symbolizes the unique interplay between Islam and Bornean culture. Its cross-section can serve as a powerful symbol of identity for educational institutions, providing a distinctive foundation that sets them apart from universities worldwide.

The Borneo Black Orchid, celebrated for its beauty and captivating fragrance, symbolizes the character of the educational institution in the public eye. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the shape of the Borneo Black Orchid embodies the philosophy of scientific vision, reflecting the development of five key concepts in Islam: *Iman* (faith), *Islam* (practice), *Ihsan* (excellence), Borneo, and the global community. Rooted in this symbolism, the institution has undertaken significant initiatives, particularly in shaping its policies and implementing the Three Pillars of Higher Education: Instruction, Research, and Community Service. This vision, with its profound philosophical foundation, presents a compelling and meaningful mandate for continuous development and growth.

With the aspiration to contribute meaningfully to global society, higher education institutions can adopt the symbolic shape of the Borneo Black Orchid. This approach aims to fully harness the rich natural and cultural wealth of Borneo. By establishing foundational milestones in diverse fields of study—such as Philosophy, Law, Philology, Ethics, and Engineering—the institution demonstrates its commitment to academic excellence and innovation. This development model seamlessly integrates the three main pillars of Islam with Borneo’s cultural heritage and the evolving demands of the contemporary global landscape.

Ultimately, the realization of these aspirations depends on higher education practitioners and policymakers. Educational practitioners in Kalimantan must actively contribute to the development of higher education institutions that integrate elements of Islamic culture and identity. This can be achieved through research, policy proposals, and the establishment of integrative educational institutions. Policymakers, in turn, should craft policies that align with the local wisdom of each region. The integration of culture and Islam can be reflected in the design and development of institutional curricula, ensuring that education embodies both cultural heritage and Islamic values.



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