



## The implementation of nu-oriented learning based on moral akhlaq values: A case study at mts nu 02 gringsing, batang reGENCY

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### KEYWORDS

Ke-NU-an Learning; Character Education; Moral Values; Aswaja; Islamic Secondary School.

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of *Ke-NU-an* learning based on moral values at MTs NU 02 Gringsing, Batang Regency, as a model of character education grounded in the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja). The background of this research is the growing moral crisis among students, which necessitates educational approaches that emphasize value internalization and character formation. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this field research collected data through interviews, participant observation, and documentation involving teachers, students, and school administrators. The findings reveal that *Ke-NU-an* learning has been systematically integrated into both instructional and non-instructional activities, including religious habituation programs, extracurricular activities, and daily school culture. The implementation of Aswaja values such as moderation, tolerance, balance, and responsibility contributes significantly to the development of students' religious character, discipline, social awareness, and appreciation of local culture. Furthermore, the role of teachers as moral role models and the institutional support provided by the school strengthen the effectiveness of character education. This study concludes that *Ke-NU-an* learning grounded in moral values functions not only as religious instruction but also as a strategic framework for character education in Islamic secondary schools under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama.

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### Introduction

Strengthening character education in the current context is highly relevant to addressing the moral crisis occurring in our country. Whether acknowledged or not, there is a real and alarming crisis within society today, involving what we value most our children. This crisis is reflected in the increasing prevalence of promiscuity, rising levels of violence, crime, and theft. These issues have become persistent social problems that, to this day, have not been comprehensively resolved.

Aswaja education is one of the components aimed at enhancing spiritual potential and shaping students to become individuals who have faith and devotion to Allah SWT and possess noble character. Noble character encompasses ethics, good conduct, and moral values as manifestations of religious education. The enhancement of spiritual potential includes the introduction, understanding, and internalization of the values of *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, such as *Tawassuth* (moderation), *Tawazun* (balance), *Tasamuh* (tolerance), and *I'tidal* (uprightness). These values are practiced in both individual life and collective social interactions. Ultimately, the enhancement of spiritual potential aims to optimize the various

potentials possessed by human beings, whose actualization reflects their dignity and status as servants of Allah SWT with strong character (Said Aqil Siraj dalam Ramli, 2011: 8).

Indonesia is currently facing serious challenges, namely a prolonged multidimensional crisis. This problem is fundamentally rooted in the declining moral quality of the nation's younger generation, as reflected in the growing culture of criminal behavior such as student brawls, increasing indiscipline among learners, and various forms of juvenile misconduct, including smoking, truancy, and failure to complete homework. Therefore, the cultivation of moral values through character education from an early age is a key strategy for nation-building (Observasi, MTs NU 02 Gringsing, 12 Desember 2017).

Therefore, the cultivation of moral values can be carried out through various approaches, one of which is a cultural approach, such as the inclusion of Aswaja local content subjects based on the NU perspective as well as other ideological components. The NU version of Aswaja conceptualizes Aswaja as a methodology of thought rather than positioning it as a school of law, sect, or a product of any particular madhhab. Nahdlatul Ulama adheres to the doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, a framework of thought that takes a middle path between rationalist (*'aqli*) and scripturalist (*naqli*) approaches. Consequently, the sources of legal reasoning in NU are derived not only from the Qur'an and the Sunnah but also from *Ijma'* and *Qiyas* (Mahbudi, 2012: 21).

Nahdlatul Ulama is a unique phenomenon, not only in Indonesia but also across the Muslim world. It is a traditional ulama organization with a vast number of followers, recognized as the largest non governmental organization that has endured over time and remains deeply rooted among grassroots communities. According to information from several survey institutions, nearly 80 million Indonesians identify as traditionalist members of Nahdlatul Ulama. With such a large constituency, NU undoubtedly possesses significant potential to serve as a driving force for national progress, particularly given its strong capacity for mass mobilization. Following the collapse of the Indonesian Communist Party, no organization appears to have matched NU's mobilizing power. What is especially noteworthy is that this capacity emerges and is sustained from within, driven by religious motivation embedded in individual believers namely, the Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyah worldview itself (Wahid et al., 2010: 130).

MTs NU 02 Gringsing, Batang Regency, implements the KTSP curriculum based on Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 22 of 2006 and the 2013 Curriculum in accordance with Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 207 of 2015. The application of education as a means of shaping students' character is given top priority. Daily routines such as reciting prayers before lessons, performing congregational *Dhuhr* prayers, guidance in performing *wudu*, and Friday charity (*infaq*) are among the practices implemented to foster strong character development among students. In addition, extracurricular and non-instructional activities that support character formation are continuously enhanced, including rebana music, scouting, Ramadan boarding programs, social service activities, *syawalan*, commemoration of Islamic holy days (PHBI), and annual outdoor educational visit (Wawancara, Arifudin, 26/12/2017).

From these findings, it can be understood to what extent the implementation of NU-based learning grounded in moral values has been applied at MTs NU 02 Gringsing, Batang Regency. The Aswaja foundation, which in practical terms manifests as NU's *amaliyah* traditions and is articulated through Aswaja education, plays a significant role in shaping students' character at the institution. The character traits developed among students include: (1) strong faith and religiosity, (2) tolerance, (3) unity and cohesion, (4) discipline, (5) orderliness, (6) courage and honesty, (7) respect for the services of national heroes, (8) democratic attitudes, (9) responsibility, and (10) appreciation of local culture.

Based on the researcher's preliminary observations at MTs NU 02 Gringsing, it was found that the school implements character education for students through NU-based learning. This reflects the institution's status under the auspices of LP Ma'arif NU Kabupaten Batang, which promotes the internalization of moral values through NU-oriented educational practices.

## Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research approach to obtain valid findings in accordance with established scientific principles. Qualitative research was chosen because it allows researchers to investigate social and educational phenomena in their natural settings based on empirical facts, without manipulation or intervention, thereby enabling an in-depth understanding of the research context (Margono, 1997: 88). The research was conducted as field research at MTs NU 02 Gringsing, Batang Regency, as the institution represents an educational setting that actively implements NU-based learning grounded in moral values. Field research was considered appropriate because it enables direct observation of phenomena as they occur in real situations (Nasution, 1996: 106).

Data in this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected directly from teachers of NU-oriented subjects and students involved in the implementation of NU-based learning, while secondary data were gathered from the school principal, vice principal, and relevant institutional documents to support and complement the primary data (Sukmadinata, 2010: 221). Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide to obtain information related to educational objectives, learning quality, and the implementation of NU-based learning grounded in moral values. Observations were carried out through participant observation to gain a comprehensive understanding of teaching and learning activities as well as the school environment, while documentation was used to analyze written, visual, and electronic records relevant to character education and Aswaja values (Nasution, 1996: 106).

To ensure the credibility and validity of the data, triangulation was employed by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This process allowed the researcher to cross-check information from multiple sources and techniques to enhance data trustworthiness (Emzir, 2014: 85). Data analysis was conducted descriptively through a systematic process of organizing, categorizing, and interpreting interview transcripts, field notes, and documentation. The analyzed data were then presented in narrative form to draw conclusions regarding the implementation of NU-based learning and its role in shaping students' character (Sukmadinata, 2010: 221).

## Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of Ke-NU-an learning based on moral values at MTs NU 02 Gringsing has been systematically integrated into both instructional and non-instructional school activities. The school emphasizes moral and Aswaja-based values as the foundation for creating a religious and disciplined learning environment. This is reflected in daily religious habituation activities such as congregational Dhuhr prayer, recitation of Asmaul Husna, and consistent moral guidance provided by teachers. These practices demonstrate that moral education is not merely delivered through theoretical instruction but is internalized through continuous behavioral conditioning (Margono, 1997).

The findings further reveal that the objectives of Ke-NU-an learning are oriented toward shaping students' religious character, discipline, and social responsibility. Moral values such as respect for elders, obedience to religious and social norms, and responsibility are emphasized as core competencies expected to be embodied by students. This approach aligns with the concept of character education, which prioritizes the formation of attitudes and behaviors through meaningful learning experiences rather than cognitive mastery alone (Suharsimi Arikunto, 1995).

In terms of learning materials, Ke-NU-an instruction incorporates historical and ideological content related to Nahdlatul Ulama, including its role in Indonesia's struggle for independence. These materials contain strong moral and national values, particularly nationalism, unity, and social solidarity. The inclusion of NU's historical narratives functions as a medium for strengthening students' moral awareness and national identity. Such contextual learning supports the notion that values education becomes more effective when linked to students' socio-cultural realities (Saifuddin Azwar, 1999).

From the instructional process perspective, the implementation of Ke-NU-an learning is supported by participatory teaching strategies and contextual examples drawn from students' daily lives. Teachers play a crucial role as moral role models who demonstrate Aswaja values in their attitudes and interactions. Observational data show that students gradually develop disciplined behavior, religious awareness, and respect for diversity through this continuous exposure. This finding is consistent with Nasution's view that qualitative research captures social phenomena in their natural context without manipulation (S. Nasution, 1996).

The discussion also highlights that character formation through Ke-NU-an learning is reinforced by school-wide support systems. Religious programs, extracurricular activities, and institutional policies collectively contribute to the internalization of moral values. This integrated approach confirms that character education is most effective when implemented holistically across curricular and extracurricular domains (Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, 2010).

Regarding data validity, triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation strengthens the credibility of the findings. The convergence of data from multiple sources indicates consistency between planned programs and their actual implementation in the school setting. Such triangulation is essential in qualitative research to ensure data trustworthiness and analytical rigor (Emzir, 2014). Recent studies in Indonesia confirm that Islamic-based character education in schools effectively develops students' moral, religious, and social competencies when learning is integrated across subjects and extracurricular activities (Darlan et al., 2021). Strategies such as mentoring, participatory observation, and integration of school culture further enhance students' internalization of moral values, ensuring that character education is not limited to the classroom but becomes a part of everyday school life (Hasan Basri, 2024). In line with this, multicultural and inclusive approaches are increasingly emphasized in Islamic education, fostering tolerance, respect for diversity, and democratic values, which align closely with Aswaja-based character education goals (Musyarrofi & Rofiq, 2025).

Case studies in Islamic elementary and secondary schools indicate that character education programs combining religious teachings with practical activities, such as student-led community service and peer mentoring, significantly improve discipline, social responsibility, and ethical awareness (Muhamad et al., 2019; Yuhanis et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, innovative approaches such as online learning integration and modeling proved effective in maintaining these character education programs, demonstrating the adaptability and resilience of Islamic schools in continuing moral development under challenging conditions (Ak et al., 2023).

Higher education programs have highlighted the importance of integrating Islamic values with academic learning to reinforce moral competencies in students, ensuring that graduates possess both intellectual and ethical capabilities (Suyadi et al., 2021; Setiowati et al., 2023). Islamic education in Indonesia has evolved to embed moral development into daily practices, combining religious and national values to foster holistic character formation (Mas'ud et al., 2019). Students' perception of Islamic identity is also shaped by institutional brand and professional identity, underscoring the importance of moral role modeling within schools (Noviani et al., 2023).

Literature reviews emphasize that coaching, mentoring, and collaboration between schools and the broader community are critical to fostering religious and moral character in Islamic elementary schools (Arif et al., 2024). Development strategies in Islamic higher education further integrate religion and science to produce graduates with strong moral, intellectual, and social competencies (Mulyono & Wekke, 2018). Comparative studies between Indonesia and Malaysia indicate that structured Islamic curricula significantly impact students' religious and moral character, highlighting the importance of well-designed programs in shaping ethical behavior (Ismail et al., 2024).

Integration of family, school, and community support has also been shown to be essential for building strong religious character in students, reflecting the interdependence of home and school environments in character education (Husnaini et al., 2020). Moreover, the use of Pancasila-based local indigenous values supports Islamic character education by grounding

moral development in both cultural and national identity (Dali, 2018). Implementation of Curriculum 2013 in Islamic education has further emphasized the need for teachers' mastery of scientific approaches and authentic assessment, strengthening the effectiveness of character education programs (Nuryana, 2019). In parallel, studies in medical education indicate that integrating practical and theoretical aspects fosters moral responsibility and professionalism, a concept that parallels character education approaches in Islamic schools (Santoso, 2024). Finally, trend analyses of character education in Indonesia show that programs are most successful when moral and social values are embedded consistently in both daily life and classroom instruction, highlighting the importance of coherence between formal teaching and practical habituation (Susilo et al., 2022).

Overall, the results and discussion demonstrate that Ke-NU-an learning based on moral values at MTs NU 02 Gringsing Kabupaten Batang has been effectively implemented and contributes significantly to the development of students' religious character, discipline, tolerance, and social responsibility. Integration of modern educational practices, multicultural approaches, and national values further strengthens character education programs in Islamic schools, confirming that Aswaja-based education functions not only as religious instruction but also as a strategic model of character education in Indonesia (Yusutria et al., 2024).

### Conclusion

This study concludes that Ke-NU-an learning based on moral values has been systematically and effectively implemented at MTs NU 02 Gringsing, Batang Regency. The integration of Aswaja values into both classroom instruction and school-wide religious activities demonstrates that character education is not treated as a supplementary component but as a core educational foundation. Through continuous habituation practices such as congregational prayers, religious recitations, and moral guidance, students gradually internalize values of religiosity, discipline, tolerance, responsibility, and social awareness.

Furthermore, the implementation of Ke-NU-an learning is strengthened by comprehensive planning, contextual learning materials, and the active role of teachers as moral role models. The synergy between curricular content, instructional strategies, and extracurricular religious activities contributes significantly to the formation of students' moral character. This integrated approach confirms that Aswaja-based education serves not only as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as an effective model of character education within Islamic educational institutions.

Overall, the findings indicate that Ke-NU-an learning grounded in moral values plays a strategic role in fostering students' character development and supports the broader objective of developing morally responsible and socially engaged individuals. Therefore, the implementation of Ke-NU-an learning at MTs NU 02 Gringsing Kabupaten Batang can be considered a relevant and sustainable educational practice that may serve as a reference for similar institutions seeking to strengthen character education through culturally rooted and religiously grounded approaches.

In addition, this study implies that the effectiveness of Ke-NU-an learning is closely linked to the consistency of institutional support, the exemplary role of teachers, and the integration of moral values into daily school culture. Character education becomes more meaningful when values are not only taught conceptually but are also lived and practiced through routine activities and social interactions within the school environment. Thus, strengthening NU-oriented learning requires continuous evaluation, innovation in pedagogical strategies, and collaboration among school stakeholders to ensure that moral and Aswaja values remain relevant in responding to contemporary educational challenges.

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