

From Religious Authority to Character Formation: KH Nasori's CommunityBased Islamic Education in Tegal Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of KH Nasori as a local Islamic educational figure in shaping the religious, moral, social, and national character of the Muslim community in Tegal Regency, Indonesia. It responds to the limited scholarly attention given to local ulama as community-based agents of Islamic character education, particularly in regional Muslim societies undergoing socio-religious transformation. This study employed a qualitative figure-study design supported by historical-pedagogical analysis. The primary data were obtained from Abdul Fatah's biography of KH Nasori, while secondary data were drawn from scholarly literature on Islamic education, character education, pesantren studies, kiai leadership, religious moderation, and community-based education. Data were collected through documentation and library research and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. The findings show that KH Nasori contributed to character formation through personal exemplarity, religious da'wah, classical Islamic text teaching, pesantren-based mentoring, mosque-centered community education, and active engagement in Nahdlatul Ulama. The main character values internalized through these practices include religiosity, sincerity, istiqamah, simplicity, social responsibility, moral courage, moderation, and national commitment. These findings indicate that Islamic character education is not confined to formal institutions or written curricula, but can be cultivated through living moral authority, community engagement, and socio-religious leadership. Since this study relies on biographical and documentary sources, future research should employ oral history, ethnography, or comparative case studies to examine the broader impact of local ulama on community-based Islamic education.

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Introduction

Character education has become a central concern in contemporary Islamic education because the development of Muslim communities cannot be separated from the formation of moral integrity, religious commitment, social responsibility, and civic consciousness. Islamic education is not merely designed to transmit religious knowledge, but also to cultivate ethical awareness, spiritual discipline, and socially responsible behavior through learning, habituation, role modeling, and community engagement (Aisyah et al., 2022; Arif et al., 2023; Erwin et al., 2025). In the Islamic educational tradition, character formation is closely related to the cultivation of akhlaq al-karimah, which places moral behavior as the visible expression of faith, knowledge, and spiritual consciousness (Miftahuddin et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2022; Rozaq et al., 2022). Contemporary studies also emphasize that Islamic character education becomes effective when moral values are embodied in institutional culture, educator-student relations, community practices, and everyday religious

experiences rather than being limited to verbal instruction or formal curriculum delivery. Therefore, character education in Islamic societies requires not only formal learning systems, but also moral exemplars who are able to translate Islamic values into lived social practices.

In the Indonesian Muslim context, local ulama and kiai have historically played an important role in shaping religious life, transmitting Islamic knowledge, and strengthening the moral character of society. Kiai are not only religious teachers, but also cultural leaders, social mediators, moral authorities, and agents of transformation who connect Islamic teachings with the concrete needs of local communities (Hanafi et al., 2021; Saepudin et al., 2023; Shiddiq et al., 2024). Studies on pesantren and kiai leadership show that the authority of kiai is often built through knowledge mastery, personal piety, consistency of service, social legitimacy, and the ability to guide communities through religious, educational, and socio-political challenges. In many Muslim communities, the educational influence of kiai does not operate only in classrooms or pesantren dormitories, but also through mosques, majelis taklim, religious organizations, public advice, daily interaction, and collective religious rituals (Rahmat & Yahya, 2022; Saada, 2023; Subchi et al., 2022). This indicates that local ulama function as living models of Islamic character education because their values are communicated through consistent conduct, social commitment, and moral leadership.

KH Nasori, whose full name was Abukhaer Nasori, represents one of the local ulama whose educational role was deeply rooted in the socio-religious life of Tegal Regency. He was widely known as a charismatic religious figure who contributed to da'wah, pesantren education, classical Islamic text teaching, mosque-based community development, and the strengthening of Nahdlatul Ulama at the local level (Musthafa et al., 2023; Rohman & Muhtamiroh, 2022; Usman et al., 2021). His educational work was not limited to the transmission of Islamic knowledge, but also involved the internalization of sincerity, istiqamah, simplicity, social responsibility, religious commitment, and national loyalty through concrete social and religious practices (Anam et al., 2019; Fitriyah A. W. et al., 2023; Sarip et al., 2023). Through regular religious gatherings, santri mentoring, classical kitab teaching, and direct engagement with grassroots communities, KH Nasori demonstrated a form of character education that was personal, communal, contextual, and transformative. His role as Katib Syuriah of PCNU Tegal Regency and his involvement in bahtsul masail further illustrate that Islamic education was practiced not only as individual moral training, but also as a collective effort to guide society toward moderate religiosity, social cohesion, and commitment to national life (Mujahid, 2021; Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Syukri et al., 2024).

The significance of KH Nasori's role becomes more visible when placed within the historical and socio-religious context of Tegal society. His da'wah activities were carried out in a community setting where religious practices were influenced by local traditions, abangan culture, and competing ideological currents during the mid-twentieth century. In this context, his educational strategy was not confrontational, but transformative; he strengthened Islamic values through teaching, example, religious organization, mosque development, and community participation (Faturahman et al., 2023; Fitri et al., 2025; Pratomo, 2020). His involvement in the establishment of Masjid Agung Procot Slawi is particularly important because the mosque functioned not only as a place of worship, but also as a center of moral education, religious identity formation, and social empowerment (Pepilina et al., 2025; Ropi, 2019; Syukri et al., 2024). This confirms that Islamic character education can be effectively developed through socio-religious spaces that integrate worship, learning, moral guidance, and community service.

Previous studies have examined character education in pesantren, kiai leadership, Islamic religious moderation, and the role of Islamic institutions in shaping student morality. Muali et al. (2021) show that sufistic-based kiai leadership contributes to santri character formation through spiritual authority, discipline, and exemplary conduct. Dian et al. (2024) demonstrate that kiai leadership plays a strategic role in developing students' character in Islamic boarding schools. Kamal (2024) finds that pesantren-based character education is internalized through institutional culture, role modeling, habituation, and direct moral experience. Mulyana (2023) emphasizes that Islamic education can strengthen moderation values such as tolerance, justice, non-violence, and national commitment. Ahmadi and Hefny (2024) highlights that village kiai contribute to character education and social cohesion through habituation, advice, role modeling, motivation, and disciplinary measures. However, most of these studies focus on institutional pesantren contexts, student character formation, curriculum-based moderation, or general kiai leadership. Studies that specifically analyze a local ulama figure such as KH Nasori as a community-based model of Islamic character education remain limited.

This study addresses that gap by examining KH Nasori not merely as a biographical figure, but as an Islamic educational actor whose da'wah, teaching, organizational involvement, and social struggle contributed to the character building of the Muslim community in Tegal Regency. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to conceptualize the educational role of a local ulama as a living model of community-based character education, where values are internalized through personal exemplarity, mosque-centered education, pesantren learning, Nahdlatul Ulama activism, and social transformation. Unlike previous studies that mainly investigate kiai leadership within pesantren institutions or formal educational settings, this research highlights the broader socio-pedagogical role of a local ulama in shaping collective character within society. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of KH Nasori in developing character values among the Muslim community of Tegal Regency, identify the educational strategies he employed through da'wah, teaching, and organizational engagement, and formulate the relevance of his character education model for contemporary Islamic education.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a figure-study design to examine the role of KH Nasori as a local Islamic educational figure in shaping the character of the Muslim community in Tegal Regency. A figure-study design was selected because the research focuses on the life, ideas, educational practices, socio-religious contributions, and moral legacy of a particular figure within a specific historical and cultural context. This design is appropriate for Islamic education research because it enables the researcher to analyze not only biographical narratives, but also the values, strategies, and educational meanings embedded in the life practices of an influential religious figure. In this study, KH Nasori was positioned as a subject of educational inquiry because his da'wah activities, classical Islamic teaching, mosque-based community development, and involvement in Nahdlatul Ulama represent a contextual model of Islamic character education rooted in local Muslim society (Hasan, 2025; Isbah, 2020; Katni et al., 2022).

The primary data source of this study was the biography of KH Nasori written by Abdul Fatah, which provides information about his life history, educational background, da'wah activities, religious leadership, involvement in Nahdlatul Ulama, teaching practices, and contribution to the establishment of religious institutions in Tegal Regency. Secondary data were obtained from

scholarly books, journal articles, and relevant studies on Islamic education, character education, pesantren studies, kiai leadership, religious moderation, community-based education, and qualitative research methodology. The inclusion criteria for secondary sources were based on their relevance to the research focus, their contribution to understanding Islamic character education and local ulama leadership, and their academic credibility. Sources that discussed character education or Islamic education without conceptual relevance to the role of religious figures, community-based education, or Islamic moral formation were excluded from the analysis (Ma'arif, 2018; Manshuruddin et al., 2025; Nur et al., 2024).

Data were collected through documentation and library research. The documentation technique was used to identify and examine biographical materials, written narratives, and supporting documents related to KH Nasori's educational and socio-religious contributions. Library research was used to build the theoretical and comparative foundation of the study by reviewing literature on character education, kiai leadership, Islamic educational values, and community-based moral formation. Each source was examined to identify key information, educational values, leadership patterns, character-building strategies, and the social implications of KH Nasori's role. The collected data were then classified into several analytical themes, namely personal exemplarity, da'wah and religious teaching, classical kitab learning, mosque-centered education, Nahdlatul Ulama activism, and character values internalized within the community (Nur et al., 2024; Salim et al., 2024).

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data condensation was conducted by selecting biographical and theoretical information that directly related to KH Nasori's role in character building. Data display was carried out by organizing the findings into thematic categories and analytical tables to clarify the relationship between KH Nasori's educational practices and the character values formed in the community. Conclusion drawing was conducted by interpreting the meaning of the findings in relation to Islamic education theory, character education, and relevant previous studies. Verification was carried out through repeated reading of the data, comparison between primary and secondary sources, and consistency checking between the research focus, analytical categories, and final interpretation.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, source triangulation and theoretical triangulation were applied. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing the primary biographical source with secondary literature on Islamic education, kiai leadership, pesantren culture, religious moderation, and character education. Theoretical triangulation was used by interpreting the data through several conceptual perspectives, including Islamic character education, moral exemplarity, community-based education, and socio-religious leadership. These procedures were intended to reduce subjective bias and ensure that the interpretation of KH Nasori's role was not limited to descriptive biography, but developed into a systematic educational analysis. Therefore, the methodological process enabled this study to produce a credible and conceptually grounded explanation of how a local ulama contributed to character building within the Muslim community.

Result and Discussion

KH Nasori as a Local Islamic Educational Figure

The findings show that KH Nasori played a significant role as a local Islamic educational figure whose influence extended beyond formal religious teaching. His role was constructed through a combination of personal piety, religious knowledge, social engagement, da'wah activities, classical

Islamic teaching, and organizational commitment. The primary biographical source indicates that KH Nasori was not merely known as a preacher or religious teacher, but also as a community guide whose educational influence was embedded in the daily religious and social life of the Muslim community in Tegal Regency. His figure represents the role of local ulama as moral educators who transmit Islamic values through both verbal teaching and lived example.

Table 1. KH Nasori’s Educational Roles in Community Character Building

Educational Role	Form of Practice	Character Values Internalized
Religious teacher	Teaching classical Islamic texts and guiding religious learning	Religiosity, discipline, knowledge-seeking
Da’wah figure	Conducting religious preaching and community guidance	Moral awareness, religious commitment, social responsibility
Role model	Demonstrating sincerity, simplicity, and consistency in service	Sincerity, humility, istiqamah
NU activist	Strengthening Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah values and organizational commitment	Moderation, national commitment, collective responsibility
Mosque initiator	Supporting the development of Masjid Agung Procot Slawi as a religious center	Community empowerment, worship discipline, social cohesion

Table 1 shows that KH Nasori’s educational role was multidimensional. His teaching activities strengthened religious understanding, while his da’wah activities shaped moral awareness among the community. His personal conduct functioned as a living example of sincerity, humility, and istiqamah. Meanwhile, his involvement in Nahdlatul Ulama strengthened moderate Islamic identity and national commitment. The establishment and development of mosque-based religious life further reinforced the role of public religious spaces as centers for character formation.

Character Values Internalized through KH Nasori’s Educational Practices

The study found several dominant character values internalized through KH Nasori’s educational and socio-religious practices, namely religiosity, sincerity, istiqamah, simplicity, social responsibility, moral courage, moderation, and national commitment. These values were not transmitted through a formal written curriculum, but through recurring religious activities, social interaction, organizational engagement, and personal exemplarity. The value of sincerity was reflected in his commitment to da’wah and community service without material orientation. Istiqamah was reflected in his consistency in guiding society despite socio-political challenges. Social responsibility appeared through his involvement in religious institutions and community development, while national commitment was evident in his contribution to strengthening Nahdlatul Ulama and moderate Islamic identity.

Table 2. Character Values in KH Nasori’s Educational Model

Character Value	Educational Expression	Social Meaning
Religiosity	Teaching Islamic knowledge, leading religious activities, and guiding worship practices	Strengthening Islamic identity and religious awareness
Sincerity	Serving the community without material orientation	Building moral integrity and selfless service
Istiqamah	Consistent da’wah and religious guidance	Cultivating perseverance and commitment
Simplicity	Living modestly and prioritizing service	Encouraging humility and ethical self-control

Social responsibility	Engaging in community religious development	Strengthening solidarity and public concern
Moral courage	Defending religious principles amid ideological contestation	Building firmness, resilience, and ethical leadership
Moderation	Promoting Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah values through NU	Forming balanced and tolerant religious attitudes
National commitment	Supporting religious and social harmony within national life	Strengthening civic responsibility and collective identity

Table 2 indicates that the character values associated with KH Nasori's educational practices were both individual and collective. Values such as sincerity, istiqamah, and simplicity shaped personal morality, while social responsibility, moderation, and national commitment shaped collective character. This suggests that KH Nasori's character education model did not separate personal piety from social responsibility. Instead, religious character was constructed as an integration of worship, moral discipline, communal service, and civic commitment.

Educational Strategies: Exemplarity, Da'wah, Teaching, and Social Engagement

The findings reveal that KH Nasori's strategy of character education was based on four major patterns: personal exemplarity, religious da'wah, classical Islamic teaching, and social engagement. Personal exemplarity was the foundation because the community learned values by observing his behavior, discipline, simplicity, and commitment. Religious da'wah functioned as a medium for communicating Islamic values in language that was accessible to the community. Classical Islamic teaching strengthened the intellectual and normative basis of religious character. Social engagement connected Islamic education with real community needs, including mosque development, organizational strengthening, and moral guidance.

Table 3. Strategies of Character Education Practiced by KH Nasori

Strategy	Implementation	Educational Contribution
Personal exemplarity	Demonstrating sincerity, discipline, simplicity, and commitment	Providing a living model of Islamic morality
Religious da'wah	Delivering sermons, advice, and religious guidance	Transmitting Islamic values to the wider community
Classical Islamic teaching	Teaching kitab-based religious knowledge	Strengthening religious literacy and moral reasoning
Pesantren-based mentoring	Guiding santri and religious learners	Developing discipline, obedience, and spiritual awareness
NU organizational involvement	Participating in religious deliberation and community leadership	Strengthening moderation and collective responsibility
Mosque-centered education	Developing the mosque as a center of worship and learning	Building community-based religious character

Table 3 demonstrates that KH Nasori's educational strategies were contextual and community-oriented. His model of character education did not depend solely on formal instruction, but was embedded in daily religious practices, social relations, institutional participation, and public religious spaces. These strategies enabled the internalization of Islamic values to occur not only at the individual level, but also within the broader structure of community life.

Relevance of KH Nasori's Character Education Model for Contemporary Islamic Education

The findings indicate that KH Nasori's model of character education remains highly relevant for contemporary Islamic education because it emphasizes the integration of knowledge, exemplarity,

habituation, and social responsibility. In a modern context where character education is often reduced to formal curriculum documents, classroom materials, or institutional slogans, KH Nasori's educational model demonstrates that character formation requires the living presence of moral authority. His educational practices show that values are most effectively internalized when educators and religious leaders consistently embody the virtues they teach. Therefore, Islamic character education should not be understood merely as the transmission of religious knowledge, but as a process of moral cultivation through example, interaction, service, and sustained community engagement.

The relevance of KH Nasori's model can also be seen in its ability to connect Islamic learning with real social life. His da'wah, classical Islamic text teaching, mosque-centered activities, pesantren-based mentoring, and involvement in Nahdlatul Ulama illustrate that character education takes place not only in formal classrooms but also within community spaces. This is important for contemporary Islamic education because many institutions still tend to separate religious instruction from social practice. KH Nasori's model offers a corrective perspective: religious knowledge must lead to ethical action, public responsibility, and social benefit. Through this model, values such as sincerity, istiqamah, simplicity, moral courage, moderation, and national commitment are not taught as abstract concepts, but are practiced through daily religious and social engagement.

For Islamic schools, madrasahs, and pesantren, KH Nasori's model provides a strong foundation for developing character education programs that are holistic and contextual. His approach shows that students and communities need educators who function not only as knowledge transmitters but also as moral exemplars, spiritual mentors, and social guides. This is particularly relevant in the current educational climate, where character education is often challenged by individualism, moral inconsistency, digital disruption, and weakening social responsibility. By emphasizing exemplarity and habituation, KH Nasori's model encourages Islamic education institutions to strengthen institutional culture, teacher-student relationships, community involvement, and religious practices as integrated components of character formation.

The model is also relevant for strengthening religious moderation and civic responsibility in contemporary Muslim society. KH Nasori's active engagement in Nahdlatul Ulama and his commitment to Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah values indicate that Islamic character education must cultivate balanced religiosity, tolerance, social harmony, and national commitment. This dimension is crucial because contemporary Islamic education is not only expected to produce religiously knowledgeable individuals, but also Muslims who are socially responsible, nationally committed, and capable of living peacefully within plural societies. Thus, KH Nasori's model contributes to the development of Islamic education that is both spiritually rooted and socially constructive.

Overall, KH Nasori's character education model offers a contextual framework for contemporary Islamic education by integrating spiritual formation, moral exemplarity, community empowerment, and civic consciousness. Its relevance lies in its ability to bridge formal education and lived religious practice, individual piety and social responsibility, as well as local Islamic tradition and national commitment. For contemporary Islamic education institutions, this model implies the need to revitalize the role of local ulama, kiai, teachers, and religious leaders as living models of character education. In this sense, KH Nasori's legacy provides an important reminder that genuine Islamic character education is not only taught, but embodied, practiced, and sustained within the life of the community.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that KH Nasori's role in character building was rooted in the integration of personal exemplarity, religious teaching, da'wah, mosque-centered education, and organizational activism. This confirms the central argument that Islamic character education is most effective when moral values are embodied in the life of an educator and transmitted through social practice. This finding is consistent with Muali et al. (2021), who found that sufistic-based kiai leadership contributes to the formation of santri character through spiritual authority, discipline, and exemplary behavior. The similarity lies in the emphasis on kiai as moral exemplars. However, this study extends that finding by showing that KH Nasori's character-building role was not limited to pesantren students, but reached the wider Muslim community through da'wah, mosque development, and Nahdlatul Ulama activism.

The result also supports Dian et al. (2024), who argue that kiai leadership plays a strategic role in developing students' character in Islamic boarding schools. Both studies recognize that kiai leadership is not merely administrative, but moral and pedagogical. Nevertheless, the present study differs because it analyzes a local ulama whose educational influence operated across nonformal and community-based contexts rather than within a single pesantren institution. This distinction is important because it shows that the character-building role of a kiai may function beyond institutional boundaries and may shape the collective moral orientation of society.

The finding that KH Nasori internalized values through habitual religious practices and social interaction is also aligned with Kamal & Kibtiyah (2024), who explains that pesantren-based character education is internalized through institutional culture, educator-student relationships, habituation, and direct moral experience. The similarity lies in the view that character education is not transmitted through verbal instruction alone. However, this study adds that in the case of KH Nasori, habituation was not only institutional but also communal. Religious gatherings, mosque activities, NU forums, and daily social interaction became educational spaces where values such as sincerity, istiqamah, moderation, and social responsibility were formed.

The study further resonates with Mulyana (2023), who emphasizes that Islamic education can strengthen religious moderation through values such as non-violence, tolerance, fairness, egalitarianism, and national commitment. KH Nasori's involvement in Nahdlatul Ulama and his commitment to Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah indicate that his character education model was closely connected to moderate Islamic identity and national commitment. While Mulyana focuses on religious moderation in Islamic education textbooks and schools, this study demonstrates that moderation can also be transmitted through the leadership and social practices of local ulama. This finding enriches the discourse on religious moderation by showing that local religious figures can function as living transmitters of moderate Islamic values.

The findings also strengthen Ahmadi and Hefny (2024) study on village kiai leadership, which highlights the contribution of local kiai to character education and social cohesion in rural Muslim communities through role modeling, advice, motivation, habituation, and discipline. The similarity is clear in the emphasis on community-based character education. However, this study provides a more specific historical-pedagogical analysis by focusing on KH Nasori's contribution to Tegal society, especially through his da'wah, mosque-centered education, and organizational struggle in Nahdlatul Ulama. Therefore, the present study contributes to a deeper understanding of how local ulama leadership becomes a socio-educational force in shaping collective character.

The study also corresponds with Arafat and Helmi (2025) who explains that kiai occupy a central position in organizing religious, educational, and social activities within pesantren environments. In the case of KH Nasori, this centrality appeared not only in pesantren-related activities but also in public religious spaces and social institutions. His educational role indicates that the authority of local ulama is built through knowledge, personal integrity, social service, and consistency of struggle. This finding suggests that the moral authority of ulama is educationally powerful because it provides communities with an accessible model of Islamic values in everyday life.

The relevance of KH Nasori's community-based character education model is further strengthened by recent studies conducted by Sufian and colleagues. Al Khansa et al. (2024) showed that an integrated Islamic Religious Education learning model can enhance students' understanding of religious values and engagement by linking Islamic concepts with real-life contexts, thereby enabling values such as honesty, discipline, and cooperation to be internalized through interactive and meaningful learning experiences. This finding is consistent with KH Nasori's educational practices, in which Islamic values were not transmitted as abstract doctrines but embodied through da'wah, mosque-centered education, social interaction, and community service. Similarly, Erlina et al. (2025) emphasized that contextualized Arabic learning infused with religious moderation values can foster inclusive, tolerant, and dialogic attitudes. This supports the present study's finding that KH Nasori's involvement in Nahdlatul Ulama and Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah tradition functioned as an important medium for cultivating moderation, moral responsibility, and national commitment among the Muslim community.

In addition, Koderi et al. (2023) demonstrated that learning media based on local wisdom can effectively strengthen students' communication skills while making learning more engaging and culturally meaningful. Although their study focused on Arabic communication skills through Lampung local wisdom film, its implication is relevant to KH Nasori's model because both highlight the pedagogical power of local culture and community-based religious experience in value internalization. KH Nasori's use of mosque activities, classical Islamic teaching, and local social engagement indicates that character education becomes more effective when religious knowledge is connected to the lived culture of the community. Moreover, Rokhman et al. (2024) showed that scientific-based academic supervision can improve educational quality and strengthen educator competence. This finding supports the practical implication of the present study that Islamic education institutions, pesantren, mosques, and socio-religious organizations need structured mentoring, supervision, and institutional support to preserve the role of local ulama as living models of character education.

The novelty of this study lies in its conceptualization of KH Nasori as a living model of community-based Islamic character education. Previous studies have mainly focused on kiai leadership within pesantren, character education for santri, or institutional models of religious moderation. This study offers a different contribution by examining how a local ulama shaped community character through a combination of personal exemplarity, da'wah, kitab teaching, mosque-centered education, and Nahdlatul Ulama activism. The study therefore broadens the scope of Islamic character education from formal and pesantren-based settings to community-based socio-religious transformation.

The theoretical implication of this study is that Islamic character education should be understood not only as a curricular or institutional process, but also as a socio-pedagogical process embodied by religious figures within society. KH Nasori's model shows that character values are internalized through the interaction between moral authority, religious knowledge, social trust, and community participation. Practically, this study implies that Islamic schools, madrasahs, pesantren, mosques, and socio-religious organizations need to strengthen the role of local ulama, kiai, and religious teachers as living models of character education. Character education programs should not only emphasize learning materials, but also cultivate exemplary figures, community-based religious activities, and value-oriented institutional cultures.

This study has several limitations. First, it uses a figure-study design based primarily on biographical and documentary sources; therefore, the findings are interpretive and depend on the availability and credibility of written materials. Second, this study does not involve direct interviews with community members, students, or religious leaders who experienced KH Nasori's influence, so the social impact of his role is reconstructed mainly through documentary analysis. Third, the study focuses on one local ulama in Tegal Regency, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or religious communities. Future research may use oral history, ethnography, case study, or comparative figure-study designs to examine the educational roles of other local ulama across different socio-cultural contexts. Further studies may also develop a more systematic framework for assessing the impact of local ulama on community-based Islamic character education.

Conclusion

This study concludes that KH Nasori played a significant role as a local Islamic educational figure in shaping the character of the Muslim community in Tegal Regency through personal exemplarity, religious da'wah, classical Islamic teaching, mosque-centered education, pesantren-based mentoring, and active engagement in Nahdlatul Ulama. The character values internalized through his educational practices include religiosity, sincerity, istiqamah, simplicity, social responsibility, moral courage, moderation, and national commitment. These findings demonstrate that Islamic character education is not confined to formal classrooms or written curricula, but can develop effectively through the presence of local ulama as living moral models within society. The novelty of this study lies in its conceptualization of KH Nasori's role as a community-based model of Islamic character education that integrates spiritual, moral, social, and civic dimensions. The study implies that Islamic education institutions, pesantren, mosques, and socio-religious organizations need to strengthen the role of local religious figures in character education programs. However, because this research relies on documentary and biographical analysis, future studies are recommended to use interviews, oral history, ethnography, or comparative case studies to obtain a broader and more empirically grounded understanding of the role of local ulama in shaping community character.

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