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AN ETHNOPEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MUSLIMAT NAHDLATUL ULAMA MAJELIS TAKLIM LEARNING SYSTEM BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM IN STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS CHARACTER

ANALISIS ETNOPEDAGOGIK SISTEM PEMBELAJARAN MAJELIS TAKLIM MUSLIMAT NAHDLATUL ULAMA BERBASIS KEARIFAN LOKAL DALAM PENGUATAN KARAKTER RELIGIUS MASYARAKAT

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Abstract

The Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Majelis Taklim is a non-formal Islamic educational institution that plays a vital role in disseminating religious knowledge while preserving local cultural values. Amid the wave of globalization, the existence of Majelis Taklim holds strategic significance for preserving the cultural identity of the community through a learning process rooted in local wisdom. The purpose of this study is to analyze the internalization of Banten cultural values within the educational system of the Nahdlatul Ulama Women's Majelis Taklim in Serang City, as well as to identify the role of ethnopedagogy in strengthening the religious character of the community. This study employs a qualitative approach using ethnopedagogical methods. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and a literature review, involving board members, religious teachers (ustazah), community leaders, and Majelis Taklim members selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, interpretation of cultural meanings, and drawing conclusions, applying source and technique triangulation to ensure data validity. This process is realized through role modeling, habit formation, regular religious study sessions, the practice of religious traditions, and ongoing intergenerational interaction. The ethnopedagogical approach has proven effective in strengthening cultural identity, enhancing religious character, and preserving local wisdom amid social change. This study concludes that the Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama Majelis Taklim in Serang City functions as an effective agent of cultural and religious education in integrating Islamic teachings with local culture, thereby contributing to the development of a non-formal Islamic education model based on local wisdom.

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Keywords : Ethnopedagogy, Banten Culture, Local Wisdom, Majelis Taklim, Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama, Nonformal Islamic Education.

Abstrak

Majelis Taklim Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) adalah lembaga pendidikan Islam nonformal yang memainkan peran penting dalam penyebaran pengetahuan keagamaan sekaligus pelestarian nilai-nilai budaya lokal. Di tengah gelombang globalisasi, keberadaan Majelis Taklim memiliki arti strategis untuk melestarikan identitas budaya masyarakat melalui proses pembelajaran yang berakar pada kearifan lokal. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis internalisasi nilai-nilai budaya Banten dalam sistem pendidikan Majelis Taklim perempuan Nahdlatul Ulama di Kota Serang, serta mengidentifikasi peran etnopedagogi dalam memperkuat karakter keagamaan masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode etnopedagogi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dokumentasi, dan tinjauan pustaka, dengan melibatkan anggota pengurus, guru agama (ustazah), tokoh masyarakat, serta anggota Majelis Taklim yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel secara sengaja. Analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, interpretasi makna budaya, dan penarikan kesimpulan, dengan menerapkan triangulasi sumber dan teknik untuk menjamin validitas data. Proses tersebut diwujudkan melalui keteladanan, pembiasaan, pengajian rutin, praktik tradisi keagamaan, dan interaksi antargenerasi yang berlangsung secara berkesinambungan. Pendekatan etnopedagogik terbukti mampu memperkuat identitas budaya, meningkatkan karakter religius, serta menjaga keberlangsungan kearifan lokal di tengah perubahan sosial. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Majelis Taklim Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama di Kota Serang berfungsi sebagai agen pendidikan budaya dan keagamaan yang efektif dalam mengintegrasikan ajaran Islam dengan budaya lokal sehingga berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan model pendidikan Islam nonformal berbasis kearifan lokal.

Kata Kunci : Etnopedagogik, Budaya Banten, Kearifan Lokal, Majelis Taklim, Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama, Pendidikan Islam Nonformal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious values-based education is one of the strategic priorities in the development of Indonesia's human resources, particularly in the context of rapid globalization, digitalization, and the secularization of values, all of which have the potential to erode the moral and religious foundations of society. The swift pace of modernization often presents a paradox: while it facilitates greater access to information and knowledge, it also tends to shift people's orientation toward individualism, materialism, and pragmatism, distancing them from the noble values of religion and local culture. This situation underscores the need for alternative educational spaces that can preserve and revitalize religious values through approaches that are grounded in and relevant to the realities of everyday community life. In this context, non-formal Islamic education provided through *majelis taklim* (Islamic study circles) plays a strategic role as a lifelong learning institution. It not only imparts religious knowledge but also strengthens religious character, fosters social solidarity, and contributes to the preservation of local cultural traditions within the community (Sururin, 2025).

As a non-formal Islamic educational institution, *majelis taklim* (Islamic study circles) has long been an integral part of Indonesia's social and religious life. Beyond serving as a medium for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, *majelis taklim* functions as a space for character formation, the strengthening of social capital, and community empowerment through various religious and social activities. Recent studies indicate that learning activities conducted in *majelis taklim* significantly enhance religious literacy, foster social cohesion, and reinforce the religious identity of participants through participatory and community-based learning processes (Latif, 2026).

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Among the various religious organizations that oversee *majelis taklim* in Indonesia, *Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama* (Muslimat NU) is one of the country's most prominent Muslim women's organizations. It has consistently upheld religious values as the philosophical foundation of its movement. Through its cultural-religious approach, Muslimat NU has successfully reached women across diverse social strata, including traditional communities that are often overlooked by conventional empowerment programs. This approach demonstrates that Islamic values are not incompatible with women's empowerment; rather, they serve as a source of inspiration and legitimacy for such initiatives. The learning system developed within Muslimat NU's *majelis taklim* is not merely derived from formal Western educational paradigms. Instead, it represents a synthesis of adult learning principles (andragogy) and the distinctive cultural and religious values of Nahdlatul Ulama, thereby creating an authentic and contextually relevant lifelong learning ecosystem that reflects the socio-cultural realities of local communities.

This phenomenon highlights the importance of an ethnopedagogical perspective in understanding community-based religious learning systems. Ethnopedagogy refers to the study of educational practices rooted in a community's local wisdom, in which the values, norms, and customs embedded within local culture serve both as the foundation and as the medium of learning. This perspective emphasizes that education cannot be separated from its socio-cultural context. Accordingly, local wisdom functions not only as a source of values but also as a pedagogical strategy that connects the transmission of religious knowledge with the reinforcement of cultural identity. Recent studies have demonstrated that ethnopedagogical approaches enhance the effectiveness of character education because learners internalize values through cultural experiences that have become an integral part of their daily lives (Hasanah et al., 2026).

Serang, the administrative capital of Banten Province, possesses a rich and distinctive local culture that has been profoundly shaped by Islamic traditions. The religious character of Banten society is reflected in various cultural practices, including Panjang Mulud, which commemorates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); pilgrimages to the tombs of respected Islamic scholars and saints; Debus, a traditional cultural performance; and numerous other religious rituals that embody values of cooperation, simplicity, honesty, and spirituality. These elements of local wisdom are not merely cultural heritage but also serve as living instruments of character formation, transmitted across generations and practiced within community life, including in religious learning activities such as *majelis taklim*. Consequently, Muslimat NU *majelis taklim* in Serang occupies a unique position at the intersection of Nahdlatul Ulama's religious educational tradition and the local wisdom distinctive to Banten society. These two elements are believed to work synergistically in strengthening the religious character of the local community.

Previous studies have extensively examined the role of *majelis taklim* in fostering the religious character of both communities and youth through regular Qur'anic studies, religious lectures (*tausiyah*), and routine guidance, all of which have been shown to improve participants' religious understanding and commitment. Other studies emphasize the role of *majelis taklim* as a comprehensive institution for education, character formation, and community empowerment, encompassing educational, social, and developmental functions. Within the context of local wisdom, several studies have confirmed the effectiveness of cultural values in shaping character across various educational levels and social settings. Likewise, ethnopedagogical research has illustrated how local arts and traditions, such as *Reog*, *Wayang Klithik*, and the *Ngaasin* tradition, can be utilized as culturally grounded pedagogical tools to strengthen students' character. More recent studies focusing on Muslimat NU *majelis taklim* have begun to reveal a lifelong learning model that integrates the principles of andragogy with the cultural values and religious teachings of Nahdlatul Ulama.

Nevertheless, studies that specifically analyze the learning system of Muslimat NU *majelis taklim* through an ethnopedagogical lens while comprehensively integrating the local wisdom of Serang City and Banten remain scarce. Previous research has generally examined *majelis taklim* and local wisdom as separate subjects or has explored ethnopedagogy primarily within formal education

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and traditional arts, without adequately investigating how women's non-formal Islamic educational institutions such as Muslimat NU design, manage, and implement locally grounded learning systems to sustainably strengthen the religious character of society. This gap represents an important scholarly opportunity, as a deeper understanding of the ethnopedagogical model employed by Muslimat NU *majelis taklim* can contribute theoretically to the development of culturally rooted non-formal Islamic education while also offering practical insights for strengthening da'wah strategies and character education that are responsive to Indonesia's diverse local contexts.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze, from an ethnopedagogical perspective, the learning methods implemented by Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama *Majelis Taklim* in Serang City based on local wisdom. Specifically, the study investigates how these learning activities contribute to strengthening the religious character of the community. It seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of the forms of local wisdom integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices of *majelis taklim*. Furthermore, the study explores the pedagogical strategies employed by female Islamic instructors (*ustazah*) to instill religious values through culturally grounded approaches, as well as the factors that facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of the learning process. The findings are expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of ethnopedagogical models in non-formal Islamic education while also offering practical guidance for *majelis taklim* administrators, Muslimat NU organizations, and policymakers concerned with character education at both local and national levels.

Based on the foregoing context, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What forms of local wisdom are integrated into the learning system of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang City? (2) How is the ethnopedagogical approach implemented in the learning activities of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang City? and (3) How does this learning system contribute to strengthening the religious character of the community? In line with these questions, the study aims to identify and analyze the forms of local wisdom incorporated into the learning system, examine the implementation of ethnopedagogical approaches, and explain their contribution to strengthening the religious character of the community within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang City. Ultimately, the study seeks to propose a conceptual model that enriches the understanding of local wisdom-based non-formal Islamic education in Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive ethnographic design. This approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the socio-religious phenomena embedded in the educational system of *Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Majelis Taklim* in Serang, which cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurements alone. Qualitative research is conducted in natural settings, with the researcher serving as the primary research instrument. It emphasizes descriptive inquiry, focuses on processes rather than outcomes, utilizes inductive data analysis, and seeks to uncover the meanings underlying the phenomena being investigated. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the behaviors, values, beliefs, and learning practices within the Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* community from the participants' own perspectives (the emic perspective).

An ethnographic design was adopted because this study seeks to explore the local wisdom and cultural patterns embedded in the community-based religious learning system. Ethnography is broadly understood as a written description of a culture or social group developed through prolonged and in-depth observation of people's socio-cultural lives in their natural settings. Through this design, the researcher not only described the learning activities conducted in Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang but also examined the meanings, symbols, and values of local wisdom embedded in these educational practices and interpreted how these values contribute to strengthening the religious character of the community. In this study, ethnopedagogy served as the analytical framework for

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understanding the relationship between educational practices, local culture, and character development. Accordingly, the data were interpreted from pedagogical, anthropological, and cultural perspectives.

Research Site and Duration

The study was conducted at several Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) *Majelis Taklim* located in Serang City, Banten Province. These sites were purposively selected based on the activeness of their learning activities, representation of different sub-districts, and the diversity of local wisdom practices characterizing each *Majelis Taklim*. Serang was chosen because it possesses a strongly religious community and a rich Islamic cultural heritage, including traditions such as Panjang Mulud, pilgrimage (*ziarah*), and various forms of Islamic cultural expression, all of which are considered to influence the learning practices of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*. The study was conducted over approximately six months, encompassing proposal preparation, fieldwork, data analysis, and report writing.

Data Sources and Participants

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected directly from participants through in-depth interviews and participant observation of learning activities within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*. Secondary data were obtained from supporting documents, including organizational archives, teaching materials, activity reports, photographs, videos, previous research findings, and relevant scholarly publications.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which was subsequently expanded through snowball sampling whenever additional relevant informants were identified. The key participants included: (1) administrators and female Islamic instructors (*ustazah*) of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* who possessed comprehensive knowledge of the curriculum and instructional methods; (2) officials of the Serang Branch of Muslimat NU responsible for organizational policies concerning *Majelis Taklim* development; (3) *jamaah* (members or participants) who directly experienced the learning process and internalization of values; and (4) community leaders or local cultural experts knowledgeable about the local wisdom of Serang. The number of participants was not predetermined but followed the principle of data saturation, whereby data collection ceased once no substantially new information emerged.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis.

- Participant observation enabled the researcher to directly observe learning activities, including Qur'anic memorization sessions, instructional methods, interactions between instructors and participants, the incorporation of local symbols and traditions into learning, and the surrounding socio-cultural environment. This technique facilitated the collection of contextual information that could not be captured solely through interviews.
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted using an interview guide while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions as new issues emerged during fieldwork. Interviews explored participants' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations regarding the implementation of local wisdom-based learning and its contribution to strengthening religious character.
- Document analysis involved reviewing written and audiovisual materials relevant to the study, including curricula, Qur'anic learning programs, activity schedules, photographs, video recordings, and organizational policy documents. These materials served to complement and triangulate the data obtained through observations and interviews.

Research Instrument

Consistent with qualitative research principles, the researcher functioned as the primary research instrument, responsible for formulating research questions, collecting and organizing data, evaluating data quality, interpreting findings, and drawing conclusions. To support systematic data collection, several research instruments were employed, including observation guides, interview

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protocols, audio recorders, cameras for visual documentation, and field notes. Prior to field implementation, the interview and observation instruments were reviewed by academic supervisors and experts in non-formal Islamic education and cultural studies to ensure their relevance and appropriateness.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of four interrelated and continuous stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. These analytical procedures were aligned with the research questions, methodological framework, and ethnopedagogical perspective guiding the study.

- Data reduction involved synthesizing the collected data, selecting the most relevant information, and focusing on themes related to local wisdom, ethnopedagogical practices, and the strengthening of religious character, while excluding information that was not pertinent to the objectives of the study.
- Data display was conducted by organizing the reduced data into descriptive narratives, thematic matrices, and conceptual diagrams to facilitate the identification of relationships among categories, thereby supporting data interpretation and the formulation of conclusions.
- Conclusion drawing and verification were carried out continuously throughout the research process, beginning with the initial stage of data collection. Preliminary conclusions remained tentative and were continuously refined and verified against newly collected field data until credible and scientifically justifiable findings were obtained.

In addition to the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, this study also adopted Spradley's ethnographic analytical framework, particularly domain analysis and cultural theme analysis, to identify categories of local wisdom and the cultural patterns underlying the learning system of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*. Domain analysis was employed to classify the major categories emerging from the data, whereas cultural theme analysis was used to identify the underlying cultural values that connected various domains of local wisdom with the strengthening of the community's religious character.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, this study employed the four widely accepted criteria for establishing rigor in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

- Credibility was established through prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, and triangulation. Three forms of triangulation were employed: source triangulation, by comparing information obtained from different participants; methodological triangulation, by comparing data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis; and time triangulation, by examining the consistency of findings across different periods of observation.
- Transferability was enhanced by providing rich, detailed, and contextual descriptions of the research setting, participants, and findings. Such thick description enables readers to assess the applicability of the study's findings to other Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* with similar characteristics and socio-cultural contexts.
- Dependability and confirmability were ensured through the maintenance of an audit trail, documenting every stage of the research process—from data collection and analysis to the development of conclusions. This audit process, reviewed by academic supervisors or peer researchers, ensured that the findings were firmly grounded in empirical field data rather than the researcher's personal interpretations or biases.

In addition to these procedures, member checking was conducted by presenting the preliminary findings to key participants to verify that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected their experiences, perspectives, and intended meanings. This step was particularly important because ethnopedagogical research requires an authentic understanding of the community's *emic* perspective while minimizing the influence of researcher bias.

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Research Procedure

The study was conducted through a series of interrelated stages as follows:

- Pre-field stage. This stage involved conducting a preliminary literature review, developing the research proposal, selecting the research sites and participants, preparing the research instruments, and obtaining research permits from the relevant authorities, including the Serang Branch of Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the administrators of the selected *Majelis Taklim*.
- Fieldwork stage. This stage consisted of participant observation of the learning process, conducting in-depth interviews with all categories of participants, and collecting documents and other supporting materials relevant to the study.
- Data analysis stage. This stage included transcribing interview recordings, reducing and categorizing the data, presenting the findings through descriptive narratives and thematic matrices, and interpreting the data using an ethnopedagogical theoretical framework.
- Report writing stage. This final stage involved systematically preparing the research report, validating the findings through member checking, and formulating conclusions and recommendations for the development of a local wisdom-based learning model for Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*.

Through these interconnected stages, the study is expected to generate a comprehensive, systematic, and evidence-based understanding of the forms of local wisdom, the implementation of ethnopedagogical approaches, and the contribution of the Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* learning system in Serang to strengthening the religious character of the community.

3. RESULT AND DISCCUSSION

Overview of the Research Site

Serang, the capital of Banten Province, has a well-established and active network of *Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) organizations extending to the sub-district level. One of the most prominent religious institutions within this organizational structure is the *Majelis Taklim*, which plays a significant role in fostering community development and religious education. Field observations and documentary analysis revealed that Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang regularly organizes weekly religious learning sessions attended by women from diverse age groups, ranging from housewives to older adults. These learning activities are conducted not only in mosques and prayer halls but also on a rotating basis in members' homes, thereby strengthening social interaction and community cohesion among the people of Banten. The instructional content includes Islamic creed (*aqidah*), practical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Islamic ethics (*akhlaq*), Qur'anic recitation improvement (*tahsin*), Qur'an memorization (*tahfiz*), and the study of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), with learning materials selected according to the participants' educational backgrounds and learning needs. Sururin (2025) explains that Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama *Majelis Taklim* adopts a lifelong learning model that integrates Islamic values, principles of andragogy, and local wisdom. This integrated approach enables the learning process to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of participants while accommodating the socio-cultural context of the local community.

The organizational structure of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang generally consists of a female Islamic instructor (*ustazah*) serving as the principal educator, supported by an executive committee responsible for administrative affairs, activity scheduling, logistical arrangements, and coordination of the *jamaah* (participants). This collective and participatory leadership structure fosters a learning environment characterized by openness, dialogue, and a strong sense of kinship. Such conditions provide a conducive foundation for the implementation of ethnopedagogical practices, whereby religious instruction extends beyond the transmission of Islamic knowledge to incorporate local cultural values through everyday social interactions and community experiences. These findings are consistent with those of Darwis et al. (2025), who argue that ethnopedagogical approaches effectively utilize local culture as a pedagogical resource for character development, strengthening cultural identity, and enhancing the relevance of learning to community life.

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A. Forms of Local Wisdom Integrated into the Learning System of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*

The findings indicate that the learning system implemented in Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang is deeply embedded within the cultural context of the local community rather than operating in a cultural vacuum. The educational process consistently incorporates various forms of local wisdom that have long been practiced and preserved within Banten society. These culturally grounded elements not only enrich the learning experience but also serve as important pedagogical resources for transmitting religious values and strengthening the religious character of the community. The study identified five major categories of local wisdom that are systematically integrated into the learning process. These categories are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Forms of Local Wisdom Integrated into the Learning System of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang City

Theme/Category	Form of Local Wisdom	Manifestation in the Learning Process	Character Values Strengthened
Ritual Traditions	*Panjang Mulud* celebration and *shalawat* recitation	Learning sessions begin with the collective recitation of *shalawat* and communal prayers	Love for the Prophet Muhammad, spiritual devotion, togetherness
Social Bonding Traditions	Rotating social gatherings *(arisan)* and grave pilgrimage *(ziarah kubur)*	Learning activities are held on a rotating basis in members' homes and include visits to the graves of respected Islamic scholars as part of the religious gathering	Social solidarity, respect for ancestors and religious scholars, humility
Language and Communication	Local Banten and Sundanese expressions	Learning is delivered using a combination of Indonesian and local languages (Sundanese and Bantenese Javanese), together with locally familiar expressions	Emotional connectedness, openness in communication, mutual understanding
Local Arts and Cultural Expressions	Marawis, Qasidah, unsur seni Debus	Traditional Islamic arts are incorporated into commemorations of Islamic holy days organized by the *Majelis Taklim*	Cultural appreciation, creativity, pride in cultural identity
Social Ethos	Mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and kinship	Participants collectively organize refreshments, meeting venues, and financial contributions for learning activities	Social responsibility, collective responsibility, generosity

Source: Authors' compilation based on field observations and interview data

1. Ritual Traditions: *Panjang Mulud* and *Shalawat* Recitation

The findings revealed that the *Panjang Mulud* tradition, which is deeply embedded in Banten society as a commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), has been

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incorporated into the regular learning activities of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*. This integration is reflected in the recitation of *shalawat*, the reading of *Al-Barzanji* or *Simt al-Durar*, and collective prayers during specific religious occasions. One participant explained:

"Every month during the Mawlid celebration, we always hold collective shalawat recitations following the Panjang Mulud tradition. In this way, participants do not only study fiqh or tawhid, but also relive the atmosphere of the Mawlid celebration, which has become a long-standing tradition passed down through generations in Serang." (IN1, Ustazah of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*, interview)

This practice reinforces previous findings suggesting that the *Panjang Mulud* tradition in Serang functions not merely as a religious ritual but also as a means of preserving cultural identity, strengthening social solidarity, and transmitting Islamic values across generations. By integrating Islamic teachings with local cultural traditions, the practice nurtures devotion to the Prophet Muhammad while reinforcing the Islamic identity of the Banten community. Mutaqin et al. (2025) argue that *Panjang Mulud* represents a form of religious cultural heritage that serves as an educational medium by integrating *shalawat* recitation, collective prayer, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and the reinforcement of local identity within a single communal event. These findings are consistent with Sururin (2025), who emphasizes that local religious traditions within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* function as lifelong learning media that connect cultural experiences with the internalization of Islamic teachings.

2. Social Bonding Traditions: *Arisan* and Pilgrimage (*Ziarah*)

Another prominent form of local wisdom identified in this study is the integration of religious study sessions with *arisan* (rotating social gatherings) and pilgrimages (*ziarah*) to the graves of respected Islamic scholars and ancestors. Within the learning process, *ziarah* is understood not merely as a cemetery visit but as an educational activity through which participants learn to appreciate the contributions of Islamic scholars, understand the history of Islam in Banten, and reflect upon the impermanence of worldly life. The religious, moral, social, historical, and educational values embedded in this tradition make it an effective medium for culturally grounded character education. Furthermore, *ziarah* serves as a vehicle for transmitting the collective memory of Islam's historical development in Banten and preserving the exemplary legacy of local religious scholars. Through these activities, participants acquire both spiritual experiences and social learning that strengthen their religious identity (Latif, 2026). As one administrator explained:

"Pilgrimage is not simply a recreational visit. We teach our participants that it is a way of remembering the contributions of Banten's saints and Islamic scholars while reminding ourselves that our existence in this world is temporary." (IN2, Administrator of Muslimat NU Serang Branch, interview)

3. Local Language and Communication

Local wisdom was also evident in the language used during instructional activities. The *ustazah* commonly delivered lessons using a combination of Indonesian and local Bantenese and Sundanese expressions that were familiar to participants, thereby creating emotional closeness and facilitating open communication. The use of local idioms and proverbs when explaining Islamic ethical concepts (*akhlaq*), for example, enabled participants to understand and remember the lessons more effectively than formal religious terminology alone. This finding is consistent with Darwis et al. (2025), who reported that the incorporation of local languages and traditional expressions within ethnopedagogical approaches enhances learners' comprehension while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity.

4. Local Arts as Learning Media

During the celebration of Islamic holy days, several Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* incorporated traditional cultural performances such as *marawis* and *qasidah*, and in certain contexts referenced the spirit embodied in *Debus*, a traditional Banten cultural performance symbolizing courage and steadfast faith. These artistic expressions functioned not merely as entertainment but as pedagogical media for reinforcing religious values, fostering pride in local cultural identity, and strengthening participants'

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emotional attachment to Islamic teachings. These findings indicate that traditional arts serve not only recreational purposes but also constitute effective educational tools for communicating religious messages. By utilizing *marawis* (traditional Islamic percussion music), *qasidah* (Islamic devotional songs), and culturally familiar symbols, religious teachings become more accessible and meaningful because they are conveyed through cultural forms that resonate with community members (Sururin, 2025).

5. Social Ethos: Mutual Cooperation (*Gotong Royong*) and Kinship

The values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and kinship were clearly reflected in the collective management of *Majelis Taklim* activities, including the preparation of refreshments, organization of learning venues, and financial contributions to religious and social programs. These collaborative practices provide participants with experiential learning regarding social responsibility, collective commitment, and generosity, thereby strengthening social cohesion within the community. The findings demonstrate that religious learning occurs not only through formal instruction but also through the cultivation of social behaviors rooted in local cultural traditions. Darwis et al. (2025) argue that ethnopedagogical approaches enable values such as cooperation, solidarity, and social responsibility to be integrated into character education, making learning more relevant to the realities of community life.

B. Implementation of the Ethnopedagogical Approach in the Learning Process

The second major finding of this study indicates that the ethnopedagogical approach implemented in Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang operates through four principal mechanisms: curriculum contextualization, andragogy-based role modeling, the utilization of cultural media and symbols, and practice-oriented participatory assessment. These findings are consistent with those of Sururin (2025), who argues that learning within Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama *Majelis Taklim* integrates the principles of andragogy, the values of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah*, and local wisdom, thereby creating a contextual and experience-based lifelong learning model.

First, curriculum contextualization is evident in the way *ustazah* relate teachings from classical Islamic texts to contemporary issues encountered by participants, including marriage, household financial management, and child-rearing. While discussing these topics, instructors consistently draw upon local wisdom as a foundation for reflection and problem-solving. This approach aligns with the principles of ethnopedagogy, which regard local wisdom as both a source of educational values and a pedagogical strategy that connects the transmission of religious knowledge with the reinforcement of cultural identity. Darwis et al. (2025) argue that incorporating local cultural values into Islamic education contextualizes learning, enhances the relevance of instructional content to learners' everyday lives, and strengthens character development through culturally meaningful experiences.

Second, the instructional process predominantly follows the principles of andragogy, positioning participants as active learners rather than passive recipients of religious instruction. Participants are encouraged to engage in discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and the sharing of personal life experiences, which are subsequently connected with Islamic teachings. This finding supports previous studies describing Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* as a lifelong learning ecosystem that synthesizes Malcolm Knowles's principles of andragogy with the cultural and religious values of Nahdlatul Ulama, resulting in a learner-centered, self-directed educational model that recognizes participants' life experiences as valuable learning resources.

"We do not simply deliver one-way lectures. The women attending these study circles possess rich life experiences, so we encourage discussion and dialogue to ensure that the knowledge shared is genuinely relevant to their everyday lives." (IN1, Ustazah of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim*, interview)

Third, cultural media and symbols are deliberately employed as instructional resources. These include local stories, religious songs and poetry in regional languages, and references to prominent Banten Islamic scholars such as Nawawi al-Bantani as exemplars of scholarship and piety. The use of local cultural symbols and respected community figures as educational resources is consistent with

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the findings of Darwis et al. (2025), who demonstrate that ethnopedagogical approaches effectively utilize cultural narratives, local languages, and community role models to reinforce both cultural identity and character development.

Fourth, learning assessment within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* is not conducted through formal written examinations, as commonly practiced in formal educational institutions. Instead, assessment relies on continuous observation of changes in participants' attitudes and religious practices, including attendance, participation in religious and social activities, and observable behavioral changes in everyday life. This practice-oriented and participatory assessment model reflects the characteristics of non-formal Islamic education, which emphasizes behavioral transformation and character formation rather than cognitive achievement alone.

C. Contribution of the Learning System to Strengthening the Religious Character of the Community

The third major finding demonstrates that the local wisdom-based learning system implemented by Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang contributes to strengthening the religious character of the community through four principal dimensions: improvement in religious practices, enhancement of social morality, the development of community solidarity and social concern, and the cultivation of religious moderation.

Improvements in religious practices were evident from participants' testimonies, which indicated increased consistency in performing daily prayers, reciting the Qur'an, and engaging in *dhikr* after regularly attending *Majelis Taklim*. The strengthening of social morality was reflected in positive behavioral changes, including more respectful communication, greater concern for neighbors, and increased efforts to maintain social harmony within the community. As one participant explained:

"After regularly attending the study sessions, I have become more patient in dealing with family problems and more consistent in attending the mosque. The lessons are also connected with our daily traditions in Serang, making them much easier to practice." (IN3, *Majelis Taklim* participant, interview)

These findings are consistent with Latif (2026) who argues that active participation in *Majelis Taklim* plays a significant role in strengthening religious identity by fostering continuous learning, reinforcing social connectedness, and encouraging the habitual practice of religious values in everyday life.

Community solidarity and social concern were reflected in participants' involvement in charitable and social activities, including supporting orphans, visiting and assisting members who were ill or experiencing bereavement, and actively participating in collective religious events. Religious moderation was evident in the way instructors promoted values of tolerance and mutual respect toward people of different religious backgrounds through dialogical approaches that discouraged extremism, reflecting the characteristics of *Islam Nusantara*, the distinctive religious tradition of Nahdlatul Ulama. This emphasis on social awareness and moderation is closely aligned with the principles of *Islam Nusantara*, particularly *tawasut* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice), which serve as the foundation for developing an inclusive religious character. Sururin (2025), demonstrates that these values are internalized through culturally grounded learning, enabling participants not only to understand Islamic teachings normatively but also to apply them meaningfully in their social lives.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that strengthening the religious character of the community within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang is not achieved through the simple transmission of religious knowledge. Rather, it occurs through a gradual and continuous process of value internalization, in which local wisdom functions as a cohesive cultural framework that makes Islamic values more meaningful, contextually relevant, and readily applicable in the everyday lives of participants.

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Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce and extend the theoretical framework of ethnopedagogy, which conceptualizes education as a process that is inseparable from its socio-cultural context. Unlike previous ethnopedagogical studies conducted in formal educational settings, which have primarily focused on integrating local wisdom into school curricula, the present study demonstrates that ethnopedagogical practices within women's non-formal Islamic education possess distinctive characteristics. Specifically, learning takes place through more flexible, personal, and experience-based interactions among participants, as the educational process is grounded in the principles of andragogy rather than child-centered pedagogy.

The integration of *Panjang Mulud*, pilgrimage (*ziarah*), and local arts into the learning system of Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* further supports the view that Banten's local wisdom embodies values of honesty, mutual cooperation, simplicity, responsibility, and spirituality that are well suited for transmission to future generations through community-based educational institutions such as *Majelis Taklim*. These findings are consistent with Mutaqin et al. (2025), who argue that the *Panjang Mulud* tradition functions as a cultural medium for transmitting Islamic values, strengthening social solidarity, promoting mutual cooperation, and preserving the cultural identity of the Banten community. Consequently, the tradition serves as a culturally grounded educational instrument that facilitates the internalization of Islamic teachings through social practices passed down across generations.

Compared with ethnopedagogical studies conducted in formal educational settings such as those examining the use of *Reog* and *Wayang Klithik* in strengthening elementary school students' character this study reveals a similar pattern regarding the role of local wisdom as a medium for character education. However, important differences emerge with respect to the learner profile, institutional setting, and evaluation process. Whereas formal education generally employs structured curricula and standardized assessment, learning within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* is characterized by flexible, practice-oriented evaluation embedded in participants' everyday religious and social lives. These differences demonstrate that ethnopedagogical implementation is inherently contextual and must be adapted to the characteristics of both the educational institution and its learners. Accordingly, the ethnopedagogical model developed within *Majelis Taklim* cannot be directly equated with models implemented in formal educational institutions.

The study also demonstrates that the cultural-religious strategy adopted by Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* plays a significant role in challenging the perception that Islamic values are incompatible with women's empowerment. On the contrary, Islamic teachings function as a source of inspiration and legitimacy that encourages women to participate actively in religious, educational, and community affairs. Therefore, the local wisdom-based learning system implemented by Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* contributes not only to strengthening individual religious character but also to promoting women's socio-religious empowerment through educational practices firmly rooted in local cultural traditions.

Despite these positive findings, the study identified several challenges affecting the implementation of the ethnopedagogical approach within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang. These challenges include the limited regeneration of young *ustazah* with a deep understanding of Banten's local wisdom, the lack of systematic documentation of culturally based learning practices, and the growing influence of globalization and digitalization, which has shifted many younger people's preferences from community-based religious learning toward online religious education that is often detached from local cultural contexts. In addition, limited institutional resources, particularly insufficient professional development opportunities for *ustazah*, constrain the more effective implementation of local wisdom-based education. These issues require serious attention from Muslimat NU administrators and other stakeholders in non-formal Islamic education when designing strategies to ensure the sustainability of culturally grounded learning systems. Latif (2026), similarly identifies the limited availability of qualified educators, inadequate documentation of educational

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practices, and changing societal preferences driven by digital technologies as major challenges facing the development of local wisdom-based non-formal Islamic education.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the ethnopedagogical model implemented within Muslimat NU *Majelis Taklim* in Serang operates through three interconnected processes: the transmission of Islamic knowledge, the preservation of Banten's local wisdom, and the strengthening of the community's religious character. Rather than functioning independently, these elements interact to form an integrated, authentic, and culturally responsive lifelong learning ecosystem that reflects the socio-cultural realities of Banten society. This integrated model offers a valuable conceptual framework that may be adapted for the development of local wisdom-based non-formal Islamic education in other regions with comparable cultural characteristics.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the learning system implemented by Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) *Majelis Taklim* in Serang represents an effective model of non-formal Islamic education that successfully integrates Islamic values with the local wisdom of Banten through an ethnopedagogical approach. The learning process extends beyond the transmission of religious knowledge to encompass the internalization of local cultural values, including the *Panjang Mulud* tradition, *shalawat* recitation, *silaturahmi* (social bonding), pilgrimages (*ziarah*) to the graves of Islamic scholars, the use of local languages, *Islam Nusantara* arts and cultural expressions, and the traditions of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and kinship as means of strengthening the community's religious character. This integration contextualizes religious learning, making it more relevant to the everyday lives of participants while fostering the continuous reinforcement of both cultural and religious identity.

The ethnopedagogical approach is implemented through participatory, dialogical, and experience-based learning consistent with the principles of andragogy. *Ustazah* connect religious teachings with contemporary social realities, local cultural traditions, and the exemplary lives of Banten's Islamic scholars, enabling the internalization of values through habituation, dialogue, religious practice, and community-based socio-religious activities. Furthermore, the assessment model, which emphasizes changes in attitudes, the quality of religious practice, and social responsibility, demonstrates that the learning process prioritizes character formation rather than the acquisition of cognitive knowledge alone.

The findings further reveal that the local wisdom-based learning system makes a substantial contribution to strengthening the religious character of the community. This contribution is reflected in improvements in religious practice, the enhancement of social morality, stronger solidarity and mutual care among participants, and the development of a moderate religious outlook that embodies the principles of *Islam Nusantara*. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the field of ethnopedagogical research in non-formal Islamic education by demonstrating that the integration of local culture and religious values can create a contextual, authentic, and sustainable learning ecosystem.

From a practical perspective, the local wisdom-based learning model developed by Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama *Majelis Taklim* offers a valuable reference for strengthening religious character education in other regions with comparable socio-cultural characteristics. Accordingly, greater attention should be given to enhancing the professional capacity of *ustazah*, ensuring the regeneration of qualified educators, systematically documenting culturally grounded learning practices, and utilizing digital technologies in ways that support rather than diminish the preservation of local wisdom. Such efforts are essential to ensuring that this educational model remains responsive to the challenges of globalization while continuing to strengthen religious character, cultural identity, and social cohesion within Indonesian society.

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