

Development of a Character Education Model Based on Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Values and Local Wisdom in Islamic Higher Education

Agus Zainudin¹, Ach. Faqih Supandi² A`imatul Masruroh³

¹ Universitas Islam Jember, Indonesia; guszain90@gmail.com

² Universitas Islam Jember, Indonesia; achfaqih795@gmail.com

³ Universitas Islam Jember, Indonesia; aimatulmasruroh6@gmail.com

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Abstract

Islamic higher education institutions bear a significant responsibility in shaping students' character to align with noble values and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* principles. One of the efforts undertaken is to develop a learning model that integrates local wisdom with *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values. This study aims to produce a well-developed product, specifically a character education model based on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* and local wisdom that is effective in building students' character in Islamic higher education. This learning model is expected to assist lecturers in nurturing students' character under *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*'s values and local wisdom, thereby shaping students into future generations with noble character and national insight. The research method used is qualitative descriptive with a case study approach. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis methods involve data reduction, data display, and data verification. The results of this study indicate that the learning model based on local wisdom and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values, developed, internalized, and integrated into the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Character course through teaching, academic studies, and academic culture, has provided understanding and reinforcement of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* creed among students.

Kata kunci:

Pengembangan;
Model Pembelajaran;
Karakter Aswaja An-Nahdliyah;
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Abstrak

Perguruan tinggi Islam memiliki tanggung jawab besar dalam membentuk karakter mahasiswa yang berakhlak mulia dan sesuai dengan nilai-nilai *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*. Salah satu upaya yang dilakukan adalah dengan mengembangkan model pembelajaran yang mengintegrasikan kearifan lokal dan nilai-nilai *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menghasilkan produk yang baik yaitu berupa mengembangkan model pembelajaran berkarakter *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* berbasis kearifan lokal yang efektif dalam membangun karakter mahasiswa di perguruan tinggi Islam. Model Pembelajaran ini diharapkan dapat membantu dosen dalam mengembangkan karakter mahasiswa yang sesuai dengan nilai-nilai *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* dan kearifan lokal sehingga mahasiswa menjadi generasi penerus bangsa yang beakhlak mulia dan berwawasan kebangsaan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif melalui pendekatan studi kasus. Sedangkan teknik pengumpulan data yaitu observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi dan metode analisis data berupa reduksi data, display data, dan verifikasi data. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa model pembelajaran berbasis kearifan lokal dan nilai-nilai *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* yang dikembangkan, diinternalisasikan dan diintegrasikan ke dalam mata kuliah Karakter *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* secara akademik dituangkan melalui pembelajaran, kajian, serta budaya akademik telah memberikan pemahaman dan penguatan akidah *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* pada mahasiswa.

Corresponding Author:

Agus Zainudin

Universitas Islam Jember, Indonesia; guszain90@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The development of the character of the Indonesian nation has been a primary goal of national development since independence (Azzahra & Dewi, 2021). Law No. 23 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 3, states that character or moral education is the primary goal (Tanaka, Ahmad and Refariza, Elva and Andrias, Andrias and Sawaludin, Sawaludin and Sudirman, Sudirman and Andriani, Nining and Udin, Tamsik and Yahya, Muhamad and Munawaroh, Mumun and Rais, 2023). The development of an *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom is crucial, especially as globalization presents increasingly complex moral and ethical challenges (Latif et al., 2023; Tarwi & Naimah, 2022). These challenges are evident in the rising instances of ethical violations such as plagiarism and technological misuse (Aprilianto et al., 2023; Gay et al., 2012; Hasan et al., 2024). Therefore, an educational approach that integrates local and religious values is essential. The Indonesian government is actively campaigning for and promoting character education at all levels of education. This effort is part of President Joko Widodo's *Nawacita* vision and the National Mental Revolution Movement (GNRM), which is implemented across all aspects of national life, including education (Marzuki & Samsuri, 2022). Furthermore, President Joko Widodo signed Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 concerning the Strengthening of Character Education, aimed at improving the quality of character education in Indonesia (Hasanah et al., 2024; Hidayatullah, 2019; Latifah et al., 2024). In this context, educators serve not only as teachers but also as mentors and *muaddib* or *murabbi* for students. They play a vital role in guiding, directing, demonstrating, and internalizing religious values in their students (Zainudin, 2021). Additionally, character education fosters more active and creative students in the learning process, while the educational environment helps nurture honesty, discipline, and enthusiasm, which are essential foundations for improving personal quality (Aliani et al., 2023; Apologia et al., 2024; Zainudin, 2020). Educators can utilize the values of local wisdom as a learning resource (Undang-Undang, 2003). These values can be incorporated into the development of learning models, as demonstrated by *Universitas Islam Jember*.

Meanwhile, local wisdom, according to Poespowardojo in (Rahayu, 2021), has the ability to resist external influences and adapt for the future. The strength of local values and the capability of local genius in confronting external forces determine the identity of a society. If local talents are lost or destroyed, the character of a nation is also lost. Beyond the home environment, there is an institution of significant importance that is responsible for shaping students' character to act and think in ways that are beneficial to their lives (Khamid & Adib, 2021; Muzayana, 2024). Students are educated in positive ways on campus, which contributes to building, shaping, and developing character education, one of which involves the approach of integrating local wisdom. This study introduces a novel approach by utilizing the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom within Islamic Higher Education, a topic that has yet to be comprehensively discussed in previous research. Several related studies include (Anam et al., 2021a), which focus on *Aswaja* character education among *pesantren*

students; (Rustam, 2020a) which examines Islamic education systems based on local wisdom in *pesantren*; and (Ikhsan et al., 2021a), which analyze NU values in shaping religious-nationalist Muslim character. Although previous studies have addressed character education, this research offers a unique contribution by focusing on the development of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model. This model specifically integrates local wisdom values into the curriculum of Islamic Higher Education, an approach that has not yet been extensively explored. Moreover, this research supports the vision of *Nawacita* and aligns with national policies, such as Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education.

Character education through the development of learning models in Islamic Higher Education holds specific and significant relevance to Islamic values. Therefore, character education must not only be cultivated, developed, and consciously built on a daily basis through processes such as education (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024; Anwar et al., 2018; S. Arifin et al., 2023; Azkiya et al., 2024), but its development through learning models in Islamic Higher Education is also crucial. It plays an essential role not only in shaping the character of students but also in realizing the vision and mission of Islamic education in forming individuals who are faithful, moral, and contribute positively to society. This is exemplified by *Universitas Islam Jember*, the only higher education institution in Jember Regency that implements and develops the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom. This initiative aligns with Chapter II, Article 2 of the Vision of *Universitas Islam Jember* (Statuta Universitas Islam Jember, 2020) and is supported by preliminary observations conducted by the researcher. The development of this learning model is reflected in specific courses, such as Introduction to *Aswaja* in the first semester, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* for second-semester students, and Applied *Aswaja* (Jazil et al., 2023; Mustofa, 2023), which is a practical course. The primary aim of these courses is to shape students with character traits and religious as well as social attitudes that embody the principles of *Tawasuth* (moderation), *I'tidal* (justice), *Tasamuh* (tolerance), *Tawazun* (balance), and *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil).

The development of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character education is taught to students through principles such as *tawassuth* (moderation), which emphasizes a balance between academic and non-academic pursuits (Ma`arif et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2024). This means that students need to find equilibrium between focusing on their academic studies and engaging in non-academic activities, such as social initiatives, organizational involvement, or personal development. They must learn to manage their time wisely to prioritize academic responsibilities without neglecting other aspects of campus life. Furthermore, this study employs data reduction, data display, and data verification methods for in-depth data analysis. These methods provide strong validity to the results and demonstrate that the development of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model can be integrated with local wisdom. Such integration produces graduates from Islamic higher education institutions who not only possess

high academic competence but also exhibit strong character, noble morals, and the ability to contribute positively to society and the nation.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher considers this study essential as an effort to address the gaps in previous research by developing a more applicable and contextual model that aligns with the needs of higher education in Indonesia. This is particularly relevant in addressing the increasingly pressing moral and ethical challenges brought about by the complex and dynamic era of globalization (Sari & Septiani, 2024). Therefore, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of character education in Indonesia, particularly within the context of Islamic higher education. Religious values and local wisdom serve as strong pillars of resilience for the younger generation in navigating the influx of information and negative global influences (Hamidah et al., 2024). As such, the development of an *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom has become increasingly urgent as a defense mechanism and a means of character formation in Islamic higher education. The objective of this research is to develop a character-based *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* learning model grounded in local wisdom, integrated into the Islamic higher education curriculum. The primary focus of this study is on the courses Introduction to *Aswaja*, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, and Applied *Aswaja*, aiming to examine whether this learning model can enhance the effectiveness of character education, strengthen students' religious and nationalist character, and improve their competitiveness, while also supporting national policies on strengthening character education. By adopting this approach, the developed learning model is expected to make a significant contribution to shaping students with a strong identity, who are well-prepared to face the challenges of globalization.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research at the Universitas Islam Jember uses descriptive qualitative field research and this type of research is a case study, with data obtained in the form of words, images, and behavior, not expressed in the form of numbers or statistics but remains in qualitative form which has more meaningful benefits. This research involves collecting information about an existing phenomenon by describing what it is about a particular phenomenon or condition (Cresswell, 2022). This research describes the results of the application of the development of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*-based character education models and local wisdom in Islamic universities in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods (Rizky Fadilla & Ayu Wulandari, 2023; Sugiyono, 2013).

This study aims to describe the results of the development of character education models based on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values and local wisdom in Islamic higher education. The researcher chose the research location at the Universitas Islam Jember. This university was chosen because of its characteristics that fit the needs of the research, as the only Islamic higher education institution in Jember Regency that explicitly adopts the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*-based character education model and the

researcher's desire to contribute directly to the development of the learning model pioneered by this university. The object of research is the Introduction to *Aswaja*, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, and Applied *Aswaja* courses. The research data were collected through participatory observation of learning activities that integrate the case study approach, in-depth interviews with three lecturers and one student, and documentation (Creswell, 2017). The research identified best practices in integrating *Aswaja* values and local wisdom into learning. The data obtained were then analyzed using the methods of data collection, data display, data condensation and data verification (Miles et al., 2018).

This research is expected to provide a dual contribution. First, in a practical context, this research is hoped to produce an effective learning model that can be adopted by other Islamic higher education institutions. Second, in a theoretical context, this research is expected to enrich the body of knowledge in the field of Islamic education, particularly related to the integration of religious and cultural values in the learning process. Thus, this research is anticipated to serve as a reference for educators, researchers, and policymakers in efforts to shape a young generation with strong character who can face contemporary challenges.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Universitas Islam Jember is the only higher education institution in Jember Regency that implements and develops the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom, as outlined in Chapter II, Article 2 of its vision: "To become a leading Islamic higher education institution capable of competing in the application of science and technology based on Islam *Ahlussunah wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyah* and committed to upholding Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution." The university applies this learning model through two approaches: credit-based courses (SKS), including Introduction to *Aswaja* and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, and non-credit-based activities (non-SKS) involving applied learning rooted in local traditions. This implementation is further supported by activities such as RPS (Lesson Plan) workshops, the development of teaching materials, and journal boot camps, with the aim of producing students who embody the *Aswaja* character in accordance with the university's vision.

The vice rector, which includes Universitas Islam Jember, emphasized in an interview the university's vision as a philosophy of character education based on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*. Our values and local wisdom:

The vision by including the application of science and technology based on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Islam is not only a writing but must be known to various parties, but our campus has the responsibility and exemplary in applying the values contained in the teachings of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Islam in which it is also charged with local wisdom to be of more excellent value in the lives of our students in the future (Interview, 1).

Strengthened rector interview:

As noted by the Rector of Universitas Islam Jember, UIJ was established on September 14, 1984, by the Jember Branch of Nahdlatul Ulama (PCNU) with the vision of becoming a Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated higher education institution in Jember Regency. UIJ was designed to produce scholars from the Nahdliyin community who excel in Islamic knowledge and have Aswaja character. The university's flagship program focuses on Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah character education, emphasizing morals and values such as tawasuth (moderation) by avoiding radicalism and fostering a moderate attitude in daily life, tawazun (balance) by integrating intellectual, spiritual, and emotional aspects in learning, tasamuh (tolerance) by respecting cultural, religious, and ideological differences, tidal (justice) by training students to make fair decisions in local contexts, and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil) by integrating virtuous values into academic and non-academic activities as guiding principles for daily life (Interview, 2).

The vice rector and rector, in his statement, emphasized the great value in the teachings of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Islam. This value can be a provision for students' lives in the future by starting from the implementation of the university's vision, namely by the entire academic community with a sense of responsibility and providing examples. The vision is to apply science and technology based on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Islam and local wisdom. This is reinforced in the following figure 1.

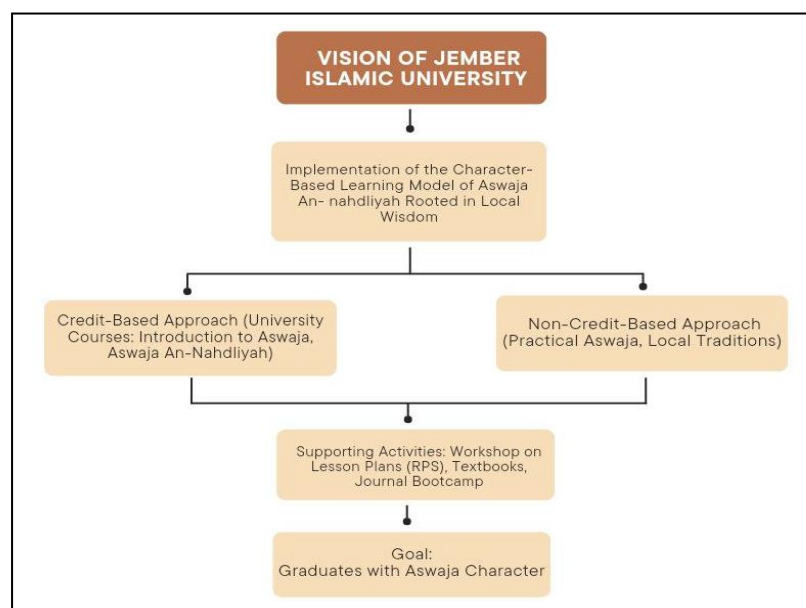


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the Implementation of the Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Character-Based Learning Model Rooted in Local Wisdom

Policy on Implementing the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Character-Based Learning Model Rooted in Local Wisdom at Universitas Islam Jember

Starting the development of the character education model by formulating a policy emphasizing strengthening *Aswaja An Nahdliyah* values and local wisdom, especially in learning. The rector conveyed this through his interview:

All policies that we issue have to do with *Aswaja An Nahdliyah* values and local wisdom. This is the basic principle of the policies we issue because the Universitas Islam Jember was founded on the wishes and desires of the Jember *Nahdlatul Ulama* branch board, so the guidelines issued in various aspects, especially in learning, emphasize the mastery of science and apply it in life based on *Aswaja An Nahdliyah* values and local wisdom (Interview, 3).

Universitas Islam Jember is committed to implementing the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom by internalizing and integrating it into courses taught in classroom settings. Specifically, the university offers key courses such as Introduction to *Aswaja* in the first semester, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* in the second semester, and Applied *Aswaja*, which distinguish Universitas Islam Jember from other institutions. These efforts aim to produce graduates with high competence in their respective fields while embodying the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character.

To support this vision, Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) has conducted workshops on developing semester lesson plans (RPS) and *Aswaja*-based teaching materials. Moving forward, UIJ plans to produce standardized teaching materials collaboratively authored by faculty members, aligned with the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* vision and mission. All study programs and courses are directed to reflect these values, incorporating *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* principles into modules for fields such as agriculture, biology, and midwifery practices. The ultimate goal is to establish UIJ as a center of education oriented toward Islamic values with *Aswaja* character.

Ministry of research and higher education of the republic of Indonesia has actively promoted local wisdom values by developing curricula based on the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) and the Merdeka Belajar initiative (Handayani et al., 2022). Furthermore, Vice Rector I for Academic and Student Affairs at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ), explained that the development of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character at UIJ is rooted in local wisdom and aligned with the university's vision and mission (Budiono, 2024). The core emphasis is on integrating the values of *Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah* (*Aswaja*) into the university's educational dharma. The UIJ curriculum is designed with two approaches: credit-based (SKS) and non-credit-based (non-SKS). The credit-based approach includes the Introduction to *Aswaja* course in the first semester and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* in the second semester, with measurable learning outcomes, content, and assessment instruments. Meanwhile, the non-credit-based approach focuses on practical applications, such as training in funeral rites, performing prayers, *tahlil*, preaching, and other activities grounded in *Aswaja* principles. The values of *Aswaja* are also expected to underpin all courses offered at the university. Principles such as *wasathiyah* (moderation) and *tawazun* (balance) are implemented through student-centered learning methods. This approach provides students with opportunities to explore, ask questions, and develop their potential. Additionally, lecturers are encouraged to act fairly, provide clear instructions, and establish grading criteria at the outset of the learning process. These steps, including the preparation of learning contracts and diagnostic assessments, are regarded as manifestations of *Aswaja* values

(Hidayatullah et al., 2021). Through this approach, UIJ aims to produce graduates who are not only academically competent but also possess strong *Aswaja* character.

Interview results with lecturers on the implementation of learning in an effort to develop Aswaja character based on university policies:

We implement learning based on a centralized policy with an emphasis on Aswaja values. The implementation begins with training as a form of debriefing for teaching lecturers at the beginning of the lecture, followed by aligning the semester learning plan (RPS) with the preparation of uniforms, so that team teaching runs and meets the expected targets (Interview 4).

Also explained that the implementation of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model into the curriculum is carried out through a series of training sessions and alignment processes (Budiono, 2024; Hidayatullah et al., 2021). The first step involves training on strengthening E-learning and developing Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-oriented Semester Learning Plans (RPS). Moving forward, the RPS will be collaboratively prepared by lecturers teaching the same courses to ensure uniformity in teaching processes, understanding, materials, and evaluations. Additionally, training sessions for the creation of textbooks will be conducted, which will serve as the primary reference for learning. These textbooks will be standardized for specific courses, while supplementary references remain available. To ensure sustainability, UIJ plans to establish a textbook grant program where faculty authors will submit their work for evaluation and publication. Furthermore, programs like journal boot camps are designed to encourage academic publications. With these initiatives, UIJ aims to ensure that within 2–3 years, all courses will have standardized textbooks, thereby guaranteeing the quality of education. This approach aligns with the theory suggesting that local wisdom can be integrated into learning as part of teachers' efforts to preserve local culture by creating and incorporating educational materials that embody local wisdom values (Aiman & Sholeh, 2021; Suteki & Damanik, 2024).

Implementation of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Character-Based Learning Model Rooted in Local Wisdom at Universitas Islam Jember

The *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom at Universitas Islam Jember is formally outlined in the university's academic guidelines for 2023–2024. This initiative is part of the university's efforts to instill *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values in students, shaping them into individuals of strong character. Students with such character are expected to utilize their knowledge to contribute positively to themselves, others, and their environment (Isnaini & Fanreza, 2024). Academically, the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character is integrated into learning, academic discussions, and the university's academic culture (Akib et al., 2020). The learning aspect includes specific courses on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* offered across all study programs, which serve as a hallmark of Universitas Islam Jember.

These courses include Introduction to *Aswaja*, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, and Applied *Aswaja*. The primary objective of these courses is to provide students with a thorough understanding of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* doctrine and strengthen their faithn (Akib et al.,

2020). As noted by a lecturer responsible for teaching *Aswaja* courses, the material is divided into two parts: Introduction to *Aswaja* and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*. Introduction to *Aswaja* covers the fundamentals of *Aswaja*, including its definition, distinctions from other schools of thought, the schools of jurisprudence it follows, its characteristics, and ways to apply these characteristics. Meanwhile, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* delves deeper, focusing on the relationship between *Aswaja* and the state across different historical periods, such as the reform era, the proclamation era, the old order, and the new order. It also explores the history of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) as an *Aswaja*-based organization. In addition, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* emphasizes social attitudes and community relations grounded in *Aswaja* values, offering a broader perspective compared to Introduction to *Aswaja*, which is more focused on foundational knowledge.

The *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Character-Based Learning Model emphasizes that civic values and religious understanding must be instilled in education to shape students into moderate and multicultural individuals (Mukhlisin et al., 2023). According to a lecturer for *Aswaja* courses:

Teaching *Aswaja* is crucial and should be a mandatory subject at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ), particularly in addressing contemporary challenges in an era dominated by information, technology, and social media. *Aswaja* education plays a significant role in building the foundation of students' character, preventing them from falling into misinterpretations, such as radicalism (Interview, 5).

The values taught at UIJ, such as tolerance, are closely aligned with Indonesia's national ideology, Pancasila. The tolerance promoted at UIJ encourages students to respect differences in ethnicity, race, religion, and culture, reflecting the principles of the first and third pillars of Pancasila. Additionally, UIJ educates students on how to navigate the influence of transnational Islam on religious understanding in Indonesia, stressing the importance of tolerance between different Islamic sects (Kruja, 2022). A unique example of the application of *Aswaja* values at UIJ is found in the Faculty of Health Sciences, where students are taught specific prayers and birthing methods that are distinctive to UIJ. For instance, during childbirth, students are encouraged to use *murottal* recitations of the Qur'an to soothe the mother. This approach not only supports the medical process but also strengthens spiritual aspects in line with *Aswaja* values.

Based on interviews with informants, the implementation of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom is carried out both academically and non-academically. Academically, this model is integrated into classroom and extracurricular activities. Courses in faculties such as the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences and the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business incorporate *Aswaja*-based values into subjects such as social studies and economics. At Universitas Islam Jember, formal education is linked with the surrounding environment through this character-based learning model, emphasizing the importance of local wisdom to facilitate dialogue between students and their communities (Annisha, 2024). This approach encourages students to understand and internalize local values and cultures while enhancing their ability to communicate and adapt to their environment (Rustam, 2020a). Non-academically, Universitas Islam Jember integrates *Aswaja* character

formation rooted in local wisdom into academic culture through practices such as congregational *sholat fardhu*, *dzikir* after prayers, *sholawatan*, visits to the graves of UIJ founders and notable Islamic figures in Jember, and Qur'an recitation gatherings (*khataman*). These activities differentiate this research from previous studies. As noted by the university rector (Halid, 2024),

Policies from prior leadership emphasized the importance of congregational worship and punctuality, adopting traditions from Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). For instance, the campus has implemented a policy requiring students to participate in congregational prayers. Additionally, the *Mulazamatu Qiroatul Qur'an* policy encourages students to cultivate a habit of regularly reading the Qur'an. The *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Research and Development Institute (Institute for Research and Development *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*/LP2AN) also routinely organizes monthly Qur'an recitation (*khataman*) activities. These efforts aim to instill spiritual values and enhance performance based on the principles of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* (Interview, 6).

Practical learning serves as a highly representative platform for instilling character values (Aiman Faiz, 2019). In this context, the integration of local wisdom can be incorporated into the learning process, extracurricular activities, or other programs. This is exemplified by the active involvement of lecturers, staff, and students in *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) organizations, both on and off campus. Achieving the desired outcomes requires character education to be implemented in a balanced manner, both inside and outside the classroom (Isnaini & Fanreza, 2024; Nidhomuddin & Ni'am, 2021) organizations such as *Ansor*, *Muslimat*, *Fatayat*, *IPNU*, and *IPPNU*. To foster character development, Universitas Islam Jember has organized various student activities, including workshops, discussions, seminars, and studies, aimed at embedding *Aswaja* values and local wisdom into character building. As stated by students (Kurnisari, 2024),

The *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model at Universitas Islam Jember teaches moderation in daily life. This course goes beyond theoretical teaching and incorporates practical applications. For example, when discussing local traditions in Jember Regency, such as *Rokat/Petik Laut*, lecturers explain that the ritual is not merely a tradition but is performed with the intention of expressing gratitude to Allah for the blessings of the sea's wealth granted to humanity (Interview, 7).

The *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom has received positive feedback from students. This learning model seeks to develop students' potential to become independent, creative, and innovative individuals while preserving cultural values and national insight. Specifically, it aims to shape students to be responsible, dedicated, honest, beneficial to their environment, and moderate in their daily lives.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* Character-Based Learning Model Rooted in Local Wisdom at Universitas Islam Jember

The *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom at Universitas Islam Jember offers several advantages that support the development of students' character. One of its primary strengths lies in its ability to strengthen Islamic and national identity. By promoting the values of moderation, tolerance, and *rahmatan*

lil 'alamin (mercy to all creation) embedded within *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, students are guided toward an inclusive and peaceful understanding of Islam. This aligns with the vision of Universitas Islam Jember to become a leading Islamic higher education institution that integrates the application of science and technology based on *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* principles, while upholding Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Amarullah et al., 2024). Moreover, the integration of local wisdom within this learning model enhances students' national identity by instilling the nation's noble values, such as mutual cooperation (mutual cooperation), tolerance, deliberation (consensus), and love for the homeland (Mujab & Hernawati, 2023).

Another advantage is the increased relevance of higher education to the needs of society (Marita Sari, 2024). This learning model integrates Islamic values with local wisdom tailored to the social conditions of the Jember community, making education more meaningful and beneficial in addressing the challenges of daily life. It also emphasizes the holistic development of students' character, focusing not only on cognitive aspects but also on affective and psychomotor domains. Students are expected to develop intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence in a balanced manner. The ultimate goal is to produce graduates who are not only intelligent but also possess noble character and good morals (Harefa & Tabrani, 2021). Equally important, the local wisdom-based learning model strengthens collaboration between Universitas Islam Jember and the community. The learning process involves various stakeholders, such as religious leaders, traditional leaders, and cultural figures, allowing the university to play an active role in preserving and developing the local wisdom of Jember.

On the other hand, the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*-based learning model faces several challenges in its implementation. The first challenge lies in the need for strong commitment from lecturers, students, and the university, as well as ongoing training for lecturers to effectively teach this model. Additionally, achieving uniform understanding of students' diverse backgrounds and environmental conditions is a crucial factor. Another limitation is the lack of standardization in implementing this model, which results in variations in the quality of teaching across lecturers and courses. Therefore, the development of updated standards and guidelines is urgently needed. Finally, evaluating the effectiveness of this model also presents a challenge, particularly due to the difficulty in measuring character-based outcomes. The development of appropriate evaluation instruments is necessary to ensure the achievement of students' character formation and the effectiveness of the implementation of *Aswaja* values.

The Rector of Universitas Islam Jember (Halid, 2024) highlighted several challenges in implementing the values of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* (*Aswaja*) at UIJ. First, there are differences in understanding regarding how these values should be applied. Second, the interpretation of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* often varies, which, although seen as part of a natural dynamic, can pose difficulties. Third, a lack of discipline impacts performance that is oriented toward *Aswaja* principles. Fourth, dedication is sometimes neglected due to competing priorities. Additionally, there is a need to foster a culture of creativity, innovation, and investment for further development at UIJ. Meanwhile, the

Vice Rector I of Universitas Islam Jember (Budiono, 2024), stated that the university has yet to formulate a detailed framework for the character traits UIJ graduates should possess. Plans are underway to discuss this issue in collaboration with the Institute for Research and Development *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* (LP2AN), focusing on *Aswaja* materials divided into credit-based (SKS) courses and upskilling-based training, ensuring that both components are interconnected without overlap. A specialized workshop on *Aswaja* is considered essential and must be conducted prior to the odd semester. The primary obstacle in implementing *Aswaja* values in coursework lies in the need for motivation, precision, and the formulation of clear indicators so that the success of embedding *Aswaja* values can be measured effectively.

Nevertheless, Universitas Islam Jember acknowledges and recognizes the positive impact of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character-based learning model rooted in local wisdom. Several key driving factors support the implementation of this model. First, the university benefits from strong social capital, as nearly all lecturers are affiliated with *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), either culturally or structurally. Therefore, the main requirement is to engage and motivate them to support this program. In addition, the university has a network of Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) that can collaborate in developing relevant learning materials grounded in *Aswaja* values.

Table 1. Development of character education based on Aswaja An Nahdliyah values and local wisdom in higher education

Substance	Content
Policy on the implementation of the learning model	Internalization and integration of learning based on <i>Aswaja</i> (Islamic Society of Java) values and local wisdom into all courses based on the chancellor's policy
Implementation of <i>Aswaja</i> -based learning and local wisdom	Stated in the academic guidelines and special courses including <i>Aswaja</i> , <i>Aswaja An Nahdliyah</i> , and <i>Applied Aswaja</i>
Strengths and weaknesses of learning models	The strengths are strengthening nationalism, being religiously observant, and accommodating the needs of the community. Meanwhile, the weaknesses are differences in understanding, multiple interpretations, lack of impactful discipline, and neglecting service

Discussion

The development of character education based on *Aswaja An Nahdliyah* values and local wisdom in higher education at the Islamic University of Jember includes aspects of learning policies, the implementation of *Aswaja*-based and local wisdom-based learning, as well as strengths and weaknesses. Character education is essential for students, especially in higher education (Daniel et al., 2024). One effective tool for

shaping students' character is religious-based education (Alwi, 2018; M. Arifin & Kartiko, 2022; Mainuddin et al., 2023), including education based on *Aswaja* values and local wisdom, as highlighted in this research.

In line with the needs of the 21st century, fulfilling the four competencies, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity, can be achieved through the development of character education based on values that society requires. More specifically, values derived from Islamic teachings, such as *Aswaja* and local wisdom, can accommodate these needs (Daniel et al., 2024). This study aims to develop a character-based learning model rooted in *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values and local wisdom. The Islamic University of Jember was chosen as the research site because it is the only Islamic higher education institution in Jember that integrates *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*-based learning into its curriculum. At the Islamic University of Jember, the development of character education based on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values and local wisdom is structured around three key aspects.

First, the Islamic University of Jember (UIJ) implements academic policies that integrate *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values into both the curriculum and campus culture. This policy aims to cultivate students who are moderate, religious, and possess a strong sense of nationalism. To ensure the consistent implementation of *Aswaja* values in education and campus life, UIJ undertakes several initiatives, including the incorporation of *Aswaja*-based courses (Introduction to *Aswaja*, *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, and Applied *Aswaja*), experience-based learning methodologies, faculty training programs, the development of instructional materials, and the formulation of Semester Learning Plans (RPS) aligned with *Aswaja* principles.

Second, the implementation of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*-based learning, incorporating local wisdom, is carried out through two approaches: academic (credit-based) and non-academic (non-credit-based). Academically, UIJ requires students to take three *Aswaja*-based courses: Introduction to *Aswaja* (first semester), *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* (second semester), and Applied *Aswaja* (final semester). These courses teach the principles of *Tawasuth* (moderation), *I'tidal* (justice), *Tasamuh* (tolerance), *Tawazun* (balance), and *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* (promoting good and preventing wrongdoing) to shape students' character. Additionally, the non-academic approach is implemented through congregational prayers, *dzikir*, *sholawatan*, visits to the graves of scholars (*ziarah*), and Qur'anic studies. Students are also encouraged to participate in organizations such as Ansor, IPNU, IPPNU, and Fatayat to further internalize *Aswaja* values in their daily lives. The integration of *Aswaja* values extends across various faculties, such as in the Faculty of Health Sciences, where students are taught to recite *murottal* during childbirth to enhance patients' spiritual well-being. This learning model demonstrates that UIJ not only instills *Aswaja* values in religious studies but also integrates them across various academic disciplines.

Third, the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* learning model, based on local wisdom, has several advantages, including strengthening Islamic and national identity, shaping students' character holistically, and aligning education with local culture. However,

challenges such as the lack of standardization, the need for effective evaluation tools, and the commitment of the academic community still need to be addressed. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that this model has developed effectively and has had a positive impact on shaping students' character in accordance with *Aswaja* values through optimally implemented learning elements (Azizah et al., 2023; Evan & Rahmat, 2023).

The findings of this study align with the research of (Anam et al., 2021b), which highlights the necessity of *Aswaja*-based character education among santri (Islamic boarding school students). Additionally, this study is related to (Rustam, 2020b), which examines the local-based Islamic education system in pesantren, and (Ikhsan et al., 2021b), which focuses on NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) values in shaping religious-nationalist Muslim identities. However, this research differs in its approach by developing a learning model that can be applied both academically and non-academically. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on developing an *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*-based learning model that integrates local wisdom values into the Islamic higher education curriculum. The ultimate goal is to produce graduates from Islamic universities who not only excel academically but also possess strong character, noble ethics, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to society and the nation.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that one strategic approach to instilling the nation's noble values in students at Islamic higher education institutions is by developing an *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* learning model based on local wisdom. This is evidenced by the achievement of character education goals, which are applied in a balanced manner both inside and outside the classroom. The development of this method is expected to assist educators in implementing more effective learning strategies. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to expand the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*-based learning model by integrating local wisdom into other aspects and elements of education. This study provides a strong foundation for the advancement of theoretical and practical aspects of interactive learning in Islamic higher education. These theories can be widely applied to enhance the overall quality of education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the character-based learning model of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* rooted in local wisdom has great potential in supporting the character development of students in Islamic higher education institutions. This model integrates moderate and multicultural Islamic values with the richness of local culture, thus shaping a young generation with religious, nationalist, and patriotic character. The implementation of this model is also considered relevant in strengthening Islamic and national values amidst the challenges of globalization and modernization, as well as enhancing the relevance of higher education to societal needs.

The main advantage of this model is its flexibility, which can be applied academically through formal credit-based courses such as Introduction to *Aswaja* and *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, as well as non-academically through practical activities based on

local traditions. This holistic approach provides a broad impact, both in the context of formal learning and in strengthening *Aswaja* values in students' daily lives. However, this study has limitations, including a small sample size, limited research locations, and a lack of case diversity.

Further research is needed to expand the scope and deepen the analysis, for example, by employing mixed methods that include quantitative and experimental approaches to measure the model's effectiveness more accurately. With more comprehensive results, more relevant educational policies can be formulated. Nonetheless, this study has made a significant contribution to supporting the vision of national education through a learning model capable of holistically shaping student character in the era of globalization.

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