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The Strategic Role of Kiai in Embedding Qur'anic Educational Values within Rural Communities

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Abstrak

Mengamalkan nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an berarti mewujudkan ajaran Al-Qur'an dalam konteks kehidupan nyata masyarakat. Kiai memiliki peran strategis sebagai penjaga moralitas dan benteng nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran strategis Kiai sebagai perantara budaya dengan menggunakan kerangka teoretis Geertz dalam mengamalkan nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an di Desa Moropelang. Dengan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan diskusi kelompok terarah bersama anggota masyarakat dan Kiai Huda. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Kiai Huda memanfaatkan jaringan komunitas dan budaya lokal untuk memfasilitasi perubahan orientasi nilai secara halus namun efektif, terutama melalui majelis taklim, khotbah Jumat, dan interaksi sehari-hari. Penelitian ini mengisi celah literatur dengan menjelaskan fungsi Kiai tidak hanya sebagai pemimpin spiritual, tetapi juga sebagai agen perubahan sosial yang menjembatani doktrin agama dan kehidupan pedesaan. Studi ini merekomendasikan pengembangan model pendidikan Islam berbasis komunitas yang dapat diperluas dengan memanfaatkan peran Kiai sebagai perantara budaya, sehingga memungkinkan penyebaran nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an yang lebih luas di konteks pedesaan. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada diskusi interdisipliner tentang pendidikan Islam dan transformasi sosial di wilayah pedesaan.

Kata Kunci: Perantara Budaya, Pendidikan Islam, Kiai, Nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an, Masyarakat Pedesaan, Perubahan Sosial

Abstract

Embedding the values of the Qur'an refers to the actualization of its teachings within the lived realities of society. The *kiai* plays a strategic role as a moral guardian and protector of Qur'anic values. This study explores the *kiai*'s strategic function as a cultural intermediary in contextualizing Qur'anic values in Moropelang Village, drawing on Geertz's theoretical framework. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and focus group discussions with community members and *Kiai* Huda. The findings reveal that *Kiai* Huda utilizes local cultural and communal networks to enable a subtle yet impactful reorientation of values, particularly through taklim assemblies, Friday sermons, and daily interpersonal interactions. This study addresses a gap in the literature by highlighting the *kiai*'s role not only as a spiritual leader but also as an agent of social transformation who bridges religious doctrine with rural life. The study recommends the development of community-based Islamic education models that leverage the *kiai*'s intermediary role, thereby promoting broader dissemination of Qur'anic values in rural settings. These findings contribute to interdisciplinary discourses on Islamic education and social change in rural communities.

Keywords : Cultural Intermediaries, Islamic Education, *Kiai*, Qur'anic Values, Rural Society, Social Change

INTRODUCTION

The *kiai* is not merely a spiritual leader but also a central figure in shaping societal mindsets and behaviors through cultural and educational approaches (Izudin, 2021). Beyond their religious authority, *kiai* function as agents of social transformation (Z. Arifin et al., 2021). In village, *kiai* contribute not only to religious affairs but also to enhancing the quality of religious life in the community through various social and educational initiatives (Syafiqurrahman & Hosnan, 2019a). In Moropelang Village, Lamongan, *Kiai* Huda exemplifies the strategic role of the *kiai* in fostering character and moral development within rural communities. His *da'wah* approach extends beyond normative-theological preaching to include cultural and participatory methods. For instance, during routine *pengajian* (recitation gatherings), *Kiai* Huda integrates Qur'anic values into local narratives that resonate with the community. Similarly, during village celebrations and meetings, he embeds moral teachings derived from the Qur'an in a manner that is humble and non-patronizing. Through such methods, Qur'anic values are not only conveyed but also embodied in the community's everyday practices. Embedding the values of the Qur'an, therefore,

involves the actualization of its teachings within the context of real-life experiences (Eliza et al., 2024).

The strategies employed by *kiai* in embedding the values of the Qur'an encompass educational, *da'wah*, and exemplary approaches. Azharghani (2023) highlights the role of *kiai* as not merely mediators of social change but also as active creators of transformative solutions in response to challenges faced by both individuals and communities. Amid the pressures of modernity, globalization, and a rural moral crisis, the *kiai* continues to serve as a moral compass and social guide. This is evident in the praxis of *Kiai* Huda in Moropelang Village, Lamongan, whose *da'wah* methodology transcends traditional theological sermons by incorporating participatory, educational, and cultural approaches. Rather than relying solely on doctrinal instruction, he instills Qur'anic values through concrete social practices—such as promoting *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), initiating economic empowerment programs, and offering Qur'an-based character education for adolescents.

The strategic position of the *kiai* within rural social structures, their role as agents of community value reorientation, and their methodological flexibility in *da'wah* are evident through these initiatives. Furthermore, empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of value-based development initiatives grounded in Islamic principles. Despite this, much of the existing literature remains limited to normative-theological analyses of *kiai*, focusing predominantly on their roles in teaching *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and tafsir. These studies rarely explore how *kiai* contextualize and translate Qur'anic values into actionable social, economic, and cultural practices.

Additionally, there is a lack of scholarly work examining *kiai* as cultural intermediaries in the sense articulated by Clifford Geertz. Although Geertz introduced the concept of the *kiai* as a cultural broker, few contemporary studies have operationalized this theory in real-world, context-rich research. This study addresses that gap by applying Geertz's framework to the case of *Kiai* Huda, who exemplifies a model of *da'wah* that is not only normative but also deeply embedded in local culture, economic participation, and social empowerment.

Moreover, existing studies often concentrate on *kiai* affiliated with NU pesantren or traditionalist circles, while the roles of Muhammadiyah *kiai* in rural

areas remain underexplored. This neglect is notable considering the significant contributions of Muhammadiyah *kiai* to community development, social networks, and faith-based charities rooted in Qur'anic values. *Kiai* Huda is a salient example of such a Muhammadiyah *kiai*, whose progressive and participatory *da'wah* has received little academic documentation despite its substantial local impact.

The growing influence of modernity, digitalization, and shifting values in rural communities calls for more contextualized, grounded, and participatory *da'wah* approaches. While existing literature frequently critiques the erosion of *kiai* authority in the digital age, few studies provide grounded, practical solutions—especially those that emerge from within rural communities themselves. This research contributes novelty by documenting not just the challenges but also the successful adaptive practices of local religious leaders in responding to contemporary societal shifts.

In the context of globalization and the accompanying transformations in lifestyle and values—marked by rising consumerism, individualism, and pragmatism (Dzikriyah & Fauji, 2022; Farihah & Ismanto, 2018)—the role of the *kiai* becomes even more vital. Rural communities are not immune to these forces, making the moral and social leadership of the *kiai* indispensable. As demonstrated in Moropelang Village, *Kiai* Huda does not rely solely on theological exposition but engages in participatory and educational forms of *da'wah*, rooting Qur'anic values in everyday communal life through culturally resonant practices.

¹³ This research aims to examine: (1) the strategic role of the *kiai* in the foundational structure of rural social life through the practice of Qur'anic values; (2) the strategies and approaches employed by *Kiai* Huda to instill these values in the daily life of the Moropelang community; and (3) the sociocultural position of *Kiai* Huda within the village. The study, titled “*The Strategic Role of Kiai in Embedding Qur'anic Educational Values within Rural Communities*,” aspires to contribute to the understanding of how religious leadership, through culturally embedded and socially participatory strategies, can facilitate the internalization and actualization of Qur'anic values in rural settings.

METHOD

This study explores the strategic role and praxis of *Kiai Khoirul Huda* in embedding the values of the Qur'an within the rural context of Moropelang Village, Lamongan, employing ¹⁵ a qualitative approach with a case study method. This methodology was selected for its capacity to deeply examine the complex, contextual social realities associated with the *kiai's* role in embedding Qur'anic values within rural community life (Creswell, 2020). The research aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced depiction of how *Kiai Huda* fulfills his strategic function by integrating Qur'anic teachings into the social, cultural, and spiritual fabric of rural society. The focus extends beyond formal *da'wah* activities to include processes of social interaction, cultural mediation, and symbolic influence that collectively shape religious consciousness and communal practices.

The research site was purposively selected: Moropelang Village, located in Babat District, Lamongan Regency, East Java. This village was chosen due to its deeply rooted religious character and the influential presence of *Kiai Khoirul Huda* as a central figure in both the spiritual and ¹⁹ social life of the community.

The primary subject of this study is *Kiai Khoirul Huda*, with additional informants including local community leaders such as neighborhood and hamlet heads (*RT/RW*). Data collection techniques included participatory observation—through direct involvement in *da'wah* activities, religious gatherings (*pengajian*), and the everyday social interactions of *Kiai Huda*—alongside in-depth interviews with *Kiai Huda* as the key informant. ¹⁴ A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with community leaders to capture the collective perception of *Kiai Huda's* influence, and documentation was gathered from sermon notes, activity photographs, and archival records of religious events in local educational institutions. Fieldwork was conducted from February to April 2025.

Data analysis followed an interactive model involving the stages of data reduction (selection, focusing, simplification, abstraction, and transformation of raw data from observations, interviews, FGDs, and documentation), data display (organization into coherent narrative forms), and conclusion drawing, as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) and further elaborated by Lisa et al., (1967).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kiai Khoirul Huda's Profile

Kiai Haji Khoirul Huda was born and raised in Moropelang Village, Babat District, Lamongan Regency, East Java. He was widely recognized as a humble, modest, and dedicated figure with a strong spirit of devotion in spreading Islamic teachings. He received his formal religious education at the *Pesantren Persatuan Islam* (PERSIS) in Bangil, Pasuruan—a boarding school known for its puritanical approach to Islamic understanding and practice.

Upon completing his studies, *Kiai* Huda returned to his hometown and committed himself fully to *da'wah*. He actively taught *ngaji* (Qur'anic and religious studies) to children and the wider community in Moropelang, particularly among Muhammadiyah members. Through his dedication and tireless efforts, he played a pivotal role in developing the Muhammadiyah Branch Executive (*PRM*) of Moropelang into one of the most prominent branches in both Babat District and Lamongan Regency.

Under his leadership, *PRM* Moropelang successfully established a number of Muhammadiyah-affiliated charitable enterprises, including the *Ihyā' al-Sunna(h)* Mosque, a *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, TPQ/Madin *Ihyā' al-Sunna(h)*, local cooperative cafés (*warkop*), a car wash workshop, a cattle farm, and the Telaga Biru Hotel. Known for his firm guidance, *Kiai* Huda consistently encouraged his congregation to remain steadfast in living out Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

In addition to his local contributions, *Kiai* Huda was actively engaged in broader religious organizational work. He served as a member of the *Majelis Tarjih* (Council of Islamic Legal Thought) of the Muhammadiyah Lamongan Regional Executive during the tenure of *Kiai* Haji Abdul Fatah. He also held the position of Advisor to the Muhammadiyah Babat Branch Executive from 2015 to 2022 and was involved with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) both at the district (Babat) and regency (Lamongan) levels.

As a regular speaker at the *Pengajian Jumat Kliwon* organized by the *Pimpinan Cabang Muhammadiyah* (PCM) Babat, *Kiai* Huda was known for his approachable, modest, and courageous leadership style. He remained focused on the mission of Islamic education and *da'wah*, undistracted by fame or political interests. A loyal

Muhammadiyah cadre, he was deeply committed to organizational regeneration and the empowerment of younger leaders.

Kiai Haji Khoirul Huda passed away on Friday, January 3, 2024, at 07:00 WIB at his residence in Moropelang Village. His funeral prayer was held after the Friday congregational prayer at the *Ihyā' al-Sunna(h)* Mosque and he was laid to rest in the village's Islamic cemetery. His passing was mourned deeply by the Muhammadiyah community of Lamongan and the broader society (Syuhadi Fathurrahim, 2025).

Kiai's Strategic Position in Rural Social Structure

The village *kiai* serves not only as a religious teacher but also as a community leader who plays a pivotal role across nearly all dimensions of rural life—including religious, educational, social, political, and cultural affairs (Cui & Li, 2025; Fiscella, 2023). In many villages, the *kiai* becomes a central figure in shaping traditions and local norms (Maulana et al., 2023). Their leadership often combines charismatic-collective and transformative styles, supported by cultural and symbolic capital that frequently translates into economic resources. Through this integrative leadership, the *kiai* fosters social cohesion, strengthens religious understanding, promotes economic empowerment, and provides meaningful avenues for community actualization (Setiyani, 2020).

Kiai Khoirul Huda—affectionately known as Gus Huda—was a key figure in consolidating the Muhammadiyah community base in Moropelang Village, Babat District, Lamongan Regency. As a graduate of the PERSIS Bangil Islamic Boarding School, he embodied the spirit of Islamic puritanism consistent with Muhammadiyah ideology. Upon returning to his village, *Kiai* Huda dedicated himself to teaching Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, and Arabic. Through his warm and humble approach, he attracted not only Muhammadiyah adherents but also individuals from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), encouraging their participation in religious activities under his guidance. His success in grassroots community building stemmed largely from his ability to integrate Qur'anic values into daily communal life. Rather than focusing solely on ritualistic aspects of Islam, *Kiai* Huda embraced its social and economic dimensions. He was instrumental in establishing various Muhammadiyah charitable

enterprises (*AUM*)—including *madrasah*, TPQ, mosques, workshops, and cattle farms—which improved the local economy and fostered social unity.

Known for his ability to build extensive networks, *Kiai* Huda established relationships with individuals and institutions at both the local and regional levels. His community network spanned residents, local leaders, students, and broader publics from diverse backgrounds. He served actively in the *Majelis Tarjih* of the Muhammadiyah Lamongan Regional Executive and as an advisor to the Muhammadiyah Babat Branch Executive. He was also a member of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) at both the district and sub-district levels. His organizational involvement reflects his talent in harmonizing local aspirations with broader institutional frameworks, effectively acting as a conduit between the grassroots community and larger structures of religious governance (Mortier et al., 2021).

Inclusion and participation were the cornerstones of *Kiai* Huda's approach to community engagement (Hamdani et al., 2020). His articulation of Islamic teachings was not confined to verbal instruction but embodied in lived experiences accessible to all. He actively participated in social welfare activities, offered skills training, and encouraged inclusive participation in religious and communal initiatives. Through these efforts, Qur'anic values became internalized within the community's everyday life. The inclusive nature of his leadership made community members feel valued, fostering greater involvement and ownership in the development process. This participatory model of *da'wah* proved to be highly effective in rooting Islamic principles in a socially relevant manner.

Despite the complexities of religious diversity and evolving societal dynamics, *Kiai* Huda remained steadfast in his mission. His humility, sincerity, and unwavering commitment to *da'wah* inspired many. His exemplary character not only earned him respect as a religious authority but also as a moral role model in social life, solidifying his legacy and ensuring the continuity of his influence.

Amin (2022) emphasized that social relationships (*ḥabl min an-nās*) are as central in the Qur'an as one's relationship with God (*ḥabl min Allāh*). A good Muslim is one who cultivates both dimensions. In this light, *Kiai* Huda's ability to foster harmonious social relations reflects a deep embodiment of Islamic ideals. Conversely, the Qur'an suggests that deficiencies in social relationships may indicate

a weakness in one's spiritual connection. Thus, the Qur'anic worldview supports the kind of holistic leadership exemplified by *Kiai* Huda, where spiritual, social, and ethical dimensions are integrated. (Amin, 2022).

Furthermore, research by Fadri (2020) confirms that the arrival of a *kiai* in a rural setting often catalyzes social transformation—whether rapidly or over time. The presence of a charismatic religious figure tends to reconfigure the local order, bringing about distinct changes in community life. The findings of this study are consistent with that view: *da'wah* conducted through social networks has played a significant role in reshaping the social fabric of Moropelang Village (Fadri, 2020).

Da'wah Methodological Flexibility

In responding to the socio-cultural dynamics of Indonesian society, it is essential to embed the values of the Qur'an within educational curricula through cultural and contextual approaches. This strategy, exemplified by *Kiai* Khoirul Huda in Moropelang Village, aims to harmonize religious teachings with local cultural contexts, enabling communities to understand and apply Islamic values in ways that are meaningful to their everyday lives.

Kiai Huda's efforts to embed Qur'anic values were rooted in cultural and contextual strategies. In his lectures, he consistently emphasized compassion (*rahmah*), mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and social justice—universal principles of Islam found within sacred texts. Yet, a pressing contemporary challenge lies in how these values can be translated into concrete practices that resonate with rural communities. A holistic strategy is thus required—one that encompasses educational, social, and cultural dimensions in the implementation of Qur'anic values.

The cultural approach to Islamic education highlights the importance of aligning Qur'anic teachings with the cultural values already present in society. Research by Kravtsov and Mansir demonstrates the interrelationship between culture and religious education (Kravtsov & Kravtsova, 2020; Mansir, 2022). This method includes integrating folklore and local traditions that are compatible with Islamic teachings. In the case of Moropelang, education grounded in local wisdom not only enriches the community's learning experience but also strengthens their cultural

identity. This facilitates the internalization of Qur'anic values as an integral part of the community's traditions and daily practices.

Contextual approaches in Islamic religious education should address real-life challenges and the specific socio-economic and cultural conditions of a community. Studies affirm that contextual methods are effective in helping rural populations apply Qur'anic teachings to everyday realities (Fita Mustafida, 2020; Mustafida et al., 2023). For example, promoting social values such as tolerance and mutual respect can be linked to contemporary issues like diversity and conflict resolution. This encourages communities not only to comprehend the Qur'an intellectually but also to embody its principles in their interactions with others.

Kiai Huda employed several strategies to embed Qur'anic values in Moropelang Village:

First, through routine *pengajian* (religious study gatherings) focused on applicable content. The materials were contextually grounded, aligning with the community's everyday habits and experiences. According to Marpaung, the internalization of Qur'anic values involves a process of *tilāwah* (recitation), *tahfīz* (memorization), *tafhīm* (comprehension), and *taṭbīq* (application). These habitual practices foster not only familiarity with the Qur'an but also sincere appreciation and enactment of its teachings (Marpaung et al., 2022; Salman, 2017). Focus group discussions (FGDs) with local residents revealed high enthusiasm for Kiai Huda's recitation sessions, where he consistently emphasized values such as honesty, solidarity, and modesty.

Second, Qur'anic values were instilled through social service activities, such as aiding the poor and organizing non-formal education initiatives (Musa et al., 2024). This reflects the message of Surah Al-Ma'un, which criticizes those who neglect prayers, rebuke orphans, and withhold assistance from the needy. Kiai Huda actively encouraged the community to uphold social responsibility and care for the vulnerable. As supported by Azizan and Priyanto's research, the integration of spiritual and social values in Surah Al-Ma'un reinforces the idea that one's faith is manifested through sincere concern for others (Azizan et al., 2022; Sabri & Priyanto, 2020).

Third, *Kiai* Huda focused on youth development by organizing study circles and discussion forums tailored to adolescents. Given that adolescence is a formative period marked by identity exploration and vulnerability to external influences, structured Islamic education during this stage is crucial. Participatory, interactive, and reflective learning environments have proven to be highly effective (Andriyani, 2020; RULMUZU, 2021). Scholars such as Rizayanti and Hafid have shown that Surah Luqman provides an educational model for guiding youth, emphasizing moral integrity and wisdom (Hafid & Astutik, 2022; Rizayanti et al., 2022). One specific method adopted by *Kiai* Huda involved the routine of Qur'anic recitation prior to study sessions—instilling discipline, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility. Hakim (2022) noted that such moral conditioning can be achieved when Qur'anic teachings are practiced consistently in daily life (Hakim et al., 2022). His approach has proven effective in fostering collective awareness among the youth regarding the importance of living by Qur'anic values.

Additionally, the integration of Qur'anic values can be adapted to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) by embedding Islamic principles into general subjects and reinforcing character education through everyday school activities. Junaidi and Sofyan (2019) highlight the significance of defining a clear Islamic vision, curriculum analysis, teacher training, and systematic evaluation to ensure meaningful integration (Junaidi, 2019; Sofyan et al., 2019). This comprehensive and contextual strategy—combining interpretation, curriculum integration, habitual practice, and daily application—enables Qur'anic values to be not only understood but embodied. Ultimately, such efforts cultivate individuals with strong moral character who reflect the Qur'an's values in both belief and practice.

Kiai's Role as an Agent of Reorientation of Community Values

Based on thematic analysis derived from observations and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the community of Moropelang Village, several key themes emerged concerning the strategic role of the *kiai* in embedding the values of the Qur'an in rural life.

First, the *kiai* functions as both a social and religious mediator. In rural societies, *kiai* hold a vital role in the community's social structure. As highly respected

religious figures, their responsibility extends beyond normative Islamic teaching to include bridging religious values with social change (Madjid, 1992). Through *pengajian* (recitations), sermons, and other religious forums, *kiai* translate spiritual concepts into language and practices that are accessible and relatable to the public. In this role, *kiai* contextualize Qur'anic values—such as justice, compassion, cooperation, and honesty—into the everyday behaviors and norms of society. Their authority is especially significant when issuing guidance or fatwas on family issues, education, or broader societal concerns. With their moral credibility and religious scholarship, *kiai* serve as trusted spiritual and ethical references (Bruinessen, 1995).

This role aligns with Arifin's (2018) study on the communication strategy of *dā'ir* from Hidayatullah in fostering rural communities in Bandung. His research illustrates how persuasive and informative *da'wah*—delivered through assemblies, training, Qur'anic learning centers, and youth programs—can effectively influence community awareness and empowerment (Arifin, 2018). The impact mirrors what was observed in Moropelang Village, where *Kiai* Huda significantly enhanced religious literacy and community engagement through various inclusive programs.

Second, Qur'anic values in Moropelang Village are not just taught—they are embodied and contextualized in daily life. For example, the humility and simplicity modeled by *Kiai* Huda have become widely emulated by villagers. The Qur'an is not only seen as a guide for worship but also as a source of moral, social, and cultural values that touch every aspect of human interaction (Shihab, 1998). These values are internalized as social norms, reflected in communal behaviors and traditions. The examples of contextualized Qur'anic values include: Justice (*'adl*)—seen in community deliberations, equitable crop distribution, and conflict resolution (QS. An-Nahl: 90); Mutual cooperation (*ta'āwun*)—practiced through collective activities like house-building or disaster relief (QS. Al-Maidah: 2); Honesty and trust (*sīdq* and *amānah*)—essential in local market transactions and lending farming tools (QS. Al-Ahzab: 72; QS. Al-Baqarah: 283); Contentment and moderation (*qanā'ah*)—forming a non-consumerist lifestyle (QS. Al-A'raf: 31); Social harmony (*ukhūwah*)—reinforced through community bonding (QS. Al-Hujurat: 10; QS. Muhammad: 22–23); Exemplary conduct and sincerity—seen in patience and moral leadership (QS.

Al-Ahzab: 21); and the value of learning—emphasized through regular religious study (QS. Al-'Alaq: 1–5) (Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2013).

Third, the practice of community-based participatory *da'wah* plays a central role. Participatory *da'wah* engages the community from the outset—problem identification, goal setting, program implementation, and evaluation. This model redefines *da'wah* as not merely sermon delivery, but as a collaborative, empowering process tailored to the unique needs of the community (Azra, 2000). It emphasizes engagement, empowerment, and sustainability—aiming not just at conveying Islamic knowledge, but at cultivating collective awareness and active practice of Islamic values in daily social life (Abdurrahman, 1997; Nasr, 2002). Key features of this participatory model include: needs-based design tailored to local sociocultural dynamics, dialogical methods involving mutual listening, involvement of local leaders, emphasis on real action, such as health, education, and economic empowerment (Nuruddin, 2011).

Fourth, *da'wah* in the digital era faces distinctive challenges. Digital-native generations are more critical, autonomous, and information-saturated. Traditional monologic *da'wah* models are less effective, particularly among youth who prefer engaging, visual, and relevant content (Nikmah, 2020). Amal K. (2021) observed that Ustadz Salim A. Fillah's successful use of digital platforms for *da'wah* communication illustrates the growing need for innovation in religious messaging.

A major challenge in this digital context is the unfiltered spread of religious content online. Many lectures, articles, and quotations from the Qur'an or *ḥadīth* circulate without scholarly validation, increasing the risk of misinterpretation, radicalism, and social discord. In this regard, *Kiai* Huda serves as a vital anchor—offering grounded, community-centered guidance rooted in authoritative religious knowledge.

These findings are the result of both literature review and empirical fieldwork focused on local actors who translate Islamic teachings into practical community engagement. To highlight the novelty of this study compared to previous research, the researcher conducted FGDs with Moropelang residents to identify unique insights not present in existing literature.

Key among these insights is the community's perception of *Kiai* Huda as both a spiritual and social figure. His localized *da'wah* strategy—using vernacular language and a familial approach—fosters a deep sense of connection. Residents' report increased openness, harmony, and responsiveness to Islamic values in daily life as a direct result of the Qur'anic teachings embodied and communicated by *Kiai* Huda.

CONCLUSION

¹ This study demonstrates that the contextual *da'wah* strategy implemented by *Kiai* Khoirul Huda in Moropelang Village has proven effective in grounding the values of the Qur'an within rural community life. His approach—characterized by participatory engagement, educational initiatives, and cultural sensitivity—answers the central research questions on how a *kiai* can influence grassroots community structures and build social networks through the embodiment of Qur'anic values. Through youth mentoring, community service, and the development of Muhammadiyah-based charitable institutions, *Kiai* Huda successfully instilled core principles such as honesty, solidarity, and simplicity into the daily life of the villagers.

² The distinctive contribution of this research lies in the formulation of a community-based *da'wah* model that integrates spiritual, social, and economic values in a contextual manner. This model is particularly relevant for Islamic educational strategies in rural areas facing modern challenges while still rooted in traditional norms. The study recommends the adoption of this contextual *da'wah* approach within national religious education frameworks, especially in curriculum design and teacher training, to facilitate broader acceptance and internalization of Qur'anic values among grassroots communities.

Nevertheless, this study recognizes its limitations as a single-case inquiry focused on one figure in one geographical setting. As such, caution is needed in generalizing its findings. Future research across diverse localities and religious actors is essential to further validate and adapt the *da'wah* model proposed. Despite these limitations, the study offers a meaningful contribution to the discourse on Islamic education and socially embedded *da'wah*, illuminating the potential of Qur'an-based transformation within the dynamic landscape of contemporary global society.

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