

CONTEXTUALIZING THE ABBASID EDUCATIONAL MODEL FOR MULTICULTURAL STUDENTS AT AL-MAHRUSIYAH

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Abstract :

This study examines the contextualization of Abbasid educational values in fostering the character of tolerance among multicultural students at MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri. The study is grounded in the need for Islamic education to effectively manage student diversity through the reinforcement of tolerance values. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss Abbasid education as a historical phenomenon or character education in pesantren through local religious traditions, this study proposes a conceptual framework that contextualizes Abbasid educational values into three interrelated dimensions: social inclusiveness, argumentative dialogue, and intellectual openness for fostering tolerance in multicultural Islamic education. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the inclusive values of Bayt al-Hikmah are contextualized through cross-regional interaction and collaboration that foster social tolerance. The tradition of *munāẓarah* is actualized through deliberation, *bahtsul masā'il*, and academic discussions, which cultivate tolerance toward differences of opinion. Meanwhile, the intellectual openness of the Abbasid era is manifested through the integration of traditional and modern sources of knowledge, resulting in intellectual tolerance. The study concludes that Abbasid educational values remain relevant to contemporary Islamic education and offer a conceptual model for developing tolerance among multicultural students.

Keywords : *Abbasid education, character of tolerance, multicultural students, Islamic education, contextualization of values.*

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini mengkaji kontekstualisasi nilai-nilai pendidikan era Abbasiyah dalam pembentukan karakter toleransi santri multikultural di MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri. Kajian ini berangkat dari pentingnya pengembangan pendidikan Islam yang mampu mengelola keberagaman peserta didik melalui penguatan nilai toleransi. Penelitian bertujuan menganalisis aktualisasi nilai inklusivitas sosial, dialog argumentatif, dan keterbukaan intelektual yang berkembang pada era Abbasiyah dalam praktik pendidikan kontemporer. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña yang meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai inklusivitas Bait al-Hikmah dikontekstualisasikan melalui interaksi dan kolaborasi lintas daerah yang membentuk toleransi sosial. Tradisi *munāẓarah* diaktualisasikan melalui musyawarah, *bahtsul masā'il*, dan diskusi akademik yang menumbuhkan toleransi berpendapat. Sementara itu, keterbukaan intelektual era Abbasiyah diwujudkan melalui integrasi sumber pengetahuan tradisional dan modern yang membentuk toleransi intelektual. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa nilai-nilai pendidikan era Abbasiyah memiliki relevansi dalam pendidikan Islam kontemporer serta dapat menjadi landasan konseptual dalam pembentukan karakter toleransi santri multikultural.

Kata Kunci: *pendidikan era Abbasiyah, karakter toleransi, santri multikultural, pendidikan Islam, kontekstualisasi nilai.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's diversity is reflected in its wide range of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and social backgrounds that coexist within a shared national identity (Aminudin & Ediyono, 2025). In educational settings, such diversity provides valuable opportunities to cultivate tolerance, mutual respect, and inclusive social interaction among students (Astuti et al., 2025; Ardi Rafsanjani et al., 2024). Nevertheless, when not effectively managed, diversity may also contribute to regional stereotyping, group exclusivism, identity-based conflicts, and bullying rooted in cultural differences (Adamu, 2023). This condition highlights that character education extends beyond individual moral development to encompass the promotion of tolerance as a fundamental value in pluralistic societies. Therefore, moral education plays a strategic role in fostering students' ability to live harmoniously amid diversity while strengthening social cohesion and integration.

Moral development from an Islamic perspective encompasses the relationship between humans and God and fellow humans (Mauludah, Ma'sum, & Iswanto, 2023). Abuddin Nata emphasized that Islamic education must be dynamic, integrative, and responsive to societal developments so as to address various contemporary social issues (Nata, 2019, p. 27). Islamic education is not only oriented towards individual piety but also towards the ability to coexist peacefully in a pluralistic environment (Aderibigbe et al., 2023). However, the management of student diversity is often administrative in nature and has not been fully accompanied by the inculcation of an academic culture that fosters tolerance (Pramesti, Syafi'i, & Shobichah, 2026). Therefore, an Islamic education model is needed that can integrate moral values, dialogue, openness, and tolerance into educational practices.

From a multicultural perspective, James A. Banks conceptualizes education as a means of providing equitable learning opportunities while fostering mutual respect and the capacity to coexist within a pluralistic society (Maksum, 2023; Adnyana et al., 2025, p. 27). Through the dimensions of prejudice reduction and the empowerment of school culture and social structures, education is directed toward minimizing intergroup bias and promoting an inclusive and participatory educational environment (Mufidata & Arsyadana, 2025). Similarly, Abuddin Nata argues that Islamic education must be dynamically contextualized so that Islamic values not only nurture individual piety but also cultivate the ability to establish harmonious social relations within diverse communities (Nata, 2019, p. 24; Aditya Putra et al., 2023; Ananda et al., 2025). Consequently, an Islamic educational framework oriented toward tolerance requires learning environments that enable students to experience and internalize the values of togetherness, dialogue, and respect for diversity in their daily interactions.

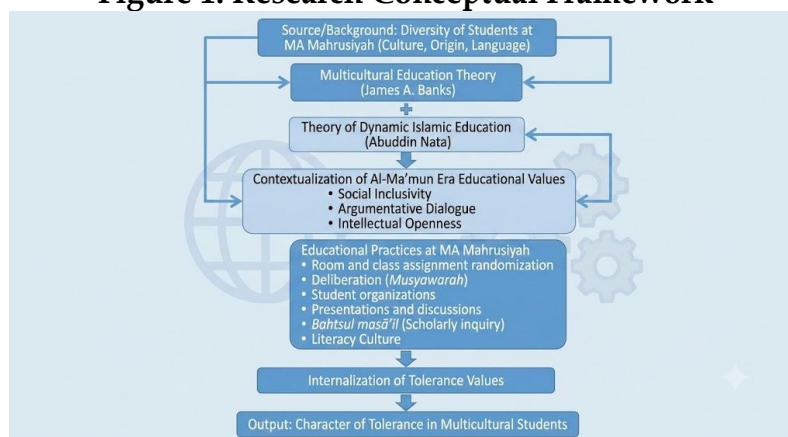
A relevant historical model can be found in the Abbasid Caliphate (813–833 CE), which is widely recognized as one of the golden ages of Islamic civilization and education (Zaitun, 2024; Putri, 2025). Beyond promoting scientific advancement, the Abbasid era fostered an intellectual culture characterized by openness, respect for diversity, and collaboration across social, religious, and cultural boundaries (Jeoung-Myoung, 2023; Khalid Hussain Mir & Md. Rafique Anjum, 2025). These values were embodied in institutions such as the House of Wisdom, which served as a center for multicultural intellectual exchange; the tradition of *munāẓarah* (scholarly debate),

which emphasized ethical dialogue and critical engagement; and the translation movement, which reflected a strong commitment to embracing knowledge from diverse intellectual traditions (Zinhom, 2024). Together, these historical experiences demonstrate that educational excellence is achieved not through cultural uniformity but through the constructive management and integration of diversity.

The tradition of dialogue that flourished during the Abbasid era underscored the ethical significance of pursuing truth through rational inquiry and respectful engagement with differing perspectives. The concept of *Adab al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah* (the ethics of inquiry and scholarly debate) positioned dialogue as a means of attaining truth through evidence-based argumentation, logical reasoning, and openness to alternative viewpoints (Arif, 2020; Pehlivan, 2024). Within educational contexts, this tradition contributed to the cultivation of tolerance, critical thinking, and the constructive management of differences (Naim Saful Amin & Syed Abdul Rahman, 2022; Ahmad, 2023). Accordingly, the Abbasid intellectual legacy represents not only a period of remarkable scientific achievement but also a source of social and ethical values that remain highly relevant to the development of contemporary multicultural education.

The relevance of Abbasid educational values can be observed at MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri, an Islamic senior secondary school whose student population represents diverse regional and cultural backgrounds from across Indonesia. Although such diversity may potentially lead to social segregation and regional stereotyping, preliminary observations suggest the development of a tolerant school culture supported by various educational practices, including randomized student placement in dormitories and classrooms, organizational activities, deliberative forums, *bahtsul masā'il*, academic discussions, and a literacy culture that integrates the study of classical Islamic texts with contemporary sources of knowledge. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of multicultural and Islamic education, this study conceptualizes the development of a tolerant character as the outcome of the interaction among an inclusive educational culture, the contextualization of Islamic educational values, and dialogical traditions that foster respect for diversity. As illustrated in Figure 1, the educational values of the Abbasid erasuch as social inclusivity, ethical and argumentative dialogue, and intellectual openness, are actualized through educational practices at MA Mahrusiyah, thereby contributing to the cultivation of tolerance among multicultural students.

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework



Several previous studies have examined education during the Abbasid era,

primarily focusing on scientific advancement, the role of the House of Wisdom, the translation movement, and the intellectual dynamics that characterized the period (Aziz & Musta'id, 2022; Jeoung-Myoung, 2023; Rusydi et al., 2023). In contrast, research on character education in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) has largely emphasized the cultivation of religious values, the influence of *pesantren* culture, and multicultural education grounded in local wisdom (Mujahid, 2021; Muali et al., 2021; Hasanah et al., 2023). Despite these contributions, studies that connect the socio-intellectual values of the Abbasid era with the development of tolerance among multicultural students in contemporary Islamic educational institutions remain limited. Existing scholarship generally treats Abbasid education as a historical phenomenon, while studies of character education in *pesantren* tend to focus on religious and culturally based approaches to multiculturalism. Consequently, insufficient attention has been given to how the inclusive ethos of the House of Wisdom, the tradition of *munāẓarah*, and the intellectual openness fostered during the Abbasid period are recontextualized within contemporary Islamic educational practices (Gamas, 2015; Iftikhar et al., 2023; Zinhom, 2024). Addressing this gap, the present study proposes a contextualization model of Abbasid educational values encompassing the dimensions of social inclusivity, argumentative dialogue, and intellectual openness as a framework for fostering tolerance among multicultural students in madrasah and *pesantren* settings.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to examine how Abbasid educational values are contextualized in fostering tolerant character among multicultural students at MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri. It argues that inclusive social interaction, a dialogical culture that respects diverse perspectives, and openness to multiple sources of knowledge constitute contemporary manifestations of Abbasid educational values in character formation. By exploring these dimensions, the study seeks to contribute to the discourse on tolerance-oriented Islamic education and to propose a conceptual framework for cultivating tolerant character within madrasah and *pesantren* settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single-case study design. The case study method was selected to facilitate an in-depth exploration of how Abbasid educational values are contextualized in fostering tolerance among students from diverse regional backgrounds within the specific setting of MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri. The research was conducted at MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri, an Islamic senior secondary school operating under the auspices of Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo. The site was purposively selected due to its multicultural student population, comprising learners from various regions of Indonesia, including Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and Papua. This diversity provides a relevant context for examining the development of tolerant character within a multicultural Islamic educational environment.

The researcher serves as the primary instrument of data collection, interpretation, and analysis in this qualitative research (Titze, 2008). Accordingly, the researcher was directly involved in observing educational activities, students' social interactions, and the academic culture within both the madrasah and *pesantren*

environments. To enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, field notes were systematically documented throughout the research process, and data were continuously verified through member checking with participants at various stages of the study.

Research participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in and knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Campbell et al., 2020). Key informants included the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, teachers of Islamic Religious Education, student organization advisors, pesantren administrators, and students representing diverse regional backgrounds. The data collection process was conducted over six months. In-depth interviews and moderate participant observation were carried out over five months to capture educational practices and participants' experiences, followed by one month of document analysis to triangulate and enrich the field data. The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis, while secondary data were drawn from scholarly literature on Abbasid Islamic education, multicultural education, character education, and *Adab al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah*.

Data were analyzed interactively following the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data validity was established through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Furthermore, an audit trail was maintained through the systematic preservation of field notes, interview transcripts, and supporting documents to enhance the dependability and confirmability of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Regional Diversity Among Students as a Context for Fostering Tolerance

Based on the researcher's observations as a member of the institution, MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo accommodates students from diverse regions of Indonesia, including Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and Papua. This diversity brings a wide range of languages, cultural backgrounds, social practices, and communication patterns into both the madrasah and pesantren environments. According to the principal, such diversity is regarded as a social reality that must be consciously managed to prevent the emergence of exclusivist tendencies based on regional identities. As the principal explained:

"Students come from many different regions, each bringing their own language, customs, and cultural background. We therefore regard this diversity not as a challenge, but as an educational asset. Through shared learning, dormitory life, and organizational activities, students are encouraged to know one another, build friendships across regional boundaries, and develop mutual respect." (I. Washoli, personal communication, June 8, 2026).

This view is supported by the pesantren leader, who emphasized that student life is organized around the principles of togetherness and kinship, encouraging intensive interaction among students from different regions through various academic and boarding school activities (A. Asif, personal communication, June 6, 2026).

Although some students initially tend to associate more closely with peers from their own regions, the vice principal for student affairs noted that misunderstandings occasionally arise due to differences in character, language, and social habits. However, these challenges gradually diminish through processes of adaptation and

habituation fostered by educational, boarding school, and student orientation activities (E. Santoso, personal communication, June 8, 2026). The strengthening of cross-regional interaction is also evident within student organizations. One organizational advisor explained that such activities bring together students from diverse backgrounds, thereby expanding opportunities for communication, collaboration, and social relationship building (I. Isma, personal communication, June 7, 2026). Similarly, the student council advisor reported that organizational members represent various regions across Indonesia, including Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and Papua. This diversity is perceived as a valuable asset that strengthens solidarity among students, while potential conflicts are mitigated through regular meetings and effective communication mechanisms (Sutikno, personal communication, June 8, 2026).

The findings indicate that student diversity functions not merely as a potential source of social challenges but also as a crucial context for cultivating tolerance. Within this multicultural environment, moral education plays an important role in strengthening social cohesion, reducing regional stereotypes, and fostering students' capacity to live harmoniously amid cultural differences. These conditions provide a foundation for understanding how educational practices at MA Mahrusiyah contribute to the development of tolerant character among multicultural students.

The findings reveal that student diversity at MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo constitutes an inherent social reality within both the madrasah and pesantren environments. The presence of students from various regions of Indonesia creates a setting in which diverse cultural identities, languages, and social practices interact on a daily basis, thereby shaping a distinctly multicultural educational environment. This finding supports Banks' conception of multicultural education in the research of Mufidata & Arsyadana (2025), which emphasizes that multicultural societies and educational institutions are characterized by the coexistence of individuals from diverse backgrounds and therefore require educational practices that promote inclusive and equitable social relations. From the perspective of Islamic education, diversity is not viewed as a source of division but rather as a manifestation of *sunnatullah* that facilitates *ta'āruf* (mutual acquaintance) and strengthens social solidarity among individuals and communities (Nuha et al., 2024; Lutfia, 2024). Accordingly, diversity at MA Mahrusiyah is not perceived as a challenge to be eliminated but as a social context that necessitates the implementation of tolerance-oriented moral education. Such an approach enables diversity to function as a medium for character formation, intercultural understanding, and the cultivation of harmonious social relations among students from different regional backgrounds.

Cultural, personal, and behavioral differences may initially generate misunderstandings among students. However, sustained interaction through pesantren life, madrasah activities, and student organizations gradually reduces tendencies toward regional exclusivism. This finding is consistent with Allport's contact hypothesis, as discussed by Sprott (1955), which posits that continuous interaction within cooperative settings can reduce prejudice and enhance acceptance of out-group members. In this context, communal living, kinship-based relationships, and intensive communication transform diversity into a medium for social learning (Litaay, Manuputty, Afdhal, & Makaruku, 2025). Accordingly, tolerance emerges not

from the absence of differences but from the experience of living together within a diverse environment. This process demonstrates that tolerance is cultivated through social habituation, enabling students to develop empathy, adaptability, and respect for diverse identities.

The findings further reinforce previous studies demonstrating the significant role of pesantren environments in fostering inclusive and moderate attitudes. Student heterogeneity serves as a form of social capital that promotes a culture of tolerance through daily interaction and habituation (Umiarso, 2019; Anugrah & Vitranti, 2022). Likewise, collective life in pesantren contributes to the development of social solidarity and the reduction of primordial sentiments (Rahayu & Ghrafiza, 2024). The present study extends this body of scholarship by showing that regional diversity among students functions not merely as the social backdrop of education but as a prerequisite for the cultivation of tolerance as an integral component of moral education (Solihat et al., 2023; Saparudin et al., 2025). In this regard, diversity constitutes the objective context that generates the need for tolerance, while sustained social interaction serves as the mechanism through which diversity is transformed into social cohesion and fraternity within the pesantren community.

Historically, these findings bear relevance to the social conditions of the Abbasid era, during which Islamic society developed within a cosmopolitan and multiethnic environment (Rusydi et al., 2023; Aziz & Musta'id, 2022; U. Hasanah, 2022). As noted by Al-Hammadi, Bayouomi dan Rosman (2022), the advancement of Islamic civilization was closely associated with its ability to manage ethnic, cultural, and social diversity within a shared societal framework. In this regard, the regional diversity of students at MA Mahrusiyah reflects a social context comparable to the pluralistic character of Abbasid society, where differences served as a foundation for harmonious coexistence rather than social division. These findings suggest that tolerance does not emerge spontaneously but is cultivated through sustained engagement within diverse communities and through habituation processes that foster mutual respect, social solidarity, and appreciation of differences.

Contextualizing the Inclusive Values of the House of Wisdom in Fostering Social Tolerance

The cultivation of social tolerance at MA Mahrusiyah is facilitated through the systematic creation of interactional spaces that bring together students from diverse regional backgrounds. Classroom assignments, study groups, student organizations, activity committees, and dormitory placements are deliberately organized heterogeneously to prevent regional clustering. According to the principal and vice principal for student affairs, these policies aim to broaden students' social networks, reduce regional fanaticism, and foster adaptation to diverse cultural backgrounds. As the principal explained, "*The diversity of our students is not viewed as a challenge but as an educational opportunity. We intentionally organize classrooms, student organizations, and dormitory life in a heterogeneous manner so that students learn to interact across regional backgrounds, reduce regional exclusivism, and develop mutual respect through everyday experiences.*" (I. Washoli, personal communication, June 8, 2026). Similarly, dormitory assignments are arranged by integrating students of different regional origins, ages, and educational levels, thereby promoting intensive cross-cultural interaction in daily life (A. Asif, personal communication, June 6, 2026). Observational data indicate that

students from various regions engage collectively in academic, organizational, religious, and residential activities without significant regional segregation.

Social tolerance is further reinforced through collaborative activities that require cross-regional cooperation, including MATSAMA, IPNU-IPPNU organizations, deliberative forums, activity committees, and study groups. These activities provide opportunities for students to interact, communicate, and accomplish shared tasks with peers from different backgrounds (E. Santoso, personal communication, June 8, 2026). Within student organizations, diversity expands social networks and strengthens collaborative skills, while deliberative practices cultivate respect for differing perspectives and collective decision-making (I. Isma, personal communication, June 7, 2026). Likewise, the student council advisor emphasized that all members are granted equal opportunities to participate in planning and implementing organizational programs regardless of regional origin. Interpersonal relationships are fostered through effective communication, mutual respect, and cooperation, enabling diversity to function as a resource for achieving common goals (Sutikno, personal communication, June 8, 2026). Furthermore, the communal nature of pesantren life, characterized by continuous learning, shared activities, and collective living, strengthens social bonds among students. The pesantren leader emphasized, *"Living together in the pesantren enables students from different regions to interact continuously. Through shared learning, worship, and daily responsibilities, they gradually build a sense of brotherhood that transcends regional identities."* (A. Asif, personal communication, June 6, 2026). Collectively, these practices demonstrate that cross-regional interaction functions not merely as a social mechanism but also as a form of moral education that cultivates *ta'āruf* (mutual acquaintance), respect for differences, and fraternity within a multicultural environment.

The cultivation of social tolerance at MA Mahrusiyah is achieved through the creation of inclusive and collaborative spaces for interaction. This practice reflects the character of the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikmah*) during the Abbasid era, which functioned as a meeting point for diverse ethnic, linguistic, and intellectual communities within an open and receptive environment (Nurabidin et al., 2024; Amirudin & Supraha, 2025). A defining feature of classical Islamic civilization was the existence of social settings that facilitated cooperation and intellectual exchange beyond exclusive identity boundaries (Kirabaev, 2020; Fitria, 2024; Rahawarin et al., 2024). From a multicultural educational perspective, this finding aligns with Banks' view in the research of Maksum (2023) that inclusive education should provide equal opportunities for intergroup interaction to enable students to live harmoniously within diverse societies. Accordingly, the integration of students through heterogeneous classroom assignments, student organizations, study groups, and dormitory arrangements at MA Mahrusiyah demonstrates that social tolerance is cultivated not through identity segregation but through shared experiences that foster mutual acquaintance, respect, and understanding.

Furthermore, the involvement of students from diverse backgrounds in various collaborative activities demonstrates that social tolerance is cultivated through sustained cooperative experiences. This finding is consistent with Allport's contact hypothesis, as discussed by Sprott (1955), which posits that intensive interaction within cooperative settings reduces prejudice and strengthens intergroup solidarity. From the perspective of Islamic education, Nata (2019) argues that moral character is

developed through habituation and educational environments that facilitate the internalization of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance), and *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance). Accordingly, collective life at MA Mahrusiyah serves as an effective medium for fostering social tolerance through shared experiences. This interpretation is further supported by Lickona (1992), who emphasizes that character formation occurs through social practices that enable individuals to experience directly the values of mutual respect, cooperation, and collective responsibility. Therefore, the inclusivity embedded in the collective activities of MA Mahrusiyah functions not merely as a social mechanism but as a form of moral education that cultivates *ta'āruf* (mutual acquaintance), fraternity, and social cohesion within a multicultural environment.

The findings reinforce previous studies demonstrating that inclusive cultures within pesantren contribute significantly to the development of tolerant attitudes. Latif Hafid (2021) and Solihat et al. (2023) found that collective living and intensive student interaction foster social solidarity and reduce identity-based exclusivism. Similarly, Aisyah et al. (2025) concluded that student diversity functions as social capital for cultivating tolerance through shared experiences and collaborative educational activities. The present study extends these findings by showing that cross-regional interaction is not merely a natural outcome of diversity but is actively shaped through institutional policies that create heterogeneous spaces within classrooms, student organizations, and dormitory life.

The findings are also consistent with the studies of Mashuri et al. (2024) and Saputro et al. (2025), which emphasize that multicultural education in pesantren is most effective when implemented through social experiences that encourage interaction and cooperation among individuals from diverse backgrounds. Likewise, Atho' et al. (2026) and Fuadah et al. (2026) highlight the importance of pesantren cultures grounded in togetherness and deliberation for fostering inclusive and moderate character. However, this study offers a more specific contribution by linking such inclusive practices to the values embodied in the tradition of the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikmah*) during the Abbasid era. Consequently, social tolerance at MA Mahrusiyah can be understood not only as the product of student interaction but also as a contemporary contextualization of the inclusive ethos of classical Islamic civilization, in which diversity served as a foundation for fraternity, cooperation, and harmonious coexistence.

Contextualizing the Tradition of *Munāẓarah* in Cultivating Tolerance for Differences of Opinion

An argumentative dialogue culture at MA Mahrusiyah is cultivated through deliberative forums, *bahtsul masā'il*, group discussions, classroom presentations, and classical text studies that provide students with opportunities to express their views openly. In the learning process, teachers act as facilitators who encourage students to articulate arguments, question ideas, and present alternative perspectives supported by accountable reasoning and evidence. As one teacher explained, "*In classroom discussions and bahtsul masā'il, students are encouraged to express their opinions freely, but every argument must be supported by evidence and conveyed respectfully. We emphasize that differences of opinion are part of the learning process, so students are expected to listen carefully, appreciate alternative viewpoints, and seek the strongest argument rather than*

simply defending their own position." (T. Thooyar, personal communication, June 5, 2026). Differences of opinion are managed through discussion norms emphasizing ethical communication, the use of references, consensus-building, and respect for opposing viewpoints (T. Thooyar, personal communication, June 5, 2026). Likewise, the traditions of *syawir* and *bahtsul masā'il* function as intellectual forums that foster scientific argumentation while cultivating appreciation for diverse perspectives (I. Washoli, personal communication, June 8, 2026).

This dialogical culture is further reinforced through organizational activities, where routine deliberations provide equal opportunities for members to express opinions and resolve differences through collective consensus. The student organization advisor noted, *"Every member is given the same opportunity to express ideas during organizational meetings. Differences of opinion are discussed openly until a collective agreement is reached, allowing students to learn that respectful dialogue is more important than insisting on personal views."* (I. Isma, personal communication, June 7, 2026). The student council advisor similarly emphasized that organizational discussions are conducted in a familial atmosphere that values participation, mutual respect, and consideration of multiple viewpoints in decision-making processes (Sutikno, personal communication, June 8, 2026). Observational data indicate that students are accustomed to presenting arguments in turn, listening attentively to others, and responding to disagreements without personal confrontation.

Beyond developing dialogical competence, these practices also promote intellectual openness through exposure to diverse scholarly perspectives and comparative discussions of different Islamic schools of thought based on their respective evidence and arguments (T. Thooyar, personal communication, June 5, 2026). The madrasah regards intellectual diversity as an integral part of the search for truth that should be approached with openness and responsibility (I. Washoli, personal communication, June 8, 2026). Furthermore, *bahtsul masā'il* and deliberative forums involving students from diverse backgrounds provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and the constructive engagement of differing viewpoints (E. Santoso, personal communication, June 8, 2026). Collectively, these findings indicate that the tradition of *munāẓarah* at MA Mahrusiyah functions not merely as a pedagogical method but as a mechanism for cultivating tolerance toward differences of opinion. Through sustained dialogical experiences, students learn to present arguments critically while respecting alternative viewpoints, enabling disagreement to serve as a source of intellectual enrichment and collaborative problem-solving rather than social conflict.

The argumentative dialogue culture developed at MA Mahrusiyah reflects the actualization of the *munāẓarah* tradition that flourished during the Abbasid era. Within this tradition, differences of opinion are not viewed as sources of conflict but as opportunities to pursue truth through rational and ethical argumentation (Barni & Yusran, 2019; Hakim & Muzammil, 2023). This perspective aligns with the concept of *Adab al-Baḥṭh wa al-Munāẓarah*, which emphasizes evidence-based reasoning, respect for opposing viewpoints, and a commitment to truth-seeking rather than victory in debate (Arif, 2020; Pehlivan, 2024). The practices of deliberation, *bahtsul masā'il*, classroom discussions, and presentations at MA Mahrusiyah demonstrate that dialogue functions not only to develop critical thinking but also to cultivate ethical communication, mutual respect, and consensus-building. Accordingly, tolerance

toward differences of opinion is fostered through sustained dialogical experiences embedded in students' academic and organizational lives.

From the perspective of dynamic Islamic education, Nata (2019) argues that Islamic education should extend beyond knowledge transmission to prepare learners for harmonious coexistence within pluralistic societies. The deliberative and dialogical culture at MA Mahrusiyah illustrates the contextualization of Islamic educational values in response to contemporary social diversity. Likewise, Banks' conception of multicultural education by research of Maksum (2023) highlights the importance of educational cultures that provide equitable opportunities for participation in academic and social life. The equal opportunities afforded to students to express their views in classrooms, organizations, and *bahtsul masā'il* forums reflect an empowering school culture and social structure while simultaneously contributing to prejudice reduction through constructive dialogue and intellectual engagement (Barni & Yusran, 2019; Wati et al., 2025). Therefore, tolerance for differences of opinion at MA Mahrusiyah is cultivated not through the homogenization of perspectives but through the habituation of open, respectful, and responsible dialogue.

The findings reinforce previous studies highlighting the role of dialogical culture in Islamic education. Mujahid (2021) demonstrated that pesantren traditions grounded in deliberation and collective learning contribute to the development of moderate character and respect for differences. Similarly, Hasanah et al. (2023) found that pesantren academic culture serves as a medium for internalizing tolerance through collective interaction and discussion, while Muali et al. (2021) showed that dialogical and collaborative learning enhances critical thinking and mutual respect within Islamic educational settings. Collectively, these studies affirm the significant contribution of dialogical practices to the cultivation of tolerant character among students.

The findings also align with scholarship on classical Islamic intellectual traditions that regard *munāẓarah* as a foundation for ethical scholarly engagement. Naim Saful Amin and Syed Abdul Rahman (2022) argued that *Adab al-Baḥṭh wa al-Munāẓarah* functions not only as a method of scholarly debate but also as a framework for fostering openness, appreciation of diverse perspectives, and constructive conflict resolution. However, the present study offers a more specific contribution by demonstrating how these values have been contextualized within contemporary pesantren education through organizational deliberations, *bahtsul masā'il*, classroom discussions, and classical text studies. In this context, *munāẓarah* functions not merely as a pedagogical approach but as a mechanism of moral education that cultivates tolerance toward differences of opinion amid intellectual diversity.

Taken together, the findings suggest that tolerance for diverse opinions at MA Mahrusiyah is fostered through the habituation of argumentative dialogue grounded in the ethics of *Adab al-Baḥṭh wa al-Munāẓarah*. This tradition represents a contemporary contextualization of Abbasid educational values within Islamic education. Through sustained dialogical engagement, students learn to articulate arguments critically, respect differing viewpoints, and regard disagreement as a means of intellectual enrichment and collaborative problem-solving. Consequently, the *munāẓarah* tradition contributes to the development of tolerant character capable of sustaining both intellectual and social harmony within multicultural communities.

Contextualizing the Tradition of *Munāẓarah* in Cultivating Tolerance for Differences of Opinion

MA Mahrusiyah promotes intellectual openness through the integration of traditional and contemporary learning resources. Instruction is not limited to formal textbooks but incorporates *kitab kuning*, *syawir* methods, digital media, and technology-based learning tools, enabling students to engage with knowledge from diverse sources. As one teacher explained, "We encourage students not to rely on a single source of knowledge. Besides studying *kitab kuning*, they are encouraged to consult textbooks, scholarly articles, and digital resources so that they can compare different perspectives and develop a broader understanding of Islamic knowledge." (T. Thoyyar, personal communication, June 5, 2026). The madrasah further positions *kitab kuning* studies as a foundational tradition that interacts dynamically with contemporary knowledge through the integration of the national and pesantren curricula (I. Washoli, personal communication, June 8, 2026). This literacy-oriented environment encourages students to read, analyze, and communicate information critically, while observational data indicate the use of classical texts, formal textbooks, scholarly articles, and digital resources in learning and discussion activities. Such practices broaden students' intellectual horizons and reduce dependence on a single source of authority.

Intellectual openness is further strengthened through exposure to diverse scholarly perspectives. Teachers introduce *ikhtilāf* through comparative approaches to different schools of thought and critical examination of the arguments underlying each position, enabling students to recognize diversity of opinion as an integral part of the Islamic intellectual tradition (T. Thoyyar, personal communication, June 5, 2026). Similarly, the madrasah regards intellectual diversity as a complementary rather than contradictory element of knowledge and encourages students to engage openly with academically accountable perspectives (I. Washoli, personal communication, June 8, 2026). Students' tendency to evaluate the strength of evidence before adopting a position reflects the development of critical thinking alongside respect for interpretive diversity (T. Thoyyar, personal communication, June 5, 2026). Accordingly, intellectual openness at MA Mahrusiyah extends beyond the expansion of knowledge to the cultivation of intellectual tolerance, characterized by a willingness to engage with diverse ideas, assess arguments rationally, and respect differing viewpoints in the pursuit of truth.

The intellectual openness cultivated at MA Mahrusiyah reflects the actualization of Abbasid educational values characterized by receptivity to diverse sources of knowledge and scholarly perspectives. This orientation parallels the translation movement and the development of the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Ḥikmah*), which brought together intellectual traditions from various civilizations within an open and dialogical environment (Zinhom, 2024; Jeoung-Myoung, 2023). From the perspective of dynamic Islamic education, Nata (2019) argues that Islamic education should be integrative and responsive to societal developments, enabling Islamic values to be contextualized creatively without compromising their fundamental principles. In this regard, the integration of *kitab kuning*, the national curriculum, scientific literacy, and educational technology at MA Mahrusiyah demonstrates that Islamic education is not constructed upon a dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge but upon the synthesis of multiple sources of learning that broaden

students' intellectual horizons and adaptability to contemporary challenges.

Furthermore, the introduction of diverse scholarly opinions and comparative approaches to different schools of thought reflects an intellectual culture that values plurality of thought. This finding is consistent with the concept of *Adab al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah*, which emphasizes rational argumentation, openness to alternative viewpoints, and a commitment to truth-seeking (Arif, 2020; Pehlivan, 2024). Within Banks' framework of multicultural education, openness to diverse intellectual perspectives contributes to an inclusive educational culture and prejudice reduction through the development of critical thinking skills (Maksum, 2023; Wati et al., 2025). This interpretation is further supported by Hare's concept of open-mindedness, which highlights the willingness to consider competing viewpoints rationally before reaching a judgment (Hare, 2010; Obiwulu et al., 2019). Accordingly, intellectual openness at MA Mahrusiyah extends beyond the expansion of knowledge to the cultivation of intellectual tolerance, characterized by a willingness to engage with diverse ideas and respect interpretive differences in the pursuit of truth.

The findings reinforce previous scholarship that identifies the Islamic intellectual tradition as a foundation for cultivating moderate and tolerant attitudes. Aziz and Musta'id (2022) and Rusydi et al. (2023) demonstrated that educational advancement during the Abbasid era was supported by openness to diverse intellectual traditions through the translation movement and the development of the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikmah*). Likewise, Jeoung-Myoung (2023) emphasized that Abbasid civilization flourished not through intellectual exclusivism but through dialogue and the assimilation of knowledge from different civilizations. The present study extends this scholarship by demonstrating that the intellectual openness of the Abbasid era is not merely a historical phenomenon but has been contextualized within contemporary pesantren education through the integration of the national curriculum, *kitab kuning* studies, literacy practices, and educational technology.

The findings are also consistent with Muali et al. (2021), who found that academic culture and collaborative learning in pesantren contribute to the development of critical thinking and openness toward diversity. Similarly, Hasanah et al. (2023) showed that dialogical Islamic learning traditions foster moderate attitudes and appreciation for differing perspectives, while Mujahid (2021) highlighted the importance of literacy culture and engagement with diverse sources of knowledge in character formation within Islamic educational settings. However, this study offers a more specific contribution by demonstrating that intellectual tolerance emerges not solely from literacy practices and pesantren scholarly traditions but also from the contextualization of Abbasid intellectual values through the integration of traditional and modern learning resources and the argumentative engagement of diverse scholarly perspectives.

Overall, the findings indicate that intellectual openness at MA Mahrusiyah represents the contemporary actualization of Abbasid educational values that regard knowledge diversity as a means of intellectual enrichment and truth-seeking. The integration of multiple learning resources and respect for the plurality of perspectives cultivate intellectual tolerance characterized by critical thinking, openness to interpretive differences, and a willingness to evaluate ideas on the basis of their evidential and argumentative strength. Accordingly, Islamic education functions not

only to transmit knowledge but also to develop inclusive, moderate, and adaptive intellectual character capable of responding to the complexities of multicultural societies.

Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Contextualizing Abbasid Educational Values for Developing Tolerant Character in Multicultural Islamic Education

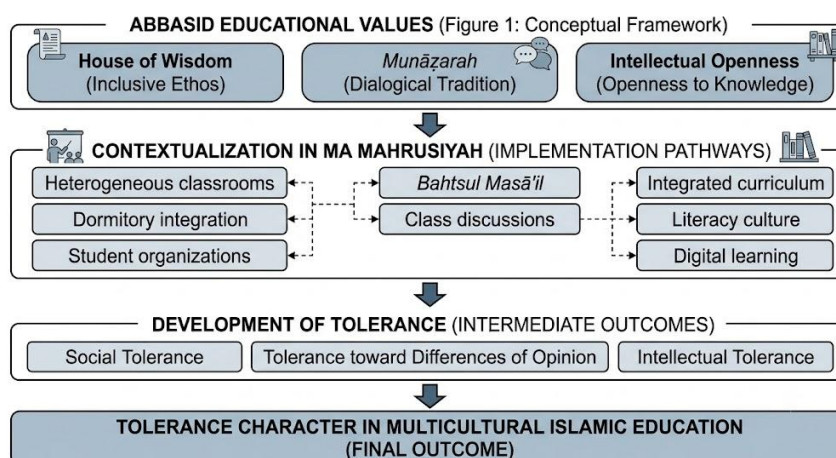


Figure 2 presents the conceptual model developed from the findings of this study. The model illustrates that three core educational values inherited from the Abbasid era, the inclusive ethos of the *House of Wisdom*, the dialogical tradition of *Munāẓarah*, and intellectual openness, serve as the conceptual foundation for cultivating tolerance in contemporary Islamic education. Rather than being adopted as historical concepts alone, these values are contextualized through various educational practices implemented at MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo.

The contextualization process is reflected in heterogeneous classroom organization, dormitory integration, student organizations, *bahtsul masā'il*, classroom discussions, an integrated curriculum, literacy culture, and the use of digital learning resources. These educational practices collectively foster three interrelated dimensions of tolerance: social tolerance, tolerance toward differences of opinion, and intellectual tolerance. The interaction among these three dimensions ultimately contributes to the development of tolerant character within multicultural Islamic education. Accordingly, the conceptual model demonstrates that Abbasid educational values remain relevant to contemporary Islamic education when translated into inclusive institutional policies, dialogical learning practices, and intellectually open educational environments.

Implications for Islamic Education Policy

The findings of this study have broader implications for the development of Islamic education policy, particularly in multicultural educational settings. At the institutional level, madrasahs and pesantren should move beyond symbolic recognition of diversity by establishing policies that intentionally create opportunities for sustained interaction among students from different cultural and regional backgrounds. Heterogeneous classroom composition, integrated dormitory arrangements, collaborative student organizations, and cross-cultural learning activities should be designed as integral components of character education. Such institutional policies enable tolerance to develop through continuous social experience rather than through normative instruction alone.

Furthermore, curriculum development in Islamic education should incorporate dialogical and inquiry-based learning traditions inspired by the Abbasid intellectual heritage. The integration of *munāẓarah*, *bahtsul masā'il*, comparative studies of Islamic schools of thought, literacy-based learning, and critical discussion can strengthen students' abilities to evaluate evidence, appreciate diverse perspectives, and engage respectfully with differences of opinion. These pedagogical approaches are consistent with contemporary educational goals that emphasize critical thinking, religious moderation, democratic participation, and character education while remaining firmly rooted in the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Finally, the *Abbasid Educational Contextualization Model* proposed in this study can serve as a conceptual framework for policymakers, curriculum developers, and Islamic educational institutions seeking to strengthen multicultural education. Rather than treating tolerance as a separate moral subject, the model demonstrates that tolerant character can be cultivated through the integration of inclusive institutional policies, dialogical learning practices, and intellectual openness embedded within everyday educational experiences. This approach offers a practical framework for contextualizing classical Islamic educational values to address contemporary challenges in culturally diverse educational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the development of tolerant character among multicultural students at MA Mahrusiyah Lirboyo Kediri is facilitated through the contextualization of Abbasid educational values, namely social inclusivity, argumentative dialogue, and intellectual openness. The inclusive ethos of the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikmah*) is actualized through cross-regional interaction and collaboration that foster social tolerance. The tradition of *munāẓarah* is contextualized through deliberative practices, *bahtsul masā'il*, and academic discussions that cultivate tolerance toward differences of opinion. Meanwhile, Abbasid intellectual openness is reflected in the integration of traditional and modern sources of knowledge and exposure to diverse scholarly perspectives, contributing to the development of intellectual tolerance.

The findings further indicate that Abbasid educational values remain highly relevant to contemporary multicultural education. The principles of social inclusivity, dialogical engagement, and intellectual openness correspond closely with Banks' conception of multicultural education, particularly the development of inclusive and participatory educational cultures and the reduction of intergroup prejudice. These results suggest that classical Islamic education embodies pedagogical principles that extend beyond their historical context and remain applicable to contemporary Islamic educational settings. Accordingly, this study contributes to the theoretical discourse on multicultural Islamic education by positioning Abbasid educational values as a conceptual foundation for fostering tolerant character in diverse learning environments.

Overall, the study proposes a conceptual model of tolerant character formation grounded in three interrelated dimensions: social inclusivity, argumentative dialogue, and intellectual openness. This model may also serve as a practical reference for madrasahs and pesantren in designing inclusive learning environments,

strengthening dialogical learning practices, and integrating traditional and contemporary sources of knowledge to foster tolerant character among students. Future research may examine the applicability of this model across Islamic educational institutions with different social and cultural characteristics to assess its broader relevance and adaptability.

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