



## Multicultural Character Formation in Islamic Religious Education

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 22 December 2025

Received in revised form 6

February 2026

Accepted 2 June 2026

#### Keywords:

Islamic Religious Education

Multicultural Character

Jawahirul Adab Book

Tazkiyatun Nafs

Local Wisdom

### Abstract

The implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia often encounters epistemological challenges, namely the dominance of Western educational theories that tend to be secular and only focus on socio-cognitive engineering, while ignoring the spiritual dimension that is the core of Islamic Religious Education. This condition triggers disparities in students who may understand tolerance intellectually, but are emotionally and spiritually fragile. This article seeks to reconstruct the position of Islamic Religious Education as the main discursive authority in character education, by making local wisdom in the Book of *Jawahirul Adab* as a pedagogical case study to fill this spiritual void. Using a qualitative approach with content analysis methods and contextual hermeneutics, this study dialogues the dimensions of James A. Banks' multicultural education with the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul). The results of the comparative analysis show that Islamic ethics provides axiological reinforcement to Banks' theory through the "Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism" model that prioritizes inner management. An analysis of the *Jawahirul Adab* (The Book of Adab) finds that the elimination of the trait of *ujub* (inheritance) serves as an internal mechanism for Prejudice Reduction, while the prohibition against *ngutek-ngutek drengki* (introverted behavior) is a psycho-spiritual prerequisite for the success of Equity Pedagogy. This study also reveals that the rhythmic structure of *nadhom* in the book serves as a more effective pedagogical instrument for internalizing values than instructional prose texts. This integration of traditional values offers a fundamental solution to the problem of "spiritual emptiness" in modern multicultural education.

## Introduction

As a nation destined for diversity, Indonesia now faces a persistent dual challenge in managing its diversity. On the one hand, the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious heterogeneity that stretches from Sabang to Merauke constitutes a rich source of social capital. However, on the other hand, this sociological reality harbors the potential for latent horizontal conflict if not managed through appropriate and sustainable educational mechanisms. Within the national education ecosystem, Islamic Religious Education holds a highly strategic constitutional and moral mandate. Islamic Religious Education is not designed solely to cultivate ritual or individual piety, but also encompasses fundamental humanitarian values such as manners, noble morals, justice, and respect for fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*) (Mulyadi et al., 2023). Ideally, Islamic Religious Education serves as the vanguard in sowing the seeds of religious moderation and tolerance to prevent national disintegration. Unfortunately, the empirical reality on the ground often presents a glaring paradox. Despite the widespread inclusion of tolerance and character education in the curriculum, intolerance, bullying, and symbolic violence still frequently occur among students. This deviation indicates a

fundamental gap or missing link in the current educational approach (Mariyono, 2024; Tilaar, 2004; Ulfa et al., 2022; Nurhasan et al., 2025; Gümrükçüoğlu, 2025).

The main weakness in the practice of multicultural education in Indonesian schools often stems from the adoption of Western theories that are not thoroughly critiqued or properly positioned (Mariyono, 2024; Afifuddin et al., 2025). The discourse on multicultural education has been dominated by the hegemony of theories imported from North American and European sociological contexts, such as those proposed by James A. Banks, Sonia Nieto, or Christine Sleeter. Banks & Banks (2019), for example, formulated five dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equality pedagogy, and an empowering school culture. Indeed, these theories offer a robust sociological and political framework for managing diversity in the classroom. However, this Western approach is rooted in secularism and liberal humanism, which tend to separate moral values from transcendental or divine dimensions (Perdana & Wahyudi, 2024). This criticism is reinforced by Armizi et al. (2025) who emphasized that the hegemony of Western educational philosophy often causes disorientation of values because it ignores the dimension of soul purification (*tazkiyah*). As a result, character education is often reduced to the transfer of cognitive knowledge about "human rights," "democracy," and "social contracts," but fails to touch the inner dimension (inner self) or the soul of the student (Hamidi & Nurhakim, 2025). This kind of education may succeed in producing students who "know" about the definition of tolerance (Ummah et al., 2024), but are not necessarily able to "feel" and "apply" that tolerance sincerely because their hearts are still plagued by spiritual illness (Masduki et al., 2025; Sahin, 2018).

This study proposes a repositioning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) from a mere supporting subject to a primary ontological framework. This is based on the need for spiritual grounding, often absent in secular multicultural curricula. As a central paradigm, Islamic Religious Education must provide the spiritual foundation (spiritual grounding) missing in these secular theories. In an effort to reconstruct this role, rediscovering the treasures of local wisdom and the intellectual traditions of Nusantara Islam (*Turats*) is a necessity (Al Anshori & Budiya, 2024). Although several researchers have explored the values of the *Jawahirul Adab* book (Book of Adab) before, the focus of most studies remains limited to the normative ethical aspects or internal moderation of Islamic boarding schools. For example, Rahayu et al. (2022) examine this book from the perspective of students' politeness towards educators, while Al Anshori et al. (2021) examine the concept of *tahdzibun nafs* (the principle of self-control) as a psychological solution to learning boredom. On the other hand, Imroatul Wakhidah (2025) highlighted the role of this book in internalizing the values of religious moderation to counter radicalism in Islamic boarding schools. However, there is not much literature that examines this book as an epistemological critique of Western multicultural education theory specifically. Therefore, this study fills this gap by positioning the Book of *Jawahirul Adab* as an ontological basis for reconstructing the theory of multicultural character education, which has been dominated by a secular perspective. The Book of *Jawahirul Adab* by Sheikh Ahmad Nawawi al-Qosimi al-Bulumanis was chosen as the main case study or primary learning source in this research. This book is not merely a historical manuscript or a collection of ancient ethical poems, but rather a manifestation of prophetic pedagogy rich in moral psychology (*tazkiyatun nafs*). While Western theory speaks of "prejudice" as a cognitive bias or social construct, *Jawahirul Adab* addresses its deeper roots in the human heart, such as pride (*ujub*), showing off (*riya'*), popularity-hungry (*sum'ah*), and envy (*hasad*) (Al Anshori et al., 2021). This study aims to bridge this gap by formulating how the values in this book can be integrated to strengthen Islamic Religious Education as a holistic, multicultural character education

foundation relevant to the challenges of the times, particularly within the framework of the Independent Curriculum (Husni, 2024; Mustakim et al., 2024; Taylor et al., 2024).

This research is urgent for two main reasons. First, there is a need to decolonize the character education curriculum to better align with the spiritual values of religious Indonesian society. Relying solely on Western theories without a religious filter often results in an education that lacks meaning. Second, the book "Jawahirul Adab," a product of Indonesian scholars, offers a unique perspective on heart management, often overlooked in modern educational psychology. By using this book as a case study, this research seeks to demonstrate the resilience and relevance of the Islamic boarding school tradition in addressing contemporary problems. This aligns with Hefner's (2022) sociological findings, which position the transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia as a global model that successfully integrates Islamic values with modern formal education.

This study contributes to the field of Islamic Religious Education and multicultural education in three important ways. First, it offers a conceptual reconstruction of multicultural character formation by integrating James A. Banks' multicultural education framework with the Islamic concept of *tazkiyatun nafs*. Second, it positions the *Jawahirul Adab* manuscript not merely as a traditional moral text, but as a pedagogical source for addressing the spiritual roots of prejudice, envy, and status-based discrimination in educational settings. Third, it proposes the Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism model as an alternative framework for strengthening multicultural character education in Islamic Religious Education, particularly within the context of local wisdom and the Merdeka Curriculum (Alhamuddin, 2025).

## Methods

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a library research approach to investigate the conceptual foundations of multicultural character formation within Islamic Religious Education through the ethical teachings contained in the *Jawahirul Adab* manuscript. Qualitative inquiry was selected because the study sought to interpret meanings, values, and educational principles embedded in classical Islamic texts rather than to measure variables quantitatively. This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of how traditional Islamic ethical concepts can contribute to contemporary multicultural education discourse. In accordance with the principles of qualitative research, the study emphasized contextual understanding, interpretative analysis, and theoretical reconstruction (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The research aimed to formulate a conceptual model that integrates multicultural education theory with the Islamic tradition of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) as a foundation for character education.

### Research Context and Data Sources

The research was situated within the broader context of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia, particularly the ongoing effort to strengthen multicultural values while maintaining the spiritual foundations of education. The primary source of data was the original text and translated version of *Jawahirul Adab*, authored by Sheikh Ahmad Nawawi al-Qosimi al-Bulumanisi. This manuscript was selected because it represents a significant body of local Islamic wisdom widely studied in pesantren traditions across Central and East Java. The text contains ethical teachings conveyed through *nadhom* (didactic poetry), which function as pedagogical instruments for moral and spiritual development.

Secondary data consisted of scholarly literature related to multicultural education, Islamic educational philosophy, Islamic psychology, character education, and curriculum

development. Particular attention was given to the multicultural education framework proposed by James A. Banks as well as contemporary studies discussing Islamic Religious Education, local wisdom, and spiritual character formation. National education policy documents, including guidelines associated with the Merdeka Curriculum, were also consulted to ensure the contemporary relevance of the analysis.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data were collected through systematic document analysis. The process began with an intensive reading of the *Jawahirul Adab* text to identify themes, concepts, and ethical principles relevant to multicultural character development. Subsequently, supporting literature was reviewed to establish theoretical linkages between Islamic ethical teachings and multicultural education theories. Relevant passages, concepts, and pedagogical principles were categorized according to major themes, including prejudice reduction, equality, social justice, moral development, and character formation. The document review process followed established qualitative research procedures that emphasize careful selection, organization, and interpretation of textual materials (Zed, 2004).

### **Data Analysis**

The study employed contextual hermeneutic analysis to interpret the meaning of the text and establish its relevance to contemporary educational challenges. Contextual hermeneutics was selected because it facilitates a dialogue between historical texts and present-day realities while minimizing the risk of anachronistic interpretation. The analytical procedure consisted of three interconnected stages. First, contextualization was conducted to understand the historical, cultural, and intellectual background of the author and the text. Second, decontextualization was undertaken to identify universal ethical values and educational principles embedded within the manuscript. Third, recontextualization was performed to connect these principles with current issues in multicultural education and the theoretical framework of Banks' multicultural education model. Through this process, Islamic Religious Education was positioned as the overarching ontological framework, while *Jawahirul Adab* served as a case study illustrating the practical application of spiritual-based multicultural education (Krippendorff, 2013).

### **Trustworthiness and Validity**

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. First, prolonged engagement with the primary text enabled a comprehensive understanding of its philosophical and pedagogical content. Second, source triangulation was conducted by comparing interpretations derived from *Jawahirul Adab* with contemporary literature on Islamic psychology, multicultural education, and character development. Third, theoretical triangulation was applied by examining the consistency of findings across different conceptual frameworks, particularly between Islamic educational perspectives and multicultural education theory. These procedures enhanced the reliability of the interpretations and strengthened the validity of the proposed conceptual reconstruction.

### **Results and Discussion**

This section presents the findings derived from the contextual hermeneutic analysis of the *Jawahirul Adab* manuscript and its comparison with the multicultural education framework proposed by James A. Banks. The analysis focuses on how Islamic ethical concepts contained in the text contribute to multicultural character formation within Islamic Religious Education. The findings are organized into four major themes. First, the study identifies the position of Islamic Religious Education as the primary discursive authority in multicultural character education. Second, it examines the pedagogical and epistemological functions of *nadhom* as a

medium for value internalization. Third, it analyzes the role of eliminating jealousy and envy in strengthening equity-oriented learning practices. Fourth, it explores the implications of these values for the development of inclusive school culture. The findings demonstrate that the ethical principles embedded in *Jawahirul Adab* provide a spiritual foundation that complements contemporary multicultural education approaches.

### **Islamic Religious Education as the Discursive Foundation of Multicultural Character Formation**

The first finding indicates that the *Jawahirul Adab* manuscript positions Islamic Religious Education as the primary ontological foundation for multicultural character development. Analysis of the text revealed that social harmony is consistently linked to spiritual purification rather than solely to social interaction or civic responsibility. The manuscript emphasizes that the quality of relationships among individuals is determined by the condition of the inner self, suggesting that multicultural attitudes emerge from successful moral and spiritual development.

Several passages analyzed in the manuscript demonstrate that ethical conduct toward others is inseparable from personal spiritual discipline. The text repeatedly emphasizes humility, self-control, sincerity, and self-purification as prerequisites for building harmonious relationships within diverse communities. These values function not merely as individual virtues but also as social mechanisms that enable mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

The findings further reveal that multicultural character formation is conceptualized as an internal process before becoming a social practice. Rather than beginning with external behavioral regulations, the manuscript prioritizes the transformation of inner attitudes that potentially generate prejudice and discrimination. This orientation places spiritual development at the center of educational practice.

The analysis also demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education functions as a comprehensive framework that integrates moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. Within this framework, multicultural values are not presented as independent concepts but are embedded within broader ethical teachings concerning human relationships, self-discipline, and accountability before God. Consequently, multicultural character is portrayed as the outcome of continuous moral cultivation rather than a product of cognitive instruction alone.

These findings indicate that the manuscript offers a holistic understanding of character formation in which personal spirituality serves as the foundation for social justice, equality, and tolerance. Such a perspective establishes a direct relationship between inner transformation and multicultural behavior within educational settings.

### **Hermeneutic Analysis of Nadhom Structure as a Pedagogical Instrument**

The second finding concerns the pedagogical significance of the *nadhom* structure employed throughout the *Jawahirul Adab* manuscript. The analysis revealed that the poetic form serves not only as a literary medium but also as a strategic educational instrument designed to facilitate value internalization.

A notable pattern identified during textual analysis is the repetitive use of prohibitive expressions such as “Aja” (Do not) and moral directives emphasizing avoidance of negative traits. These repetitions create rhythmic patterns that reinforce ethical messages and facilitate memorization. The recurring structure encourages repeated reflection, allowing moral values to become deeply embedded within learners’ consciousness.

The analysis further revealed that the manuscript employs metaphorical language to communicate complex ethical concepts. One example appears in the discussion of arrogance, where blindness (*wuto*) is used as a metaphor to describe distorted perception resulting from excessive pride. This metaphor illustrates how spiritual defects influence an individual's ability to recognize equality and appreciate diversity.

The findings indicate that the pedagogical effectiveness of the manuscript lies in its combination of rhythm, repetition, symbolism, and moral instruction. Unlike conventional prose texts that primarily transmit information, the *nadhom* structure creates a reflective learning process that engages emotional and spiritual dimensions simultaneously.

Another significant finding is the integration of moral warnings within poetic expressions. Rather than presenting ethical principles as abstract concepts, the manuscript embeds them within memorable linguistic patterns that encourage self-evaluation. This strategy transforms learning into a continuous process of internal reflection.

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that the poetic format supports the transmission of ethical values across generations. The simplicity of rhythmic composition enables students to memorize and recite the text while gradually internalizing its moral messages. This characteristic explains the continued relevance of the manuscript within Islamic boarding school traditions.

### **Elimination of Envy and Jealousy as a Foundation for Equity-Oriented Education**

The third finding relates to the role of emotional and spiritual purification in supporting equitable educational practices. Analysis of the manuscript identified envy (*hasad*) and jealousy (*drengki*) as significant obstacles to social harmony and collaborative learning.

One of the most prominent concepts found in the text is the phrase “ngutek-ngutek drengki,” which describes envy as an active and repetitive mental activity. The analysis revealed that jealousy is portrayed not merely as an emotional reaction but as a consciously maintained disposition that continuously disturbs interpersonal relationships.

The manuscript consistently associates envy with various forms of social conflict, including resentment toward others' achievements, unwillingness to appreciate differences, and resistance to collective success. Such attitudes are presented as barriers that prevent individuals from participating effectively in cooperative social environments.

The findings further indicate that the elimination of envy is considered an essential prerequisite for achieving equality. Before individuals can engage in fair and respectful interactions, they must first overcome negative emotions that generate competition, hostility, and social division. The manuscript therefore places emotional purification at the center of educational development.

Another important finding concerns the transformation of destructive emotions into positive social attitudes. The text promotes the replacement of jealousy with constructive admiration and gratitude. This transformation is portrayed as a crucial step toward building relationships based on mutual support rather than rivalry.

The analysis also demonstrates that collaborative learning requires more than instructional strategies or classroom arrangements. The manuscript suggests that successful cooperation depends upon students' emotional readiness to appreciate others without feeling threatened by their achievements. Consequently, equality is understood as both a structural and psychological condition.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing internal emotional dynamics in educational environments. By identifying envy as a root cause of social fragmentation, the manuscript provides a framework for understanding how personal moral development contributes to collective harmony.

### **School Culture Transformation Through Ethical and Spiritual Values**

The fourth finding concerns the role of ethical values in shaping inclusive school culture. Analysis of the manuscript revealed strong criticism of social stratification, excessive status consciousness, and materialistic attitudes that create divisions among individuals.

Several passages examined in the study emphasize that human dignity should not be determined by wealth, social position, lineage, or external appearance. Instead, moral conduct and spiritual excellence are presented as the primary indicators of personal worth. This perspective promotes an egalitarian understanding of social relationships.

The findings indicate that the manuscript challenges hierarchical patterns that often influence educational environments. Students are encouraged to evaluate themselves and others based on ethical qualities rather than social prestige. Such an orientation contributes to the development of more inclusive interactions within diverse communities.

Another significant finding relates to the critique of excessive attachment to status and recognition. The manuscript portrays status-seeking behavior as a source of arrogance, exclusion, and discrimination. By discouraging such tendencies, the text promotes a culture grounded in humility and mutual respect.

The analysis further demonstrates that ethical values function as mechanisms for reducing social barriers among individuals from different backgrounds. Through continuous moral cultivation, students are encouraged to develop attitudes that support equality and social cohesion.

The findings also reveal the educational relevance of the manuscript for contemporary school settings. The values identified in the text correspond closely with efforts to create learning environments characterized by respect, cooperation, inclusion, and social responsibility. These characteristics are essential for fostering positive interactions within multicultural educational contexts.

As a result, the manuscript provides practical guidance for strengthening school culture through ethical education. The emphasis on humility, sincerity, self-control, and social responsibility contributes to the creation of environments where diversity can be appreciated and differences can coexist peacefully.

### **Comparative Dimensions of Multicultural Education and Islamic Ethical Perspectives**

The comparative analysis between Banks' multicultural education framework and the ethical teachings of *Jawahirul Adab* identified several important distinctions and complementarities. As presented in Table 1, multicultural education theory primarily focuses on social and cognitive dimensions, whereas the manuscript emphasizes spiritual and moral transformation as the basis of social behavior.

Table 1. Comparative Multicultural Dimensions of James A. Banks and the Perspective of Islamic Ethics in the Book of *Jawahirul Adab*

<b>Dimensions of Analysis</b>	<b>Western Multicultural Theory (Banks)</b>	<b>Islamic Ethical Perspective (Jawahirul Adab)</b>
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Ontological Foundation	Liberal Humanism and Secularism	Islamic Worldview and Tazkiyatun Nafs
Root of the Problem	Cognitive Bias and Social Construction	Spiritual Pathology (Ujub, Hasad, Hubb al-Jah)
Main Method	Content Integration and Social Engineering	Heart Management, Riyadah, and Takhalli
Pedagogical Instruments	Rational Dialogue and Inclusive Curriculum	Rhythmic Nadhom, Character Formation, and Exemplary Conduct
Psychological Impact	Knowledge of Diversity	Inner Healing and Social Justice

Source: Developed from the analysis of Banks' multicultural education framework and the *Jawahirul Adab* manuscript (2026).

The comparison demonstrates that the manuscript expands the scope of multicultural education by incorporating spiritual dimensions that address the internal causes of prejudice, discrimination, and social inequality. While both perspectives seek to promote harmonious relationships in diverse societies, the ethical framework of *Jawahirul Adab* places greater emphasis on inner transformation as the foundation of multicultural character development.

### Emergence of the Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism Model

One of the most significant findings emerging from the hermeneutic analysis is the formulation of a conceptual framework termed Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism. The analysis revealed that multicultural character formation in Islamic Religious Education cannot be separated from the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul). Rather than positioning multicultural competence as merely a social or cognitive achievement, the findings indicate that sustainable multicultural attitudes are rooted in spiritual transformation.

The comparative examination of *Jawahirul Adab* and Banks' multicultural education framework demonstrates that the two perspectives share a common objective, namely the creation of harmonious relationships within diverse communities. However, the manuscript introduces an additional spiritual dimension that addresses the internal causes of prejudice, inequality, and social exclusion. This finding suggests that multicultural education becomes more comprehensive when social interaction is supported by moral and spiritual development.

The analysis identified three major spiritual obstacles that hinder multicultural character formation. The first obstacle is *ujub* (self-admiration or arrogance), which prevents individuals from appreciating the perspectives and experiences of others. The second obstacle is *hasad* or *drengki* (envy), which disrupts cooperation and weakens social cohesion. The third obstacle is *hubb al-jah* (obsession with status and recognition), which reinforces social stratification and discriminatory attitudes. These three elements collectively form what the manuscript conceptualizes as the spiritual roots of multicultural conflict.

The findings further demonstrate that the elimination of these spiritual pathologies directly supports the achievement of key multicultural educational objectives. The removal of *ujub* contributes to prejudice reduction by fostering openness and humility. The elimination of *hasad* strengthens equity-oriented pedagogy by encouraging sincere collaboration and mutual appreciation. Meanwhile, overcoming *hubb al-jah* facilitates the development of inclusive school cultures characterized by equality and social justice.

Based on these relationships, the study proposes a conceptual model in which Islamic Religious Education functions as the ontological foundation, *tazkiyatun nafs* serves as the

transformational mechanism, and multicultural character emerges as the educational outcome. The model illustrates that social harmony is achieved not only through institutional arrangements or curriculum interventions but also through continuous spiritual cultivation.

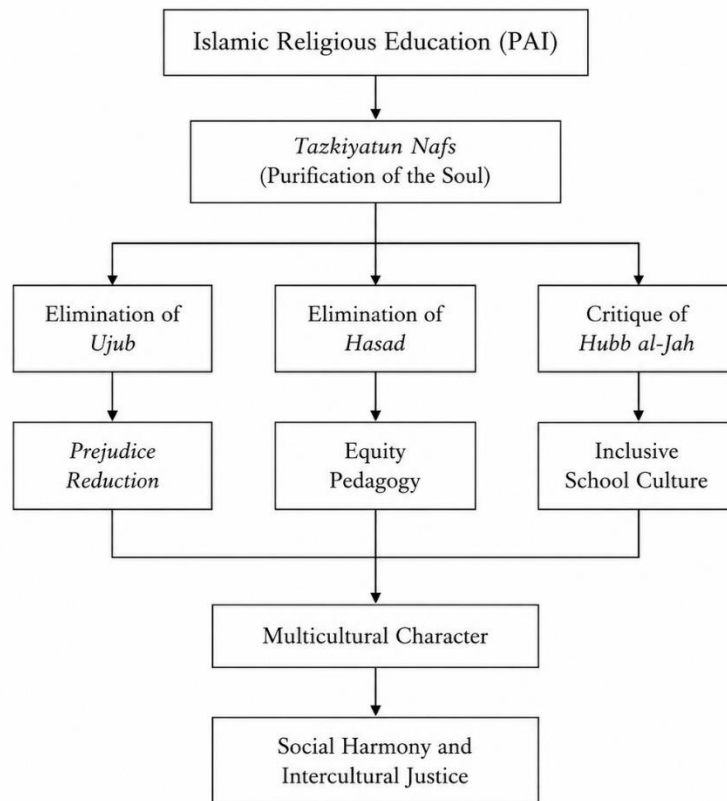


Figure 1. Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism Model

Source: Developed by the Authors (2026).

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationship between Islamic Religious Education, spiritual purification, and multicultural character formation. The model indicates that educational interventions become more effective when they address the psychological and spiritual dimensions underlying social behavior. Consequently, multicultural education is transformed from a process of social engineering into a comprehensive framework of moral and spiritual development.

### Textual Evidence from the Jawahirul Adab Manuscript

The hermeneutic analysis identified several textual expressions that function as the primary sources of the proposed conceptual framework. One of the most important findings appears in Verse 24, which states:

*“The nature of ujub, riya’, sum’ah wajib ninggal, agarne dadi wong kang luwih mulyo.”*

This verse explicitly positions the abandonment of arrogance, self-display, and excessive desire for recognition as prerequisites for attaining moral excellence. The repeated use of prohibitive language indicates that spiritual purification is not presented as an optional virtue but as an educational necessity. The finding suggests that prejudice originates from distorted self-perception and therefore requires inner transformation before meaningful social engagement can occur.

Another significant finding emerges from Verse 25 through the expression:

*“Ngutek-ngutek drengki.”*

The phrase portrays envy as an active psychological process rather than a passive emotional state. The linguistic structure implies repetitive internal agitation that continuously reinforces negative perceptions toward others. This finding reveals that educational inequality and social conflict are often rooted in emotional disturbances that remain unaddressed within conventional multicultural frameworks.

A third textual finding appears in the verse that criticizes excessive attachment to social status and worldly recognition:

*“Luhur-luhuran pangkat lan drajat aja dadi tujuan urip.”*

This expression reflects the manuscript’s rejection of status-oriented social relations. The phrase emphasizes that personal worth should not be measured by rank, prestige, or worldly recognition. The finding indicates that social hierarchy often becomes a hidden source of exclusion and discrimination. By discouraging excessive attachment to status, the manuscript promotes an egalitarian worldview in which human dignity is grounded in moral integrity rather than social position. This principle serves as an important foundation for the development of inclusive school culture and equitable educational relationships.

A fourth textual finding is represented through the metaphorical expression:

*“Tedakangkat dadi wuto.”*

The term *wuto* (blindness) functions as a powerful epistemological metaphor within the manuscript. The expression suggests that arrogance and status consciousness distort an individual’s ability to perceive reality objectively. Rather than referring to physical blindness, the metaphor describes a condition in which excessive pride prevents individuals from recognizing the equality and dignity of others. The finding reveals that prejudice is not merely a cognitive misunderstanding but can also emerge from spiritual and moral defects. Consequently, the elimination of arrogance becomes a necessary prerequisite for multicultural openness and intercultural understanding.

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that the rhythmic composition of these verses contributes significantly to their pedagogical effectiveness. Repetition, rhyme, and poetic rhythm function as mnemonic devices that facilitate memorization and long-term retention. Unlike conventional instructional texts that primarily target cognitive understanding, the *nadhom* structure encourages repeated reflection and emotional engagement with ethical values.

The findings indicate that students exposed to such rhythmic ethical teachings are more likely to internalize moral principles because the learning process involves cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously. Consequently, the pedagogical structure of *Jawahirul Adab* serves not only as a medium of knowledge transmission but also as an instrument of character transformation.

These findings confirm that the manuscript provides a coherent framework for multicultural character formation grounded in spiritual development. The emergence of the Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism model represents the culmination of this analysis and serves as the principal contribution of the study to contemporary Islamic Religious Education discourse.

The findings of this study extend the discourse on multicultural education by showing that the formation of multicultural character in Islamic Religious Education cannot be sufficiently

explained through sociological and cognitive approaches alone. The analysis of *Jawahirul Adab* indicates that prejudice, exclusion, and inequality are not merely produced by social structures or limited intercultural knowledge, but also by inner spiritual conditions that shape how learners perceive others. This finding deepens Ulfa et al. (2022), who argued that multicultural Islamic education in Indonesia must be developed through models and methods that are sensitive to religious and cultural plurality. However, while Ulfa et al. emphasized the urgency of multicultural methods in Islamic education, the present study adds that these methods require a prior spiritual foundation. Tolerance is not only a classroom value to be taught, but a moral disposition that must be cultivated through the purification of the self.

This interpretation also strengthens the argument of Tentiasih and Rifa' (2022), who found that integrating multicultural values into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can improve students' tolerance toward religious and cultural diversity. Their study is important because it places the curriculum as a strategic site for multicultural formation. Nevertheless, the present findings suggest that curriculum integration will remain incomplete if multicultural values are only inserted as learning content. Through *Jawahirul Adab*, this study shows that curriculum transformation must reach the affective and spiritual structure of learners. In other words, *content integration* must be accompanied by *inner transformation*. Multicultural education becomes more durable when students are trained not only to understand difference, but also to discipline the ego that often produces superiority, resentment, and symbolic rejection of others.

The emphasis on *tazkiyatun nafs* as the foundation of multicultural character formation is closely aligned with Hamidi and Nurhakim (2025), who argued that moral education based on *tazkiyatun nafs* is needed because Islamic character education is often trapped in cognitive and normative transmission. Their work is highly relevant because it identifies the same pedagogical weakness addressed in this study, namely the gap between knowing moral values and embodying them. The present study contributes further by positioning *tazkiyatun nafs* not only as a general framework for moral education, but as a specific mechanism for multicultural education. The removal of *ujub*, *riya'*, *sum'ah*, *hasad*, and *hubb al-jah* becomes a moral technology through which learners are prepared to accept equality, appreciate difference, and participate in social life without arrogance or envy.

This finding is also supported by Kurnianingsih et al. (2025), who emphasized that spiritual character formation through *tazkiyatun nafs* in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can strengthen students' moral awareness and self-control. Their study confirms that spiritual purification is not an abstract theological idea, but a pedagogical process that can be linked to curriculum design. The present article expands that argument by demonstrating that *tazkiyatun nafs* also has multicultural implications. When students are trained to purify the heart, they are not only expected to become personally pious, but also socially ethical. The purified self becomes less likely to treat others as inferior, less likely to compete destructively, and more capable of building relationships based on humility and justice.

The findings also offer a critical contribution to studies on local wisdom and Islamic education. Al Anshori and Budiya (2024) showed that the values of multicultural Islam can be found in classical Islamic texts within the Nusantara scholarly tradition, especially through teachings that encourage care, tolerance, compassion, and non-coercive moral engagement. Their study is significant because it demonstrates that local Islamic intellectual traditions already contain multicultural resources. The present study follows this direction but moves further by using *Jawahirul Adab* to construct a conceptual model of multicultural character formation. Thus, local wisdom is not treated merely as cultural heritage or supplementary teaching material, but as an epistemological source that can dialogue with modern educational theory.

The pedagogical role of *nadhom* in this study also provides a useful extension to Rahayu et al. (2022), who discussed Islamic teachings on students' manners toward teachers. Their work highlights the importance of adab as the ethical basis of Islamic learning relations. The present study broadens the relevance of adab beyond teacher student relations by showing that adab also functions as a foundation for multicultural social relations. The rhythmic, repetitive, and symbolic structure of *nadhom* enables values to be remembered, recited, and reflected upon continuously. Therefore, *Jawahirul Adab* should not be seen only as a normative moral text, but as a pedagogical medium that connects memory, emotion, and spiritual discipline. This is important because multicultural character cannot be formed only through rational explanation. It also requires repeated moral habituation that touches the inner life of learners.

The study's interpretation of *drengki* and *hasad* as barriers to equity-oriented education is particularly relevant to Katerina et al. (2025), who discussed the implementation of equity pedagogy in multicultural Islamic education. Their study shows that equity pedagogy requires learning practices that provide fair opportunities and inclusive participation. The present findings add that equity is not only a structural matter of access, method, or classroom arrangement. Equity also depends on students' emotional and spiritual readiness to appreciate the success of others. If envy is left unaddressed, collaborative learning may become only a formal arrangement while students continue to compete, compare, or undermine one another internally. In this sense, *Jawahirul Adab* enriches equity pedagogy by identifying the spiritual emotions that must be transformed before equality can become authentic.

This argument is reinforced by Khodijah et al. (2025), who linked Islamic educational values, multicultural education, and student mental health. Their study is important because it shows that multicultural education is not only about social harmony, but also about the psychological well-being of learners. The present study deepens this perspective by explaining that spiritual diseases such as envy, arrogance, and status obsession can damage both mental balance and social relations. Multicultural education, therefore, should not only prevent intolerance at the behavioral level, but also address the inner anxieties, resentments, and self-centeredness that often generate exclusionary attitudes. Through this lens, *tazkiyatun nafs* becomes a bridge between character education, multicultural education, and student well-being.

The discussion on envy also corresponds to Sabah et al. (2025), who examined benign and malicious envy among Muslim university students and its relationship to flourishing. Their study is valuable because it empirically shows that envy has different psychological consequences depending on how it is managed. The present study provides a theological and pedagogical interpretation of that problem. In *Jawahirul Adab*, envy is not treated as a neutral emotion, but as an inner disturbance that must be disciplined so that it does not destroy social harmony. This does not mean that students should suppress all forms of aspiration. Rather, Islamic Religious Education should help students transform destructive envy into constructive admiration, gratitude, and motivation. This transformation is crucial for multicultural classrooms because students from different social, academic, and cultural backgrounds can only collaborate sincerely when they do not feel threatened by one another's strengths.

The findings also strengthen Firdaus and Suwendi (2025), who concluded that Islamic character education contributes to social harmony in multicultural contexts by promoting tolerance, empathy, and respect. Firdaus' study is useful because it confirms the social relevance of Islamic character education. However, the present article adds a more specific explanation of how such harmony can be produced internally. The pathway proposed here is not simply value instruction, but a staged transformation from inner purification to ethical conduct and then to social harmony. This means that Islamic character education becomes

socially effective when it addresses the roots of prejudice within the learner's moral psychology.

The role of local wisdom in this study also aligns with Hidayati et al. (2020), who found that character education based on local wisdom requires active pedagogical mediation by educators. Mansur's contribution is important because it reminds us that local wisdom does not automatically form character unless it is translated into educational practice. The present study agrees with this point and suggests that *Jawahirul Adab* should be pedagogically mediated through reflection, recitation, discussion, self-evaluation, and character projects. Its values will remain textual if teachers do not transform them into classroom practices that help students examine arrogance, envy, and status-based prejudice in their own lives.

Similarly, Erwin et al. (2025) showed that Islamic character education values based on local wisdom can be constructed from cultural traditions that maintain ethical meaning within communities. This is relevant because *Jawahirul Adab* belongs to the same broader pattern of local Islamic wisdom that preserves moral teaching through culturally meaningful forms. The present study contributes to this field by showing that local wisdom can do more than preserve identity. It can also challenge the limitations of imported educational theories by offering spiritual categories that are absent from secular multicultural frameworks. Therefore, the integration of local wisdom in Islamic Religious Education should not be understood as cultural romanticism, but as an intellectual effort to reconstruct educational theory from within the moral resources of Indonesian Islam.

The same point is reinforced by Subandi et al. (2025), who argued that integrating local wisdom into transformative Islamic education can support student character development in response to modern challenges. His study is relevant because it connects local wisdom with transformation rather than mere preservation. The present research extends this argument by specifying that transformation must include the purification of inner traits that obstruct multicultural relations. In modern educational settings, students encounter diversity not only in physical classrooms but also in digital spaces where comparison, visibility, and recognition are intensified. The critique of *riya'*, *sum'ah*, and *hubb al-jah* in *Jawahirul Adab* is therefore highly relevant because it speaks directly to the culture of performance, popularity, and social comparison that shapes many students' identities today.

The findings also resonate with Hefner (2022), who described Indonesian Islamic education as a significant global model because of its ability to combine Islamic values, citizenship, and modern educational reform. Hefner's work is important because it positions Indonesian Islamic education not as a marginal or traditional system, but as a dynamic educational formation capable of responding to modern civic demands. The present study supports this argument by showing that the pesantren textual tradition can contribute to contemporary multicultural education. Rather than opposing modern educational theory, *Jawahirul Adab* enriches it by adding spiritual anthropology and moral psychology. This confirms that Indonesian Islamic education has the capacity to generate theoretical contributions, not merely adapt external theories.

Mulyadi et al. (2023) argued that Islamic Religious Education can shape religious identity in multicultural societies by helping learners understand, respect, and accept religious diversity. This study agrees with that claim, but adds that religious identity must be formed as an ethical and humble identity, not as an exclusive or superior identity. The concept of *ujub* is central here. If religious identity is built without humility, it may unintentionally produce moral superiority. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education must ensure that religious commitment and multicultural openness are developed together. *Jawahirul Adab* provides the ethical grammar

for this task because it teaches that nobility comes from self-purification, not from status, display, or claims of superiority.

Ummah et al. (2024) showed that interreligious harmony can be fostered through cultural understanding, social collaboration, and educational tools that support coexistence. Their study, although located in the Thai Islamic school context, is relevant to the present research because it confirms that Islamic education can contribute to peaceful relations in plural societies. The present article adds that coexistence requires inner work. Social collaboration may create contact among groups, but contact alone does not guarantee sincere acceptance if learners still carry envy, arrogance, or symbolic contempt. Thus, *Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism* complements interreligious harmony studies by explaining the inner ethical formation needed for coexistence to become genuine.

Masduki et al. (2025) emphasized the urgency of multicultural education in building civil society from the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy. Their argument is important because it links multicultural education to broader social ethics and citizenship. The present study contributes to this debate by offering a more micro-level explanation of how civil attitudes are formed within the learner. A civil society cannot be built only by institutional reform or public discourse. It also requires individuals who are trained to restrain ego, resist envy, and reject status-based discrimination. The proposed model therefore connects Islamic educational philosophy with the daily moral formation of students in classrooms and school cultures.

The study has important implications for Islamic Religious Education teachers and curriculum developers. Aulia et al. (2025) emphasized the need to realize inclusive multicultural learning in higher education, while Shahara and Masyithoh (2025) highlighted the importance of teacher and student manners in forming ethical learning environments. These studies show that inclusive education requires both institutional commitment and ethical relationships. The present study adds that teachers must become facilitators of inner reflection, not merely transmitters of religious content. Through *Jawahirul Adab*, teachers can guide students to examine the moral roots of prejudice and inequality within themselves. This makes Islamic Religious Education more transformative because it links knowledge, self-purification, social ethics, and multicultural responsibility.

## Conclusion

This research shows that the revitalization of Islamic Religious Education as the primary foundation of multicultural character education is not merely an option, but rather a necessity to bridge the gaps in Western secular approaches that often ignore metaphysical aspects. By integrating the concept of tazkiyatun nafs, Islamic Religious Education offers a profound dimension that transforms tolerance from mere social agreement to genuine spiritual awareness. As evidenced through the comparative analysis in Table 1, Islamic ethics provides axiological reinforcement to James A. Banks's multicultural education dimension through the management of the heart approach.

The "Tazkiyah-Based Multiculturalism" model proposed in this study positions the cleansing of the soul as an absolute requirement for creating harmony in the classroom. Through a hermeneutic analysis of the nadhom text in the *Jawahirul Adab* Book, it was found that the use of rhythm and metaphor—such as the term "wuto" (blind) to describe status arrogance—proved to be more effective in internalizing values than mere instructional prose texts. This finding confirms three main points, namely: first, the elimination of the ujub trait which is the foundation of openness to diversity; second, the elimination of drengki (active envy) is the

key to successful collaboration between students; and third, the critique of hubb al-jah (status infatuation) which proved very effective in breaking down social barriers towards an egalitarian school culture.

This study recommends that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum no longer treats the turats manuscripts as supplementary material, but rather carries out an "epistemological fusion" that is able to address the moral crisis and mental health of Generation Z. For future research, it is very important to develop practical teaching modules equipped with measurable spiritual assessment instruments, so that the success of character education is no longer assessed solely on memorizing the dalil, but on the cleanliness of the hearts and real behavior of students in maintaining the existing diversity.

### Acknowledgment

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to the Islamic Religious Education Study Program, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Islamic University of Malang, for providing support and facilities in the implementation of this research. He also expresses his appreciation and gratitude to our supervisor, who wholeheartedly took the time to guide us. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to our friends and all those who have contributed, both in the form of input and moral support, so that this article can be successfully completed.

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