



## **School Environment as Agen of Social Integration and Character Formation in Abdul Majid's Thought**

**Siti Hayu Maimunah<sup>1\*</sup>, Inani Sofwah Adilah<sup>2</sup>, Shilviana<sup>3</sup>, Muhammad Muchlish Huda<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Universitas Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo, Indonesia

Email: hayusiti73@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, adilasofwa@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>, anashilvi71@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

muhmuchlishhuda@uinponorogo.ac.id<sup>4</sup>

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### **Abstract:**

This research aims to examine the function of the school environment in the thoughts of Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid as stated in the book *At-Tarbiyatu wa Tharuqu Tadris*. The main focus of this research is to examine how schools as agents of social integration, forming the character of students, as well as the relevance of the ideal principles of the school environment to contemporary education. This research is library research with a qualitative approach. Primary data comes from the book *At-Tarbiyatu wa Tharuqu Tadris*, while secondary data is obtained from relevant scientific literature. The results show that schools prevent social disintegration by uniting different cultures or religions, forming character through discipline and teacher example, as well as six ideal principles, namely schools as a high social image, developing talents, good quality citizens, democracy, moral ideals, and strengthening relationships between school, family and society. This idea has proven to be very relevant to contemporary educational practices, such as student-centered learning and strengthening character education. This balance model is applicable for inclusive Indonesian schools facing multiculturalism and digitalization. It is hoped that this research can enrich the treasures of Islamic education regarding the strategic role of the school environment in shaping the social and moral personality of students.

**Keywords:** *management, public, trust*

### **Abstrak:**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji fungsi lingkungan sekolah dalam pemikiran Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid sebagaimana tertuang dalam kitab *At-Tarbiyatu wa Tharuqu Tadris*. Fokus utama kajian ini adalah menganalisis peran sekolah sebagai agen integrasi sosial, pembentuk karakter peserta didik, serta relevansi prinsip-prinsip ideal lingkungan sekolahnya terhadap pendidikan kontemporer. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*) dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data primer bersumber dari kitab *At-Tarbiyatu wa Tharuqu Tadris*, sementara data sekunder diperoleh dari literatur ilmiah yang relevan. Hasil menunjukkan sekolah mencegah disintegrasi sosial dengan menyatukan budaya atau agama berbeda, membentuk karakter melalui disiplin dan teladan guru, serta enam prinsip ideal yaitu sekolah sebagai gambaran sosial tinggi, pengembangan bakat, kualitas warga baik, demokrasi, cita-cita moral, dan penguat hubungan sekolah, keluarga, dan masyarakat. Gagasan ini terbukti sangat relevan dengan praktik pendidikan kontemporer, seperti pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa dan penguatan pendidikan karakter. Model keseimbangan ini aplikatif untuk

sekolah inklusif Indonesia menghadapi multikulturalisme dan digitalisasi. Penelitian ini diharapkan mampu menambah khazanah pendidikan Islam terkait dengan fungsi penting dari lingkungan sekolah dalam membentuk kepribadian sosial dan moral peserta didik.

**Kata Kunci:** *manajemen, publik, kepercayaan*

## INTRODUCTION

Education in essence not only functions as a process of knowledge transfer but also as a means of shaping the social and moral personality of students. In this process, the school environment plays a strategic role because it becomes a social space where students interact, learn to respect differences, and internalize the values needed in community life. Schools are not merely places for academic activities, but also social environments that facilitate the process of social integration and character formation. Contemporary educational research shows that a conducive school environment can shape students' social behavior, discipline, and sense of responsibility through positive social interactions and school culture. (Suprihatin et al., 2025)

In today's era of globalization, the development of trade, transportation, communication, and migration has transformed social conditions from previously relatively homogeneous groups into more diverse ones. This change brings together individuals with different moral backgrounds, education levels, lifestyles, and traditions in a single social and political environment. Such diversity can lead to potential conflict or disintegration if not managed properly, especially if educational institutions actually reinforce differences by teaching exclusive ideologies. In this context, schools hold a fundamental role as instruments for balancing social elements, providing opportunities for each individual to break free from the limitations of their original group to connect with a broader cultural and moral environment. (A & Muthi, 2025)

From the perspective of Islamic education, the educational environment is understood as one of the important factors that influence the intellectual, moral, and social development of students. One figure who paid attention to the role of the school environment in the education process is Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid through his work *At-Tarbiyatu wa Taruqu Tadris*. In his thinking, the school is viewed as a social institution that has an integrative function, namely uniting various social, cultural, and moral backgrounds of students within a broader educational environment. According to him, each student comes to school with different characteristics because they are influenced by family background, community, and the social environment in which they grow up. Therefore, the school has an important role in finding common ground among these differences, so that a unity of thinking and value orientation among students is created. (A & Muthi, 2025)

Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid also emphasized that schools not only serve as a means of social integration but also as institutions that play a role in shaping students' character. Through rules, school culture, and the relationships between teachers and students, schools become important spaces for moral and social

learning. Students learn about responsibility, discipline, cooperation, as well as respect for others' opinions through various educational activities that take place within the school environment. In this context, schools can be understood as a microcosm of society, a social space that represents the broader life of the community and serves as a place for students to learn to act as good members of society. (A & Muthi, 2025)

Several studies in the field of education also show that the school environment has a significant influence on students' social attitudes and character formation. A positive school environment can shape discipline, responsibility, and good social behavior through the example set by teachers, school culture, and social interactions that occur within it. (Cholifah & Faelasup, 2024) Other research also emphasizes that the integration of character values into school culture is an important factor in shaping students' social behavior and enhancing their moral awareness in everyday life. (Rahmawati & Utomo, 2024) These findings indicate that the school environment plays an important role in the educational process, which is not only oriented towards academic aspects but also towards the overall development of students' personalities.

Although various studies have discussed the role of the school environment in shaping student character, most of these studies still focus on the perspective of modern education. Research that examines the concept of the school environment in the thought of Islamic education figures is still relatively limited. In fact, the thoughts of Islamic education figures have made significant contributions to enriching educational discourse, especially in understanding the relationship between the social environment, moral values, and the educational process. Therefore, a study of Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid's thoughts regarding the role of the school environment becomes important to conduct, particularly in understanding how the concept of the educational environment can function as a means of social integration as well as the formation of student character.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the function of the school environment in the thought of Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid as contained in the book *At-Tarbiyatu wa Taruqu Tadris*. This study seeks to analyze how schools are understood as agents of social integration, how the role of schools is in shaping students' character, as well as the ideal principles of the school environment according to Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid and their relevance to contemporary education. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to expanding the understanding of Islamic education while also offering a conceptual perspective on the role of the school environment in shaping the social and moral personality of students.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. Library research is a study that uses written materials such as books, scientific articles, and documents as the main source of data without conducting field data collection. (Hamzah, 2020) The primary data of this study are the book *Attarbiyatu*

wa Tharuqu Tadris by Sholeh Abdul Aziz and Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid, while the secondary data are obtained from scientific literature relevant to social integration and character building, from both books and journal articles. The data collection technique is conducted through documentation study, then analyzed using content analysis method in a descriptive-interpretative manner to identify the concepts, principles, and relevance of Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid's thoughts to contemporary education.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **School as an agent of social integration**

One of the functions of the school environment is to create a balance between various elements of the social environment and provide opportunities for each individual to free themselves from the limitations of the groups in which they were raised, as well as to connect with a broader environment both culturally and morally. Schools have a social function that goes beyond merely transferring academic knowledge. From the perspective of educational sociology, schools function as a balancing mechanism between the various social elements present in society. This function operates through two main pathways: the formal pathway through the curriculum and planned programs, and the informal pathway through daily social interactions that occur within the school environment. Through the formal pathway, schools convey shared values and norms that are expected to be upheld by all members, regardless of their differing backgrounds. For example, civic education teaches the principles of democracy, human rights, and constitutional values that form the foundation of communal life in a pluralistic country.

Meanwhile, the learning of Social Studies (IPS) equips students with an understanding of the cultural diversity and history that shape national identity. On the other hand, through informal channels, social balance is formed through daily life experiences together, such as sitting at the same desk with friends from different backgrounds, collaborating on group projects, playing together in the schoolyard, and discussing in class activities. These experiences cumulatively build a direct understanding of diversity that is much stronger than just theoretical knowledge. Research on the integration of social values in physical education, for example, shows that playing sports together becomes a highly effective medium for building cross-group solidarity.

It should be understood that the social balance established by schools does not mean eliminating differences or enforcing uniformity. On the contrary, a good school creates a space where differences can exist and be recognized, but are managed within the framework of agreed-upon shared values. This is a model of healthy pluralism: not relativism that disregards values, nor uniformity that erases identity, but integration that respects uniqueness while building a common commitment. (Ahsan et al., 2024) Every student comes from a family with its own morals, educational level, lifestyle, and traditions. They also come from communities that have influenced them before entering school, such as friends on the streets, relatives, or family visitors. Therefore, each student comes with unique characteristics acquired from their respective community environments. The

distinctiveness of the school as a social space lies in the fact that every child who enters the classroom brings along that unique background. The moral foundation shaped by the family, cultural traditions inherited from the community, religious orientations they adhere to, and diverse life experiences—all of this makes the classroom a rich social mosaic. (Nofrianti et al., 2024)

The function of school is to find a meeting point among these various qualities, to create a new shared quality that unites the goals and ways of thinking of students, and to bring their religious beliefs and political talents closer together, or at least to educate them based on sound scientific thinking methods. In the context of school, the concept of a "meeting point" refers to values, norms, and aspirations that can be mutually agreed upon without having to erase differences. Schools, with their capacity to bring together various groups in intensive and continuous interaction, are the most appropriate arena for this process. This is demonstrated by research in integrated Islamic elementary schools showing that interfaith dialogue can be productive when students are guided to find universal values such as honesty, justice, and social responsibility that transcend theological differences. From this process arises a 'new shared quality,' a more inclusive collective identity. This identity is not the erasure of group identities, but rather an additional layer that transcends their boundaries. The formation of this new shared quality does not occur spontaneously, but requires a planned institutional process, such as the participatory formulation of the school's vision and mission, the development of an inclusive school culture, and the creation of shared symbols and rules that can be proud of and agreed upon by the entire school community. (Rosidin et al., 2025)

The concept of 'new collective quality' in education refers to efforts to build educational standards and values that are not only oriented toward individual achievement but also toward the development of collective awareness. Berner and D'Agostino emphasize that educational pluralism and social cohesion are not actually two opposing things; both can be integrated into a thoughtfully designed education system, where freedom to learn, unity of purpose, and equitable access go hand in hand. New collective quality does not mean uniformity. On the contrary, it requires recognition of diversity as a wealth, not a threat. Casanova demonstrates how educational spaces created collectively (educational commons) are able to reverse social inequality by empowering communities that have long been marginalized. Collective quality is realized when every learner, regardless of their background, feels they have the same space in the process education (Fernandes et al., 2023)

A good school not only delivers the curriculum but also shapes critical, empathetic thinking oriented towards the common good. When students from different backgrounds sit together in one classroom, a process of mutual learning occurs that cannot be replaced by any media or technology. Religion and politics are the two most sensitive dimensions of human life, yet also the most influential in shaping a person's worldview. This is where schools play a very strategic role: not to determine which beliefs are correct or which political affiliations are appropriate, but to teach how to live together with differences in a peaceful and constructive manner. Selwen and Kumari show how the transformation of

pluralism in a religious context can become a unifying force. The concept of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in Indonesian tradition, for example, offers a rich framework for understanding how religious diversity actually strengthens a shared national identity. (Selwen & Kumari, 2024) The main criticism of doctrinal education is that it tends to close off space for critical questioning and open dialogue. When education becomes a tool for reproducing certain beliefs without allowing learners to question and reflect, it fails in the liberating function that is at the core of humanistic education. Susanti and Herawati point out that the implementation of inclusive education at the elementary school level is still often hindered by an exclusive mentality that indirectly stems from an overly sectarian educational orientation. (Susanti & Herawati, 2024)

The importance of school for everyone and Examples from India, the United States, and social plurality The idea of school for all is not merely a slogan, but a moral and political commitment that obliges the state to ensure that no child is left behind in the education system. Two major democratic countries, India and the United States, offer valuable lessons on how extraordinary social plurality can be managed through an inclusive education system. India is a country with social, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity that may be the most complex in the world. With more than 1.4 billion people, hundreds of regional languages, and various belief systems coexisting, India faces extraordinary challenges in building a truly inclusive education system. Singh and Sharma analyzed India's new National Education Policy (NEP), and found that although the NEP embraces the spirit of inclusion and equality, its implementation still requires hard work to ensure that all community groups, especially the most vulnerable, are truly well served. (Rangarajan et al., 2025)

Meanwhile, the United States offers an experience that is no less complex and instructive. After the era of racial segregation, which formally ended with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the civil rights laws of the 1960s, America continues to grapple with the challenge of creating schools that are truly inclusive in terms of race, ethnicity, and social class. De facto segregation, not by law but through housing segregation and school choice, remains a persistent reality in many major American cities.

### **School as an agent of character building**

In the book *\*at-tarbiyah wa thuruqu tadris\**, education focuses on preparing for practical life. This shows that character building in school is not just additional material, but a foundation so that students have functional behaviors needed in everyday life. School is seen not merely as a place for transferring knowledge, but as the main agent in the holistic character formation of students. (Aziz & Majid, 1119) Schools not only function as agents of social integration, but also have a strategic role as agents of character formation for students through various activities, culture, and interactions that occur within them.

One of the elements that plays an important role in character development at school is school culture. School culture includes various student activities in interacting with their peers, teacher-to-teacher interactions, counselors with colleagues, administrative staff with other members of the school, as well as

relationships among members within the school community. All these relationships are bound by rules, norms, morals, and ethics applied in the school environment. School culture also plays a significant role in instilling character education values at school. The process of creating character education within school culture becomes very crucial in shaping stronger student character. (Saputra & Saputra, 2020) In the context of a multicultural society, students come from various social, cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

In an effort to shape the character of students, instilling a sense of discipline is also one of the values that must be developed. Discipline in the context of education means the ability of students to regulate themselves, obey rules, and carry out tasks consistently. Discipline is not merely about following externally established regulations, but more broadly is a form of self-control that arises from internal awareness. The behaviors of discipline include: arriving on time at school and class, obeying school and class rules, completing tasks regularly, maintaining neatness in dressing, and being consistent in following activity schedules. The Theory of Behaviorism proposed by B.F. Skinner explains that disciplined actions can be shaped through reinforcement. Behaviors that are rewarded or reinforced tend to be repeated. In educational practice, giving rewards for disciplined behavior plays a significant role in forming good habits.

In addition to discipline, the value of responsibility is also an important aspect in character building. Responsibility is the willingness and ability of a child to accept and carry out tasks as well as being ready to face the consequences of those actions. In the context of students, responsibility includes: completing homework, keeping the classroom clean, admitting mistakes when committing violations, taking care of personal and school belongings. Responsibility is formed through habituation and real experiences. Constructivist theory emphasizes that children will understand concepts and social values through active involvement in experiences. Therefore, education that provides children with the space to make choices, bear the consequences, and reflect on them is a form of effective character education. (A & Muthi, 2025) Basic values such as mutual respect, respecting differences, and being able to live together peacefully must be instilled from an early age.

The development of students' character also needs to be supported by the development of critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills are very important abilities and function effectively in all aspects of life. Therefore, this critical thinking ability is very important and must be instilled early in schools, at home, and in the community. In the learning process to achieve optimal results, active thinking is required. This means that an optimal learning process requires critical thinking. Therefore, critical thinking skills have a significant role in the education process. By participating in activities that focus on intellectual aspects, they can practice a regular, logical, and systematic thinking pattern, as well as develop a broad, inclusive, rational, critical, selective, and constructive way of thinking.

Teachers play a central role in shaping character through exemplary behavior, habituation, guidance, and educational interactions in the school environment. Through a humanistic approach and by setting an example, teachers can effectively instill character values in every learning process. According to

Nuraeni, the success of character education is greatly influenced by teachers' ability to integrate social and moral values into the curriculum. Teachers are not only conveyors of material but also mediators between students and the broader social environment. (Anam & Hasanah, 2026) A teacher is an individual who is made an example and role model by students, both in terms of knowledge and personality. Therefore, a teacher needs to maintain attitude in behavior and speech. This is because every action taken by a teacher will surely affect the development of students, considering the role of the teacher as a role model. Mastery of good personality aspects will greatly support the process of guidance and strengthening of students' character. A teacher with a good example is one who has a balanced, mature, wise, and noble personality.

### **The ideal principles of the school environment and their relevance to contemporary education**

Based on the functions of the school environment that have been previously described, Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid then formulated a number of normative principles regarding how an ideal school environment should be built. These principles not only explain the characteristics of an effective educational institution but also depict a model of a school capable of shaping students' social, moral, and intellectual personalities in a balanced manner. More specifically, Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid formulated six main principles that form the foundation for creating an effective and meaningful educational environment.

#### **1. The first principle:**

أن تكون صورة مصغرة للحياة الاجتماعية الراقية يدرّب فيها التلاميذ على محبة العمل وإنجازه وعلى التعاون الاجتماعي والاقتصادي لمصلحة الجماعة والوطن

That is to become a microcosm of high social life where students are trained to love work and complete it, as well as to cooperate socially and economically for the interests of society and the nation. (Aziz & Majid, 1119) This view emphasizes that schools should function as a miniature or small depiction of an ideal society that trains students' work ethic and collaboration skills so that they not only master theory but are also prepared to face the real world and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. This aligns with the real dynamics of interaction between santri and non-santri at MTs Mazro'atul Ulum and MA Al Asror, where collaboration across cultural and environmental backgrounds has proven capable of shaping students' moral knowledge while also serving as a means of internalizing social values amid their differing habits. (Makalao et al., 2025) The correlation between the principles of Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid's theory and the reality of this student interaction reflects the essence of educational policy in Indonesia, namely the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the dimensions of mutual cooperation and global diversity, which positions schools not merely as a place for the transfer of knowledge, but as a space for the development of inclusive social character.

#### **2. The second principle:**

أن يجد التلميذ فيها الفرص المواتية لتنمية مواهبه وميوله وتوجيهه إلى الدراسات أو المهن التي تناسبه ،  
. وأن تعنى بالفردية بين التلاميذ

That is, students find within it profitable opportunities to develop their talents and inclinations and guide them towards studies or professions that suit them, and the institution pays attention to individuality among students. ('Aziz & Majid, 1119) This principle emphasizes that the school environment functions as an exploration space that accommodates the differences in each child's potential, so that education can guide students personally toward the academic or career path that best suits their talents. This aligns with the humanistic education paradigm proposed by Darmiyati, where students are seen as unique individuals who must be encouraged to integrate their knowledge and personal desires. (Hufron & Junaedi, 2021) By paying attention to this aspect of individuality, schools carry out their function to develop various human potentials so that they not only become mature personally, but also are able to make functional contributions to the wider society. (Saepudin, 2023) The correlation between Abdul Majid's principles and this humanistic paradigm is relevant to the current Merdeka Curriculum policy, particularly through the concept of Differentiated Learning, which allows educators the flexibility to tailor learning to the readiness, interests, as well as the profile and learning style of each student.

### 3. The third principle:

- أن تنمي عند المتعلم صفات المواطن الصالح ، والشعور بالمسؤولية ، والرغبة في التضحية ، والقيام بالواجب لأنه واجب ، وتقدير الفضيلة للفضيلة ذاتها

That is to instill in students the qualities of good citizens, a sense of responsibility, the willingness to sacrifice, performing duties because they are duties, and valuing virtue for the sake of the virtue itself. ('Aziz & Majid, 1119) This principle emphasizes that education is not only aimed at sharpening intelligence, but also at building the moral and social character of students. This principle is in line with research findings that show that the educational process not only disseminates information, but also instills moral, social, and ethical values that shape students' character so that they are capable of becoming responsible members of society amidst the development of the digital era and cultural diversity. (Allison, 2024) In the context of modern education, this principle is closely related to citizenship education and character education, which aim to shape individuals who are responsible and capable of contributing positively to community life.

### 4. The fourth principle:

أن تكون مجتمعاً مشبعاً بالتعاطف والتفاهم بين الرئيس والمرعوس ، وأن يسودها جو من الديمقراطية

That is to become a society imbued with empathy and understanding between leaders and subordinates, and characterized by a democratic atmosphere. ('Aziz & Majid, 1119) This principle emphasizes that the school environment functions in shaping an atmosphere of democracy and empathy, which will train students to appreciate equality and collaboration in decision-making. In the context of contemporary education, this principle aligns with the idea of democratic education, which emphasizes participation, dialogue, and recognition of diversity. This is in line with the research by Astuti and Winarti in the pesantren environment, which shows that habituating attitudes of empathy, collaboration, and responsibility within the educational environment can positively shape the social character of students. (Astuti & Winarti, 2026)

## 5. The fifth principle:

أن يجد فيها المتعلم المثل الأخلاقية العليا ، والمثل الجمالية فيما يقع عليه نظره وما يسمعه

That is so that the learner can find within it the highest moral and aesthetic ideals in what they see and hear. ('Aziz & Majid, 1119) This principle indicates that the education system functions not only as a means to transfer knowledge but also as a means of forming moral and aesthetic sensitivity through school culture, social interactions, and various educational activities that reflect noble moral values. Thus, students can emulate and internalize these values in their daily lives. Research by Iqbal and Sukandar also shows that the internalization of moral values through school culture plays an important role in shaping students' character because these values are integrated into the learning process and school life. (Iqbal & Sukandar, 2026)

## 6. The sixth principle:

أن تكون قوية الصلة بالمنزل من جهة وبالمجتمع من جهة أخرى ، حتى تعمل على إصلاح ما فيهما من عيوب وأخطاء

That is, having a strong bond with family on one side and with the community on the other, so that one can strive to correct deficiencies or mistakes within them. ('Aziz & Majid, 1119) This principle emphasizes that education cannot run separately from the family and community environment because these three environments complement each other in the process of shaping students' character. This is in line with the research of Moh Kamil and Abdullah, which shows that the synergy between family, school, and community education can strengthen the formation of moral, social, and responsibility values of students in community life. (Kamil & Abdullah, 2025) In the context of contemporary education, collaboration between educational institutions, parents, and the community becomes one of the important factors in creating an effective and sustainable educational environment so that students can gain broader social experiences and learn to apply ethical principles in real life.

Based on these six principles, it can be understood that the concept of an ideal school environment according to Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid places the school not only as a formal educational institution but also as a social space that plays a role in shaping students' personalities comprehensively. These principles remain relevant in the context of contemporary education because they emphasize a balance between the development of individual potential, the formation of moral and social character, as well as positive relationships and roles between educational institutions, parents, and the community in the teaching and learning process.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study on the book *At-Tarbiyatu wa Taruqu Tadrīs*, it can be concluded that according to Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid, schools play an important role as agents of social integration that unite students from various social, cultural, and moral backgrounds within one educational environment. Through social interaction, school rules, and educational activities that take place within it, the school becomes a space that shapes values of togetherness, tolerance, and social responsibility. In addition, schools also function as agents of character formation through school culture, teacher role models, as

well as various educational activities that foster discipline, cooperation, and respect for others.

In addition, Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid also formulated six principles of an ideal school environment, namely: the school as a miniature of social life, the development of individual talents and potential, the formation of responsible citizens, the creation of a democratic atmosphere based on empathy, the development of moral and aesthetic ideals, and the establishment of strong relationships between the school, family, and society. These principles indicate that an ideal school environment focuses not only on academic aspects but also on character building and social integration of students. In the context of contemporary education, this idea remains relevant because it aligns with the concept of character education, student-centered learning, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities in shaping students' personalities comprehensively.

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