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Development of Pluralism Education in Indonesia: A Qualitative Study

Nurman[1]
Universitas Islam Riau, Riau, Indonesia

Yusriadi Yusriadi[2]
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi Puangrimaggalatung, Makassar, Indonesia

Sufian Hamim
Universitas Islam Riau, Riau, Indonesia

Abstract: This study examines Indonesia's pluralistic education strategy using qualitative research methods, including interviews, observation, and document examination, to collect data. Pluralistic education theory is applied as a theoretical framework. The research sites are three elementary schools in Riau Province, Indonesia, where students from different cultures gather to study. According to the study's findings, existing education policies provide the possibility for minority students to attend public schools. The Ministry of Education and Culture has allowed schools to make policies that reflect the cultural diversity of their students. The findings also show that the curriculum includes references to diverse cultures, that textbooks include lessons that encourage students to live in harmony with individuals from different cultures, and that many schools have created multilingual education programs. A closer examination of these practices reveals that what appears to be acceptance of cultural variation is part of pluralism. Multicultural materials that have been introduced into the autonomous curriculum have mainly been included. The curriculum maintains the established characteristics that identify Indonesian culture.
Keywords: policy, pluralism, education, students, Indonesia.

Schools have seen a rise in student diversity during the fourth industrial revolution. As a result, the notion of pluralism education has been developed in numerous nations to give children of various cultural backgrounds a more relevant and responsive education. One of these countries is Indonesia. Indonesia comprises 1,340 ethnic groups with distinct customs, and the country is home to 718 languages (Rosyada, 2014). Since the country's independence in 1945, cultural absorption, which suppresses ethnic and religious identity, has been utilized as a nation-building strategy in Indonesia (Syarif, 2019). The government has used the Indonesian language and nationalism to unify diversity via different means of cultural absorption. Cultural policies have been employed in the past to modernize and civilize society, and education was a governmental weapon for cultural absorption when nationalism was pushed.

At the time of Indonesian independence, when basic education was expanding, the Indonesian language was instilled through the national curriculum, emphasizing the characteristics of the correct standard language, such as communicating with Indonesians, knowing Indonesian customs, and being proud of Indonesian history (Hidayah, 2015). Teaching

[1]Correspondence Author: A Lecturer at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University Islam Riau, Indonesia. E-Mail: nurman07@soc.uir.ac.id
[2]Correspondence Author: A Lecturer at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi Puangrimaggalatung, Indonesia. E-Mail: yusriadi.yusriadi@uqconnect.edu.au

standard Indonesian has resulted in a decrease in using other languages among individuals of different ethnicities. For those whose language is inextricably linked to their cultural and religious identities, such as Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Chinese, its replacement with Indonesian emphasizes key aspects of their identity. Schools for various ethnicities in Indonesia, such as Christian and Muslim schools, must adhere to the government curriculum to suit Indonesian culture's grand narrative (Hanafy, 2015).

The requirement that all pupils study the same national curriculum impacts students' worldviews. Regardless of students' cultural backgrounds, studying in Indonesia provides them with a wealth of information about Indonesian culture (Fatmawati, 2021). Today, however, the situation is different. Historically, policies aiming at homogenizing and integrating multiple cultures sparked opposition, disruption, and conflict among people in numerous nations (Parekh, 2001). Countries all around the globe have been attempting to strike a balance between nationalism and cultural diversity. This phenomenon has also been seen in Indonesia.

By the end of the 1990s, Indonesians were talking about cultural diversity. A new era of democracy began in 1998 when the New Order dictatorship was overthrown, and the reformation period began. Changes in governmental power have caused a reorientation of Indonesian culture, which now include elements of the local culture, such as religion and traditional wisdom. Hence, Indonesian culture is now diverse for the first time (Ahral et al., 2021; Tamsah et al., 2021; Zacharias et al., 2021). Religious culture in Indonesia is beginning to pay greater attention to the cultural variety of Indonesians living in different places (Meliono, 2011; Wagner et al., 2012).

Diversity of cultural backgrounds and the recognition of educational pluralism impact education policy and practice, but in what ways? This research was conducted to better understand how education policy in Indonesia has adapted to the country's growing appreciation of its vast cultural variety. In the past, under the New Order administration, education was employed as a technique of cultural acculturation. However, the change in educational policy has led to several questions. What are the functions and qualities of education in today's political contexts? Is it pluralism, or is it still a kind of absorption taking place? The idea of pluralistic education was used to analyze Indonesia's education policy and school implementation considering the country's increasing sensitivity to its comprehensive cultural variety.

Literature Review

This study explores Indonesian education policy via the prism of pluralistic education. Since President Suharto's demise and the subsequent "reform era," Indonesian culture has crumbled. Although the civil rights movement began during the reform period, its consequences have extended to downtrodden and mistreated ethnic minorities. Educational plurality starts with school desegregation and continues with curriculum and practice modifications to represent the experiences, histories, and cultures of different ethnic groups (Banks, 1993; Sleeter, 1996).

Pluralism education attempts to do the following: 1) train students to be competent in pluralism, 2) offer equitable educational opportunities for all students, and 3) teach students about social justice. By training students to be pluralistic competent, pluralism education attempts to equip students to live in a culturally diverse society. This involves teaching pupils intercultural skills and information about culturally diverse communities (Banks, 1995). Pluralism education aims to give equitable educational opportunities to pupils from varied cultural backgrounds, including ethnic, gender, and social class diversity (Banks, 1995; Nieto, 2017).

Equal educational opportunities imply equal access to education and academic success. Instead of altering the varied cultures that children bring to school, schools should respect and

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utilize student culture as a learning resource and modify their curriculum and teaching techniques to make them more culturally relevant. All students have equal opportunities to learn. Achieve academic success regardless of ethnic origin (Nelson & Rogers, 2003; Sleeter, 1996).

Many academics argue that while acknowledging and respecting cultural differences in teaching and learning is a worthy goal in and of itself, it is insufficient to change the unequal power structures that exist in society between different cultural groups (Jun, 2016; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nelson & Rogers, 2003; Nieto, 2017; Sleeter, 1996). They criticize many of the pluralistic educational approaches based on these ideals as being excessively liberal, and they dispute their ability to impact confronting inequities among various cultural groups significantly. This group of scholars recommends that pluralism education be devoted to a transformational process that extends beyond the topic of cultural differences.

Pluralistic education must be social justice and cultural oppression-fighting education. In this view, education is seen as a weapon for combating prejudice and inequity in society against various cultural groups. This kind of education assists students in analyzing the social institutions that lead to the disparity between the majority and the minority. Social challenges confronting cultural groups are discussed in the classroom, and historical themes are presented from many viewpoints (Jun, 2016; May & Sleeter, 2010).

Banks (1993) suggested four distinct approaches to incorporating pluralism material into the curriculum: contribution, additive, transformation, and social action. Contributions to the curriculum include material about holidays and holidays from diverse ethnic and cultural groups. The additive method enriches the curriculum with knowledge regarding the culture, ideas, and themes of ethnic and cultural groups without altering the program's structure or goals. The transformational method calls into question the curriculum's fundamental ideas and assumptions. Through the organization of activities or projects, the social action method strives to assist students in taking social action relating to the topics they have learned.

According to Banks (1995), although being relatively simple to implement, the contribution and additive method does not threaten the current curricular framework and structure. In contrast to the transformational method, it seeks to assist students in grasping ideas and situations from multiple ethnic and cultural viewpoints while also being aware that knowledge is not a free culture but is manufactured via the opinions of those in power. If pluralism education is to confront society's uneven power relations among ethnic and cultural groups, the ideal kind of pluralism curriculum must be transformational. Students explore dominant and alternative narratives in the transformational method, and students' critical thinking abilities are transferred into social action via decision-making and social action methodologies.

The topic of ethnic rights adds a new component to the pluralism dynamic. There is no distinction between indigenous populations and immigrants in Indonesia, as in many European and American nations, and cultural variety in Indonesia is more closely tied to distinct religious traditions, particularly Islam, which is Indonesia's most prominent religion. This research employs the mentioned principles and methodologies of plurality education as a theoretical framework to investigate Indonesia's pluralism education policy.

Method

This study attempts to comprehend Indonesia's education policy regarding pluralism by looking at school policies on curriculum and teaching and analyzing them using the interpretative framework of educational pluralism. Qualitative research techniques such as interviews, observations, document inspection, and Forum Group Discussion (FGD) were used to collect data. Three primary schools in Riau province were used for the analysis. The three

schools educate pupils from various cultural backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities (Cahaya et al., 2022) (Table 1).

Table 1
Study School Profiles

School and student demographics	Province
School A: An elementary school with a high reputation in academic achievement and student discipline. 65% of students in the school are Muslim, and 23% are Christian. There are 2% Hindu students in this school.	Riau
School B: Elementary School, located in the Muslim community in the city; all 117 students are Muslim.	Riau
School C: Elementary school in Riau province in a Christian community. 63% of students are Christian, 15% of students are Confucian, 14% of students are Muslim, and 8% of students are Hindu. This school was founded 15 years ago.	Riau

Data Collection and Analysis

This study's data came from interviews, observations, and document reviews. Forty-eight interviews were done with students and teachers from three schools, officials from the local education office, parents, non-governmental organization officials, and community members. The interviews were audiotaped with the informants' consent and then transcribed. The youngsters were interviewed with their teacher's and parents' approval. In addition to conducting interviews, we observed culturally diverse classes. We conducted field observations and analyzed policy about pluralism, teacher lesson plans, classroom worksheets, student assignments, sample test questions, and the pluralism content of 15 primary school social studies textbooks.

The studies in the literature were used within the scope of the study to develop the interview questions. Based on the studies in the literature, the questions were linked with the goal of the study. The interview form was divided into two sections: personal information and questions. Gender, nationality, religion, and methods of identifying oneself are examples of personal details. The second section comprises seven questions about pluralism education. The number of questions was reduced to six when experts proposed grouping the notions of culture and pluralism under a question; these recommendations were judged to be appropriate by the researcher, resulting in the finalization of the interview form. The interview questions were organized into three sections. The first segment contained questions about defining ideas on culture, plurality, and pluralism education. The second segment contained questions addressing the impact of pluralism on education. The third segment concerned societal expectations of pluralism in education and doubts. Participants in the research were asked the following questions:

1. What do you know about culture? There is a concept known as pluralism. What do you mean by pluralism? Could you please give your thoughts on this matter?
2. Could you tell me what you think of the phrase “pluralism education"?
3. What are your thoughts on pluralistic perspectives on education? Can you tell me your thoughts on the educational implications of this?
4. What are your thoughts on the impact of pluralism education on social life?
5. Because of its nature, pluralism education is likely to impact the educational system. What do you think about its educational reflections?
6. Do you have any other thoughts or recommendations on this subject?

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These were the study's primary research questions. However, because these were semi-structured interviews, the interviewer added additional questions depending on the flow of each interview. For example, questions such as "Could you expand upon the phrase pluralism," "What do you mean by social sense," "Could you explain," and "Is this your own opinion or expectation?" were asked.

The researcher conducted the interviews, which lasted around 40 minutes each. Each respondent was interviewed individually, and the interviews were taped using a voice recorder. All participants were briefed about the interview's substance and explicitly confirmed it. The participants volunteered to help in the study.

Descriptive analysis was performed based on interview questions and participant responses in the interview analysis. Each interviewer's voice record was evaluated, and the analyses were put into textual form. The researcher then examined the text to develop a draft topic and codes. These themes and codes were converted into individual coding keys for each interviewer. Another researcher who is an expert in the topic was given the coding keys and asked to study them. The researcher and expert then discussed the subject and codes. Themes and codes were developed based on an agreement between the two.

The study team's interview coding key was submitted for expert review. New encodings were developed, and agreed-upon and disagreed-upon coding were established. Miles et al. (2019) formula (reliability = agreement/agreement + disagreement) were used in this approach. The study had an 83% dependability. According to Miles et al. (2019), if the reliability is proven to be 70% or above and expert opinion agrees in qualitative investigations, the study is considered trustworthy. As a result, this research may be regarded as credible.

Results

Theme 1: Education Policies and Improved Quality of Education

Document reviews show that the Indonesian government has begun considering pupils' socio-economic backgrounds when creating education policies. For Muslim students, for example, the Ministry of Religion has undertaken various attempts since 1999 to enhance the quality of education, both informal settings such as public and private madrasas and informal settings such as Islamic boarding schools. Rather than requiring pesantren to convert to Islamic Private Schools and include secular education into its curricula, the government registered and institutionalized pesantren as Institute of Islamic Boarding Schools. A new governmental effort provides financial assistance to registered pesantren to modernize their buildings and instructors, enabling them to continue religious instruction. The government's education policy allows for the existence of Islamic education and contributes to its standardization and institutionalization.

In the early 1990s, education programs aimed to secularize Islamic religious organizations. Islamic religious teachings are taught alongside other religious lessons in public schools from grade 1 to grade 6. The curriculum for Islamic religious studies teaches more topics, including the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic history.

Theme 2: Diversity

Is it safe to say that Indonesia wholly welcomes religious diversity? A closer look at the study's policy and empirical data suggests that this may be the case. Following the fall of the New Order administration in Indonesia in 1998, this approach arose. Although Muslim students constitute most of the student population, other religious instruction is allowed because it would

be "neutral" and would favor all sets of pupils. This policy is in force in 34 provinces. One informant said,

> *We must remain impartial since we have Christian, Muslim, and Hindu kids. We can't like Muslims any more than we like any other group. At parent meetings, we always warn parents that if they register their children at our school, they must follow our policy of providing a neutral education*. (Participant S, School A).

Theme 3. Minority Students

Minority children have received more attention in recent education policies. In July 2008, the Government of Indonesia granted free public education to all children residing in Indonesia, keeping to the premise of 12 years of compulsory education. This covers children of all minority youngsters. This is considered a door-opening approach for minority children whose access to public education was restricted due to space and regulations.

According to 2019 statistics, 49% of minority students are enrolled in public schools (Ashadi, 2020). Various obstacles prevented them from doing so: inadequate parental education; several family members; activities of working children, particularly in urban and rural areas. While the Indonesian government hopes to demonstrate that it cares about the fundamental human rights of all children through this strategy, the target group's lack of understanding of the need for education seems counterproductive. According to Participant H, a Riau Province Educational Official, “We lacked socialization advocating for parents who do not realize the value of education for their children's future. They have concerns about sending their children to a higher level and prefer to work directly.”

Education policies with Islamic lessons and providing opportunities to access general education for minority children make us think that the government of Indonesia is fulfilling its responsibility to offer education to traditionally considered groups. A closer look at the written policies and their implementation reveals the same. Compared to the past, current education policies align with the principles of pluralism education. Such policies apply in all regions of Indonesia. This and other phenomena show that Indonesia is serious about fully implementing the policy, as in the case of minority children, where the inhibiting factor is not government policies.

Theme 4. Tutoring Methods

Educational pluralism presents possibilities and obstacles for counter-hegemonic action (Muhr, 2010). Pluralism is accomplished by allowing pupils to assess information often taken for granted in school. As a result, teachers and institutions must take a critical and constructive attitude to learning, and it must produce knowledge from students and society's experiences, rather than just being gathered in students' minds. Teachers must assist students in breaking down the cultural hegemony ingrained in the information.

The curriculum and learning techniques in schools in Indonesia have evolved. Culturally relevant teaching approaches are tailored to pupils' cultural backgrounds, such as those advocated by academics of pluralistic education (Banks, 1995; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nelson & Rogers, 2003). Teachers' instructional techniques have evolved; they now provide a range of approaches to meet the various requirements of their pupils. Nonetheless, based on classroom observations, most teaching techniques are blended learning styles: teachers give information via the Learning Management System (LMS) and face-to-face lectures, and

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sometimes online using the Zoom application. Students are working on tasks utilizing worksheets or the LMS.

Presenting materials in PowerPoint (PPT) is another popular approach. Teachers at school give time for discussion or questions and answers to introduce students to the topic or help students retain the knowledge better so that they may examine the content critically or provide a new viewpoint. Learning is dynamic at some schools where this study was performed, and students' experiences and issues are utilized to develop knowledge. For example, when the teacher teaches a unit on Dutch colonialism in Indonesia in a history class at school A, the viewpoint offered is not just from an Indonesian perspective but also is debated from a Dutch perspective.

Theme 5. Language of Instruction

Language is essential in learning and in acquiring a second language, according to proponents of pluralism education (Nieto, 2017). For more than 22 years, the use of the local language in public schools was permitted in Indonesia as part of the nationalist regime's objective of uniting people of diverse cultures. Given that we live in a globalized world, language proficiency is critical to economic progress. The mandated use of the national language in instruction has been abolished since the reformation era started in 1998. Knowing many languages benefits both the individual and the country (Ward & Braudt, 2015).

Although the government does not ban the use of students' languages in the teaching and learning process, it does not have a formal policy to facilitate multilingual education. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology scrapped the ancient language policy in 2008 and enabled local languages to be utilized in classrooms. Consequently, many schools, particularly in border provinces, have created multilingual education programs that employ a student's native language as the language of teaching. Based on interviews and field trips, a multilingual curriculum (Indonesian English-local) has been implemented in schools (School A) where pupils are religiously diverse. However, all multilingual programs in schools are experimental studies carried out by schools or university research teams.

Theme 6: Curriculum

The schools where this research was conducted can be classified according to their student population: 1) schools with a large proportion of Muslim students, 2) schools where the majority of students are Christians, and 3) schools whose students are of various religions. Some of these schools also accept minorities or students of different religions and customs. Class observations, teacher interviews, study plan studies, and student work reveal that the school adheres to the curriculum objectives of the Ministry of Education. According to the Principal of School C, “the curriculum in our school follows the independent learning curriculum. We prioritize academic achievement because our children want to continue their secondary education in an academically renowned institution.”

Teachers sometimes provide additional material to complement the curriculum content. The purpose of offering other resources is to help students better understand the themes discussed in class and provide alternative views on specific difficulties. The range of various civilizations is depicted through history and practice. Although most students in school (School B) in Riau Province are Muslim, the school is still open to teaching cultural pluralism in Indonesia so that students know the origins of each culture. These findings indicate that the political culture of ethnic groups in a school area has little influence on school decision-making regarding regulations and decisions to educate students.

Finally, schools teach multicultural subjects in the same manner. While most pupils are Muslim, the school teaches about different cultures associated with the Indonesian area. Aside from teaching Islamic culture, material about other cultures is taught in schools in regions where most pupils are Muslim. Students in Indonesia study various regional cultures as outlined in textbooks, and students are exposed to the dual worldview promoted by multicultural academics.

Furthermore, the autonomous curriculum is founded on students' and society's experiences and lives. School C, for example, has 15 minority pupils. Students were asked to fill out information about themselves during class observation, such as their name, residence, parents' names, country, and ethnicity. Although there were three Muslim minority pupils in the class, the teacher requested they fill in information about their ethnicity because they were certain of it.

Several identified as Muslims; this is a "'teachable moment" for teachers to connect minority students' struggles with an educational subject, such as religious concerns. Teachers do so due to their prior experience teaching pupils of pluralism. The similarities and differences across ethnic groups are discussed, and the mechanisms contributing to such variety. According to Banks (1993), when schools include multicultural material in their current curricula, they alter the structure and paradigm of the autonomous learning curriculum. The curriculum does not maintain the prevailing group viewpoint; children are taught social action skills.

Theme 7: Culturally Diverse Students' Policies and Procedures

According to the findings of this research, the Ministry of Education has given schools the authority to make their judgments on school holidays, uniforms, and disciplinary problems based on the cultural backgrounds of their pupils. School holidays in Indonesia are primarily related to Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese, and national observances. A multicultural calendar, which includes key religious holidays, is distributed to schools across Indonesia. All schools in all provinces are closed; for example, Hari Raya Aidilfitri (a Muslim festival) and Christmas (a Christian celebration) are school holidays.

Schools provide independence in terms of uniforms, just as Islam allows Muslim students to wear uniforms appropriate to their culture – female students wear long skirts, long-sleeved shirts, and headscarves, and male students wear long pants. Thus, the conclusion can be made that the practice of schools based on this policy reflects pluralism, depending on the region and the ratio of minority students in the school. The results show that in Muslim-majority provinces, where Muslim cultural politics is strong, most schools set rules aligned with the Ministry of Education policies, such as wearing uniforms and holidays. This happens in schools in other provinces, even where Muslim students make up the majority.

Discussion

Indonesia is often recognized as a linguistic and culturally diverse country, and cultural variety and ethnic diversity are often used interchangeably in Indonesia. According to studies, the changes to an applied autonomous learning curriculum are pluralistic. Pluralism education is aimed at both majority and minority students, emphasizing social justice for all pupils. Pluralism education includes ethnicity, color, class, gender, religion, and language (Nieto, 2017).

Pluralism arose as a concept in Indonesia in the 1990s due to the reform period (Bakti, 2005). Pluralism and religion are tightly linked in Indonesian studies (Howell, 2005). According to Howell (2005), pluralism encompassed a series of interactions between Muslims and other religions, with the Muslims representing the majority. On the one hand, The Ministry

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of Education's policy of autonomous learning in educational development states that schools are given the freedom to determine their curriculum. On the other hand, the curriculum permits the educational system to remain on a monocultural foundation, as Kasim et al. (2022) point out.

Many issues addressed by the schools in this study are shared by all kinds of schools, whether they are focused on pluralism education. For example, all forms of teaching must compete with the many different situations that teachers confront and must be compelling enough to persuade teachers to modify their present methods (Desimone, 2009; Kennedy, 2016). However, this analysis has highlighted issues particular to schools regarding pluralism education.

Discussions concerning ethnic, religious, and other cultural differences are either very personal and emotionally draining or avoided entirely due to their often political character (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). The government has set laws for pluralism education; schools are asked to freely choose their curriculum and attitudes toward diversity and seek answers to deep-rooted societal issues such as racism, languages, and ability. In some circumstances, these discussions have resulted in acceptance and changed teaching techniques (Aujla-Bhullar, 2011; Brown & Crippen, 2016; Watkins & Noble, 2016).

This research examined how schools react to diversity resulting from ideological differences; teachers have suggested paying attention to the emotive elements of professional development so that teachers might engage themselves as moments of pedagogical opportunity in themselves (Garrett & Segall, 2013). Future studies in pluralism education may benefit the field of education by thoroughly analyzing teacher and student reactions to instances of adaptation or acceptance and how these reactions impact student results.

Cognitive and emotional adjustments may be necessary to accept culturally appropriate teaching and the underlying notion that social structures determine individual and institutional behavior (Nelson & Rogers, 2003). However, many teachers may need more than one school policy to understand social events via a structural lens, mainly if the policy focuses on curriculum design and changing views. According to this analysis, policies that emphasize pluralism to foster culturally sensitive education save significant time creating this more extensive social knowledge. For example, a greater objective may ensure that all students receive an equal education. These aims are likely to need a lengthy and insulated period from the many other demands placed on teachers by their students (Hulan, 2015).

More studies should examine school curricula and professional cultures that might help teachers acquire and act on a more profound understanding of diversity and inequality. In schools where cultural and religious diversity is successfully integrated, studies have shown that a whole-school approach may help foster openness to different views and ways of thinking (Mayfield & Garrison-Wade, 2015). Additional information regarding how schools may establish trust and foster an environment that encourages self-reflection and transparency would be beneficial. This information will help reduce student resistance and silence and enhance structural awareness in pluralism education.

More study is required to assist schools, and students navigate the narrow line between specificity and reduction to acquire nuanced, complicated understandings of ethnicity's effect on student learning. We agree with Watkins and Noble (2016) that a robust pluralism education must tackle these components as a genuinely intellectual endeavor, not just an ethical one of cultural diversity tolerance. Honoring students' ethnicity complexity may assist teachers in developing the critical, nuanced understandings of diversity required for thinking through how societal situations connect to their classroom environments.

Research in pluralism education may benefit from humility and self-reflection on the extent to which we now understand how schools adapt their ways. Teaching methods change when attitudes, knowledge, and abilities are improved (Kurniawati et al., 2017). The idea that

teachers may change their methods without changing their fundamental ideas has not been widely examined (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). Although not mentioned clearly, this study found that most seemed to be functioning under the same logic that Kennedy (2016) named the school's theory of action. Given the general scarcity of research on pluralism education in Indonesia, more study is required to improve the knowledge of pluralism education.

One issue that has plagued the multicultural education movement, both internally and externally, is the inclination of teachers, administrators, legislators, and the public to oversimplify the notion. Although multicultural education is a complex and multifaceted subject, media pundits and educators sometimes concentrate on just one of its many elements. Some teachers see it as simply including knowledge about ethnic groups into the curriculum; others see it as an endeavor to eradicate prejudice; others see it as the celebration of ethnic festivals and events (D'angelo & Dixey, 2001).

Content integration is how teachers integrate examples, facts, and information from many cultures and groups to explain essential ideas, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or field (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995). Multicultural education should be more than just subject integration in many Indonesian schools. Activities connected to other aspects of multicultural education, such as knowledge production, bias reduction, and equitable pedagogy, are likely to be the most productive avenues for intercultural engagement (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995).

Since the 1960s, social scientists have learned much about how children's racial views evolve and how educators might create interventions to assist youngsters in developing more favorable sentiments about different racial groups. The multicultural education "prejudice reduction" feature focuses on the characteristics of children's racial attitudes and measures that may be utilized to assist pupils in acquiring more positive racial and ethnic attitudes (Bobo, 2004). The Ministry of Education has granted schools the ability to make decisions on school holidays, uniforms, and disciplinary issues depending on their students' cultural origins. In Indonesia, school holidays are primarily associated with Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese, and national observances.

As a part of multicultural education, the government is seen as a change agent that implements structural reforms in the educational system. It is necessary to reform the school's culture and structure to provide educational equality and a feeling of empowerment for students from various ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds (Arar, 2015). Teachers and administrators should be encouraged to use suitable evaluation methods for all groups and eliminate monitoring. A multicultural calendar with significant religious holidays is issued to schools in Indonesia to promote an empowered culture and social structure. The accomplishments of multicultural education in Indonesia from the 1990s are notable and should be recognized. Most multiculturalists believe that the primary purpose of multicultural education is to reorganize schools so that all students learn the information, attitudes, and abilities required to operate in a multiethnic and multiracial society and globe (Banks et al., 2001). Debates within the discipline persist, as they do in other multidisciplinary research fields. These discussions align with the mindset of an area that values democracy and diversity. They also serve as a source of strength.

Conclusion

In Indonesia, education policy is based on multicultural education ideas and ideals. Indonesia's education policy conforms to multicultural standards; a closer examination of these practices reveals that what seems to be acceptance of cultural variation is part of pluralism. The multicultural material that has been introduced into the autonomous curriculum has been primarily incorporated, and the curriculum maintains well-established characteristics that

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identify Indonesian culture. In Indonesia, the clear presence of cultural material is sufficient to transform the relationship of equal power between dominant and minority groups.

Similarly, most laws and regulations that have been adjusted to be more culturally sensitive have a substantial influence on the country's structural inequalities between various cultural groups. The structure and peculiarities of the national education test, which cause inequalities between pupils of different nationalities and cultures, have been explored. According to critical pluralism, culture in the national curriculum is depicted as the concrete practice of certain groups, standardized and depoliticized (Bjork, 2003; Raihani, 2018; Suprapto et al., 2021; Yeom et al., 2002; Zainiyati, 2016).

Most schools' teaching approaches are evolving. Teachers assist pupils in developing critical thinking and social action abilities. Students actively obtain targeted information by actively participating in knowledge production, with knowledge defined as what the autonomous learning curriculum determines. This is consistent with the style of intercultural education advocated by critical multicultural theorists. Rather than being a static product, culture should be seen as a continual creation and reconstruction of identity (Gillborn, 2006; May & Sleeter, 2010; Stokke & Lybæk, 2018).

Furthermore, the education policy is attentive to the cultural variety of pupils; this research demonstrates that schools are consistent in their implementation of educational regulations. Most schools feature culturally relevant practices in locations where a group's cultural politics are prominent. Similarly, in other provinces where the politics of group culture are not as powerful, schools choose a strategy known as "neutral," in which they do not ignore the cultural identity of minority children. The school's practice of multiculturalism was unaffected by the school's minority student population or the school staff's view of cultural variety.

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Notes on Contributors

Nurman is the first author obtained a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the Universitas Islam Riau in 1995. He received a master's degree in Regional Planning Public Administration from the Universitas Sumatera Utara in 2002 and obtained a Doctorate Degree in Public Policy from the Universitas Utara Malaysia in 2012. He has been a lecturer at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University Islam Riau since 1997 and a lecturer teaching Public Administration at the Postgraduate Studies of the Universitas Islam Riau since 2007. His current research interests are Public Administration and Development Planning.

Yusriadi Yusriadi is a lecturer in Public Administration at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi Puangrimaggalatung, Makassar, Indonesia. He received a Community Service Grant in 2020 and a National Competitive Basic Research grant in 2022 from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. He is also a reviewer for national and international journals and an editor for national and international journals.

Sufian Hamim is the second author who obtained his bachelor's degree in Constitutional Law at the Universitas Islam Riau in 1985-1989. He received a master's degree in Public Administration from the Universitas Padjadjaran in 1992-1994 and obtained a Doctorate Degree in Public Administration from the Universitas Padjadjaran in 1998-2002. He has been a lecturer at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University Islam Riau since 1990 and a lecturer teaching Public Administration at the Postgraduate Studies of the Universitas Islam Riau since 2007. His current research interests are Public Administration, Strategic Management, and Development Planning.

ORCID

Nurman, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5976-4895
Yusriadi Yusriadi, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7908-1525
Sufian Hamim, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5780-2870