

Multicultural Education in Indonesia: A Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract: This study investigates how multicultural education has been conceptualized and developed in Indonesia by integrating a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. Based on 46 Scopus-indexed articles published through November 2025, the study adheres to the PRISMA Statement guidelines. It uses VOSviewer mapping to examine conceptual patterns, institutional structures, and thematic clusters within the field. The findings reveal that multicultural education in Indonesia operates through a distinct relational configuration that integrates pedagogical practices, religious moderation, and local cultural values. Different from dominant Western frameworks that emphasize race, migration, and structural inequality, existing research in Indonesia conceptualizes Multicultural education within a pluralistic social context rooted in religious values. Bibliometric evidence indicates a strong concentration of research within state universities and Islamic higher education institutions, with central conceptual linkages to Islamic education, curriculum development, and discourse on moderation. Although pedagogical implementation and value formation are extensively addressed, macro-level analyses of social cohesion remain comparatively underexplored. The study advances the field by articulating a relational, multi-level conceptual model that differentiates pedagogical processes, ideological orientations, and sociological outcomes within culturally specific settings. By repositioning Indonesia within global debates on multicultural education, this research contributes to enhancing a context-sensitive perspective on diversity education in plural societies.

Keywords: Multicultural education, religious moderation, social cohesion, local culture, systematic literature review, bibliometric analysis, Indonesia.

Indonesia is a country rich in ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity (Dewantara et al., 2024). The country comprises more than 300 ethnic groups, approximately

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200 regional languages, and six officially recognized religions, as reflected in its educational system (Mazyra et al., 2024). Against this backdrop, education can help to foster an inclusive and harmonious coexistence, amid the dynamics of an increasingly globalized world (Setiawan, 2025; S. Shi & Yang, 2025). However, given the existing diversity, educational policies face challenges in meeting the needs of all societal groups without compromising social equality (Huda et al., 2024). Grounded in the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which emphasizes differences, it also underlines that education should serve as a tool for creating unity in diversity.

In contemporary global scholarship, multicultural education has evolved beyond a pedagogical approach into a transformative framework that addresses issues of inequality, identity, and social integration in diverse societies (Hunduma & Mekuria, 2024; Torres & Tarozzi, 2020). While dominant Western perspectives often focus on race, migration, and structural inequality (Acar-Ciftci, 2019; Portera et al., 2025; Sleeter, 2024; Torres & Tarozzi, 2020), the Indonesian context presents a distinct configuration in which diversity is deeply intertwined with religious values and local cultural traditions (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024; Jayadi et al., 2022; Pangalila & Rumbay, 2024). This contextual specificity underscores the importance of developing more nuanced and context-sensitive conceptualizations of multicultural education that move beyond universalist assumptions.

Multicultural education has emerged to address this challenge. This educational approach enhances students' understanding of diversity and incorporates principles such as justice, democracy, and human rights into the educational process. Multicultural education involves more than acknowledging diversity, it aims to cultivate respect for differences while strengthening unity within a pluralistic society (Banks, 2021; Imouri, 2021; Prince, 2023). More recent studies emphasize that multicultural education should move beyond additive models of content inclusion toward transformative pedagogical practices that foster critical awareness, intercultural competence, and social responsibility (Ajani, 2025; Conti, 2025; Raihani et al., 2025). However, in the Indonesian context, multicultural education has not yet fully incorporated all dimensions proposed by Banks, including content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equitable pedagogy, and the development of an empowering school culture (Jayadi et al., 2022).

Multicultural education is widely recognized as important, but its implementation remains limited (Benjamin et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Ninkova, 2020). Most existing studies show that multicultural education in Indonesia often only adds content on diversity without changing teaching methods or the curriculum structure (Huda et al., 2024). As shown by studies conducted in Yogyakarta and Kalimantan, there is a gap between field practices and national policies. Teachers and education policymakers often lack clear guidelines in the implementation of multicultural education in schools (Raihani et al., 2025). This indicates that despite growing awareness of multicultural education, practical guidelines for its effective application remain insufficient.

From a policy perspective, recent educational initiatives in Indonesia, including the promotion of religious moderation and culturally responsive curricula, have reinforced the importance of integrating multicultural values into educational systems. Nevertheless, the translation of these policy initiatives into classroom practice remains inconsistent (Diem & Abdullah, 2020; Gunawan et al., 2025), revealing a persistent disconnect between policy intentions, theoretical frameworks, and pedagogical implementation. This gap across policy, theory, and practice represents a critical challenge for the advancement of multicultural education in Indonesia (Puteri, 2025).

Furthermore, research on multicultural education in Indonesia remains limited and unevenly distributed, despite the increasing number of studies. Mariyono (2024) stated that, to maximize the impact of multicultural education, comprehensive teacher training, equitable resource distribution, and a curriculum that accommodates Indonesia's cultural diversity are

required. Most existing research still focuses on theoretical approaches, with relatively few studies examining multicultural education in real-world contexts (Maddux et al., 2021). Through bibliometric analysis, Sampaleng (2023) and Santos et al. (2024) found that, while publications on multicultural education have increased, many studies provide limited methodological detail and insufficient analysis of regional trends.

More critically, prior research has not systematically examined how multicultural education in Indonesia is conceptually constructed, institutionally distributed, and thematically interconnected. Existing studies tend to focus on isolated dimensions—such as pedagogy, curriculum, or cultural values—without integrating these elements into a coherent analytical framework (Fathurrochman et al., 2025; Ramli et al., 2025; Zul et al., 2026). As a result, the relational and multi-level nature of multicultural education, encompassing pedagogical processes, ideological orientations, and broader sociological outcomes, remains insufficiently explored.

The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by conducting a systematic bibliometric analysis to provide an overview of the current landscape of multicultural education research in Indonesia. This study also aims to offer insights into how multicultural education is studied in Indonesia and identify key findings that can serve as a foundation for future educational reforms. Specifically, this study aims to bridge the gap between fragmented empirical findings and the need for an integrative conceptual framework by combining thematic synthesis and bibliometric mapping. This approach enables the identification of both substantive research themes and structural patterns of knowledge production, thereby offering a more comprehensive and systematic understanding of the field (Purnama, 2026; Rodiyana, 2024).

This study offers three main contributions. First, it advances a relational and multi-level conceptual perspective that integrates pedagogical practices, ideological dimensions (particularly religious moderation), and sociological outcomes (such as social cohesion), thereby extending existing theoretical discussions on multicultural education. Second, the study utilizes a bibliometric approach to examine the distribution of research, which includes analyzing publications based on country, institution, and researcher collaboration (Skute et al., 2019). This method provides a broader perspective on the development of multicultural education at both local and global levels. Third, from a practical and policy perspective, the findings of this study provide recommendations for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators in designing contextually relevant and effective multicultural education strategies in pluralistic societies.

Current literature has weaknesses, including insufficient analysis of the geographical distribution and the types of institutions involved in multicultural education research (Parkhouse et al., 2019; Uzunboylu & Altay, 2021). Additionally, existing research shows a limited integration between theoretical frameworks and their practical implementation in educational settings (Papadopoulou et al., 2022). Although publications on multicultural education have increased over the past decade, only a small proportion address implementation involving the active participation of various stakeholders, including teachers, students, and local communities (Sampaleng, 2023). Therefore, by employing a more comprehensive bibliometric analysis, this study aims to address these limitations and provide recommendations for future research.

This study employs systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis to provide insights into the latest trends in multicultural education research. Furthermore, it categorizes key findings and creates visualizations of research collaboration, author networks, and institutions associated with multicultural education in Indonesia. Mariyono (2024) emphasized that, to enhance the impact of multicultural education in Indonesia, equitable resource distribution, more comprehensive teacher training, and curricula grounded in local diversity are three critical factors.

Importantly, this study also contributes to global academic discourse by offering an alternative model of multicultural education rooted in the integration of cultural diversity, religious values, and local knowledge systems. This perspective provides valuable insights for international audiences, particularly in understanding how multicultural education can be adapted to diverse socio-cultural and religious contexts beyond dominant Western paradigms.

The main outcomes of this systematic literature review are expected to provide insights into the theoretical and practical implications of multicultural education as part of the literature analysis. These findings will serve as a basis for formulating educational policies that are better aligned with ongoing social and cultural changes and help realize more equitable educational goals across Indonesia. This study addresses three core research questions: (1) how is multicultural education studied in the context of Indonesia?; (2) how is recent research on multicultural education in Indonesia distributed, as examined through bibliometric analysis and systematic review; and (3) from the perspective of educational reform in Indonesia, what are the theoretical and practical implications of these findings?

Literature Review

Multicultural Education

Recent research literature conceptualizes multicultural education as a pedagogical framework that systematically integrates social, cultural, and religious diversity into curriculum structures, instructional practices, and classroom interactions (Banks, 2021). This literature indicates a gradual shift from additive models that emphasize the inclusion of diverse content toward more reflective and transformative approaches, in which educators are expected to critically relate students lived social experiences to structured learning processes (Gorski & Dalton, 2020). Within this evolving discourse, multicultural education is increasingly understood as extending beyond the mere recognition of difference to encompass the development of intercultural competence and dialogic engagement across diverse identities (Conti, 2025; Garrido et al., 2020).

The reviewed studies state that multicultural education is frequently operationalized through diversity-responsive curriculum reform, dialogic pedagogies, and the cultivation of inclusive character dispositions across educational levels (Bahtiar et al., 2024; Rachmadtullah et al., 2020; Raihani et al., 2025). FatmaWati et al. (2023) emphasized the significance of social transformation approaches in higher education, while recent research has also introduced measurement instruments to assess students' multicultural dispositions (Nurhayati et al., 2022; Yanto et al., 2022). Collectively, these developments reflect a gradual transition from predominantly normative descriptions toward more systematic empirical investigations of multicultural educational practices and outcomes.

Social Cohesion

In recent sociological literature, social cohesion is understood as a relational condition reflecting levels of trust, solidarity, participation, and a sense of belonging within pluralistic societies (Hughes & Loader, 2023). The concept is inherently multidimensional and shaped by institutional configurations, resource distribution, and public policy frameworks. Educational institutions are frequently viewed as key arenas of cross-identity interaction that have the potential to cultivate tolerant and participatory dispositions (De Schaepmeester et al., 2022; Kalia & Jackson, 2025), although these effects are not automatic and are unevenly distributed.

Several reviewed studies associate multicultural educational practices with efforts to enhance social harmony and reduce negative stereotypes (FatmaWati et al., 2023). Badrun et al. (2024) demonstrated that multicultural competence in multi-religious societies can be

strengthened through structured educational engagement. Nevertheless, much of the existing research remains focused on individual-level attitudinal change, while empirical assessments of structural or longitudinal indicators of social cohesion remain comparatively limited (Aruqaj, 2023; Castillo et al., 2023).

Religious Moderation

The relationship between religious education and social diversity has received sustained attention in international studies (Davie, 2022; Gaus, 2021). Religious education can function as a platform for interfaith dialogue that promotes inclusivity (Udemba, 2024); however, it may also foster exclusivist orientations if not accompanied by reflective and dialogic pedagogical approaches (Rymarz, 2024; Suryani & Muslim, 2024). In response to this tension, cross-religious literacy has been increasingly proposed as a strategic framework for fostering openness and mutual understanding within plural social contexts (Ali et al., 2021; W. Yoo, 2026).

In the studies analyzed, religious moderation is conceptualized through the integration of tolerance-oriented values into curricula, the use of dialogic instructional practices, and the implementation of institutional initiatives in schools and Islamic boarding schools (Burga & Damopolii, 2022; Fahmi et al., 2025; Saleh, 2025). These findings state that religious dimensions often play a central role in value formation within multicultural education, particularly in societies with strong religious foundations.

Local Culture

Global education literature emphasizes that diversity-related values are interpreted and enacted within specific cultural contexts. Pieterse (2019) argued that educational globalization does not produce uniformity but instead interacts dynamically with national and regional cultural structures. Similarly, place-based education highlights the importance of local relevance in sustaining the social legitimacy of educational practices (Palmer et al., 2025; Shi & Ma, 2025).

The reviewed studies indicate that the integration of local languages, traditions, and cultural practices into instructional processes can enhance societal acceptance of multicultural education (Sopian et al., 2025; Sugiyanto et al., 2025). Local culture thus functions both as a social backdrop and as an interpretive framework that shapes how inclusive values are understood and internalized within educational practice (Andang et al., 2025; Sakti et al., 2024). In this regard, cultural diversity plays a formative role in structuring the relationship between pedagogical processes and value formation in plural societies (Marolla-Gajardo & Riquelme Plaza, 2025; Niemi & Hahl, 2019).

Methodology

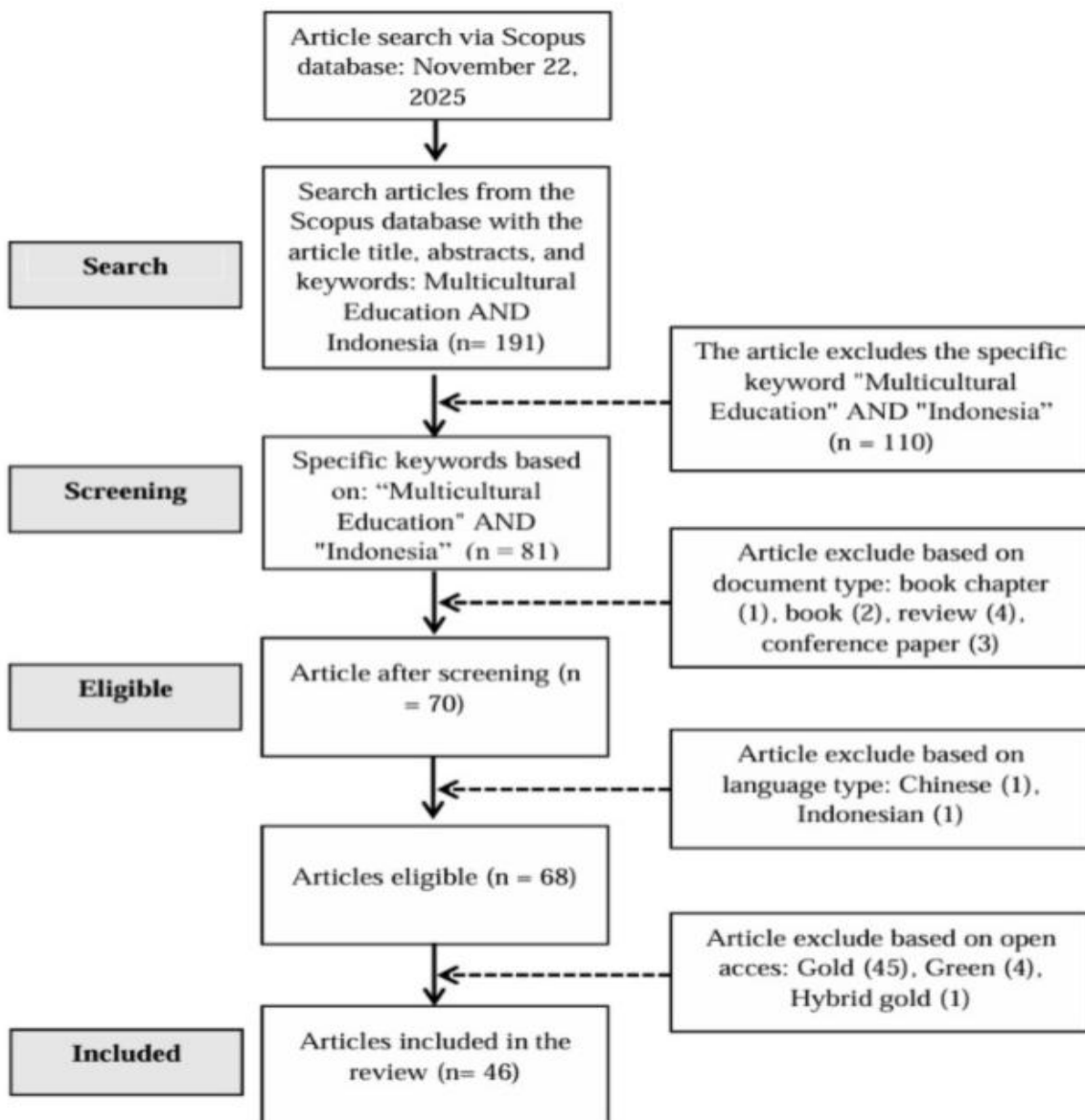
Research Design

This study was designed as a combined systematic literature review (SLR) integrated with bibliometric analysis (Alsadi et al., 2025; Amarathunga, 2024; Marzi et al., 2025). This approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the development and conceptual construction of multicultural education research in Indonesia (Rodiya, 2024; Suhendar et al., 2025). This integrated design is particularly appropriate for examining fragmented research fields, as it enables analysis at both conceptual and structural levels, thereby providing a more holistic analytical perspective (Alsadi et al., 2025; Kaur, 2025; Marzi et al., 2025; Maulina et al., 2023). At the structural level, the study maps publication trends, institutional distribution,

and patterns of research collaboration. At the substantive level, it examines how central concepts such as multicultural education, religious moderation, social cohesion, and local culture are constructed and interconnected within the existing literature.

The review process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure that each stage of article selection was systematically documented and replicable (Hossain et al., 2026; Page et al., 2021; Rogge et al., 2024). The application of PRISMA procedures enhances methodological transparency, reduces selection bias, and strengthens the reliability of the review process (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021; Sohrabi et al., 2021). As shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Information Flow of the Systematic Literature Review Based on the PRISMA Statement Framework



Data Source and Search Procedure

The Scopus database was selected as the primary data source due to its recognition as a leading international bibliographic index characterized by rigorous curation standards, quality-

based journal selection, and standardized indexing systems (Rew, 2025). The selection of Scopus was further justified by considerations of validity and reliability, as journals indexed in this database are subject to systematic peer-review processes and strict quality control mechanisms (Sizo et al., 2025).

The search was conducted on November 22, 2025, using the Advanced Search feature in the Scopus database. The search query was limited to the title, abstract, and keywords (TITLE-ABS-KEY) fields to ensure that selected articles explicitly positioned multicultural education within the Indonesian context as a primary focus.

The search query used Boolean operators to ensure conceptual alignment among the core constructs in this study. Specifically, the search criteria were defined as follows:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("multicultural education")

AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Indonesia")

AND DOCTYPE (ar)

AND LANGUAGE (English)

The use of the AND operator ensured that only articles that simultaneously contained the terms "multicultural education" and "Indonesia" within the specified fields were retrieved. The document type was restricted to journal articles (DOCTYPE ar) to maintain consistency across peer-reviewed empirical and conceptual studies. The language was restricted to English to ensure analytical uniformity.

In addition to these criteria, an open-access filter was applied to ensure full-text accessibility of the selected corpus. This restriction was intended to support transparency, replicability, and consistency in data extraction and thematic analysis, thereby contributing to procedural reliability (Villagran et al., 2023). Only articles available under an open-access scheme were included in the final review.

Article Selection Process

The article selection process followed the PRISMA Statement flow sequence, consisting of identification through database searching, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion (Islam et al., 2025; Rethlefsen & Page, 2022).

During the identification stage, 191 articles were initially retrieved from the Scopus database using the keywords: multicultural education AND Indonesia. The subsequent screening stage refined this set by applying the exact phrase "multicultural education" AND "Indonesia" to ensure that both terms were positioned as the primary focus within the title, abstract, or keywords of the articles. As a result of this screening refinement, 81 articles met the thematic criteria, while 110 articles were excluded due to the absence of direct and explicit alignment with the two core constructs of the study.

The next stage involved the evaluation of document types. Publications classified as book chapters (n = 1), books (n = 2), review articles (n = 4), and conference proceedings (n = 3) were excluded. Following this filtering process, 70 articles remained for further analysis.

The subsequent stage involved language evaluation, which resulted in the exclusion of two non-English articles (one in Mandarin and one in Indonesian), leaving 68 articles.

In the final stage, accessibility criteria were applied, retaining only articles available under open-access schemes. After this final screening, 46 articles met all inclusion criteria and were selected as the final sample. The entire selection process is presented in a PRISMA Statement flow diagram. This systematic selection process enhances procedural reliability by ensuring transparency, consistency, and replicability in dataset construction.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure thematic consistency and methodological coherence, clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established at the initial stage (Carmona et al., 2021). Eligible studies were required to be Scopus-indexed journal articles, written in English, available through open access, and explicitly examining multicultural education within the Indonesian context. Both empirical and conceptual studies were included, provided they showed direct relevance to educational theory, policy, or practice.

Documents classified as books, book chapters, conference proceedings, and review articles were excluded from the analysis. Studies that did not focus on the Indonesian context or lacked direct relevance to educational issues were also excluded. These exclusion criteria were applied to preserve thematic focus and to strengthen methodological consistency (Johnston et al., 2019; Peters et al., 2020).

Methodological Considerations in Synthesis

Although this study did not implement a numerical quality appraisal scoring system, methodological variation across studies was carefully considered during synthesis. Variations in research design, analytical depth, and levels of theoretical articulation were used to inform the interpretation and weighting of findings within the review (Sataloff et al., 2021).

Studies with clearly defined objectives, coherent research designs, and transparent methodological procedures were analyzed in greater depth. More descriptive studies were retained but given proportional emphasis within the overall synthesis. This approach was adopted to recognize differences in methodological quality among the included articles while maintaining an inclusive review process.

Data Extraction, Analytical Strategy, and Data Integration

Following article selection, systematic data extraction was conducted. Extracted information included authorship and publication year, article title, research objectives, methodological design, principal findings, and reported implications. This process established a structured analytical foundation and enabled consistent comparison across studies (Jeong et al., 2025).

To address RQ1 regarding how multicultural education has been examined in the Indonesian context, an analytical thematic synthesis approach was used. Each article was subjected to in-depth reading and iterative coding to identify recurring conceptual patterns, dominant research focuses, methodological tendencies, and conceptual interrelationships among constructs.

The thematic analysis was conducted through an iterative coding process, in which studies were categorized based on shared conceptual themes and progressively organized into higher-level analytical patterns.

Bibliometric analysis was conducted using two complementary procedures (Donthu et al., 2021; Hassan & Duarte, 2024). First, trends in publication output by year, institutional affiliations, journal sources, and author productivity were obtained directly from the Scopus “Analyze Results” feature, which provides aggregated and standardized metadata for identifying patterns of research output. These data were used to address RQ2.

Second, to map relational structures among institutions and research themes, the exported bibliographic data was processed using VOSviewer. This analysis generated visualizations of institutional collaboration networks and keyword co-occurrence patterns, enabling the identification of thematic clusters and conceptual interconnections within the field (Guofang et al., 2024; Klarin, 2024; López & Yepes, 2024). The integration of thematic synthesis and bibliometric mapping represents methodological triangulation, strengthening the robustness and interpretive depth of the findings.

Through this combined strategy, RQ2 was examined by conducting statistical analyses of Scopus data and by visualizing networks using VOSviewer. Finally, to address RQ3 on the theoretical and practical implications of educational reform in Indonesia, an integrative interpretation was conducted by synthesizing findings from thematic analysis (RQ1) and bibliometric mapping (RQ2). Implications were formulated from empirically identified conceptual patterns and structural tendencies within the field, ensuring that conclusions were grounded in both content analysis and structural mapping rather than in normative assertions alone.

Reliability and Validity

Although this study does not involve statistical data analysis, several methodological strategies were employed to ensure reliability and validity. First, data source validity was ensured using the Scopus database, which includes peer-reviewed and quality-controlled publications (Pelivan et al., 2026). Second, procedural reliability was established through the application of the PRISMA framework, which provides a transparent and replicable protocol for article selection (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021; S. Yoo, 2026). Third, methodological triangulation was applied by integrating thematic synthesis with bibliometric analysis, allowing findings to be examined from both interpretive and structural perspectives (Hassan Shah et al., 2022; Lim & Kumar, 2024; Marzi et al., 2025). Finally, transparency was maintained by clearly documenting the search strategy, inclusion criteria, and analytical procedures, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the study (Agrawal et al., 2024; Page, Moher, et al., 2021; Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021).

Generalizability

The findings of this study are analytically generalizable in terms of conceptual patterns and research trends rather than statistically generalizable. Because the dataset consists of Scopus-indexed publications, the results provide a reliable representation of dominant scholarly discourse on multicultural education in Indonesia (Rodiyana, 2024; Supriyadi et al., 2024). However, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of the selected dataset, as relevant locally published studies outside Scopus may not be fully represented.

Results

RQ1: How is multicultural education studied in this context of Indonesia?

The synthesis of the 46 analyzed articles indicates that multicultural education in Indonesia is not examined as a singular or homogeneous construct. Rather, it is conceptualized as a layered and relational phenomenon operating across multiple interconnected analytical levels. The literature predominantly situates multicultural education at the pedagogical level, framing it as a set of instructional practices designed to address the realities of ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity within Indonesia's plural society. At this level, research attention focuses on the integration of diversity-related values into curricula, the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies, and the role of educators in fostering tolerance and respect for difference (Bahtiar et al., 2024; Rachmadtullah et al., 2020; Raihani et al., 2025). Multicultural education is thus primarily constructed as a micro-level process embedded in classroom interactions and institutional policies, with a focus on shaping individual dispositions toward social plurality.

As the field has evolved, several studies have shifted from normative advocacy toward empirical measurement of multicultural competence. The development of instruments assessing

students' multicultural dispositions (Nurhayati et al., 2022) and research on intercultural sensitivity in higher education contexts (Yanto et al., 2022) reflect an emerging tendency to operationalize the concept into measurable indicators. Nevertheless, qualitative case-based and contextual explorations continue to dominate the field. Consequently, the relationship between educational practices and long-term social transformation remains underexplored, particularly through longitudinal or comparative quantitative approaches.

Beyond the pedagogical dimension, Indonesian research consistently interconnects multicultural education to religious moderation. Within Islamic schools, madrasas, and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), multicultural education is framed as an instructional strategy and as an ideological formation process that promotes balance, interfaith dialogue, and resistance to extremism (Burga & Damopolii, 2022; Fahmi et al., 2025; Murdiono, 2020; Saleh, 2025). In this regard, multicultural education operates through an ideological pathway that aligns values of diversity with principles of religious moderation. This characteristic distinguishes the Indonesian context from dominant Western frameworks, in which multicultural education is more frequently rooted in discourses of race, migration, and secular social justice.

At a broader societal level, many studies associate multicultural education with the strengthening of social cohesion and communal harmony. Research on revitalizing multicultural education in higher education institutions (FatmaWati et al., 2023) and analyzing positioning education as a strategy for ethnic conflict resolution (Ngwenya, 2024) illustrates expectations that multicultural education may reduce stereotyping, prevent conflict, and reinforce social solidarity. Badrun et al. (2024) further show that multicultural competence within Indonesia's multireligious society is relatively high and may be enhanced through formal education. However, much of the existing literature positions social cohesion more as a normative objective than as a systematically tested construct based on structural indicators or longitudinal data. The relationship between multicultural education and social cohesion is generally inferred from changes in individual attitudes rather than empirically measured at the macro-social level.

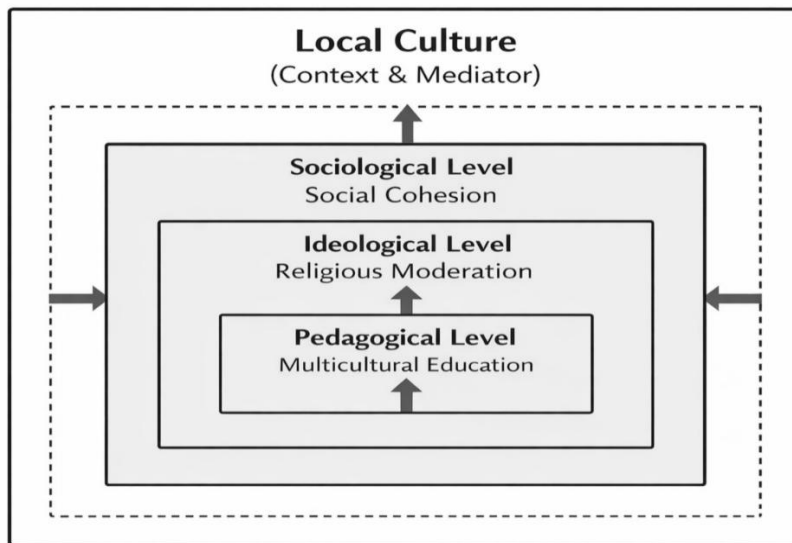
Local culture also emerges consistently as a normative framework shaping the implementation of multicultural education (Le, 2025). The integration of local languages, traditions, and community-based wisdom is viewed as enhancing the social legitimacy and contextual relevance of educational practices (Abdullah, 2024; Fahmi et al., 2025). However, in much of the existing literature, local culture remains treated primarily as contextual background rather than as a mediating variable explicitly examined in relation to how pedagogical practices connect to broader outcomes of social cohesion (Noman et al., 2026).

Overall, the thematic analysis reveals that multicultural education in Indonesia is constructed as a multilayered process that progresses from pedagogical practice to ideological value formation and is subsequently associated with the strengthening of social cohesion. However, the existing literature largely examines these dimensions separately or through normative claims, without developing an explicit relational model that systematically maps their interconnections (Torres & Tarozzi, 2020).

Based on the identified conceptual patterns, this study proposes a relational model that visualizes multicultural education as a layered process: at the pedagogical level, it is manifested through inclusive instructional practices; at the ideological level, it is manifested through the formation of religious moderation; and at the sociological level, it contributes to the reinforcement of social cohesion. These processes are rooted in the framework of local culture, which functions as both a contextual foundation and a mediating mechanism that shapes interactions across levels.

This conceptual model is presented in Figure 1 as an integrative representation of the thematic synthesis findings.

Figure 2
Conceptual Relational Model



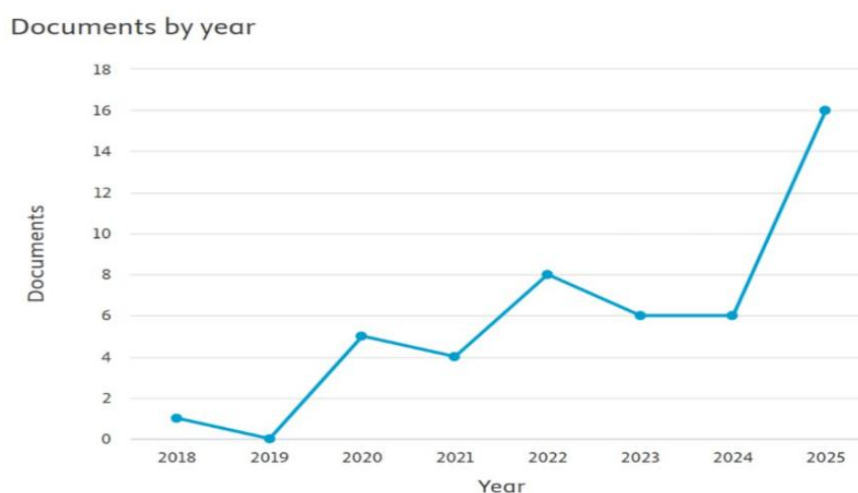
RQ2: How is recent research on multicultural education in Indonesia distributed?

To examine how multicultural education research has evolved within Indonesia's academic landscape, this analysis investigates the distribution of publications by year, institutional affiliation, journal sources, and author productivity. This multidimensional approach enables the identification of publication trends and the mapping of knowledge production patterns and the institutional structures that have shaped the field in recent years.

By analyzing these structural indicators, the study identifies concentrations of research activity, which institutions function as primary knowledge hubs, and how research dissemination occurs across indexed journals. This mapping provides insight into the dynamics of academic production and the degree to which multicultural education has been institutionalized as a research field within Indonesian higher education.

Within broader literature, multicultural education is frequently positioned as a response to challenges related to social integration, identity-based tensions, and the need to strengthen social cohesion in plural societies (Azhari et al., 2024). Examining its publication distribution, therefore, contributes to understanding not only research growth but also the structural consolidation of a field closely linked to ongoing socio-cultural transformation in Indonesia.

Figure 3
Publication Trends in Multicultural Education in Indonesia



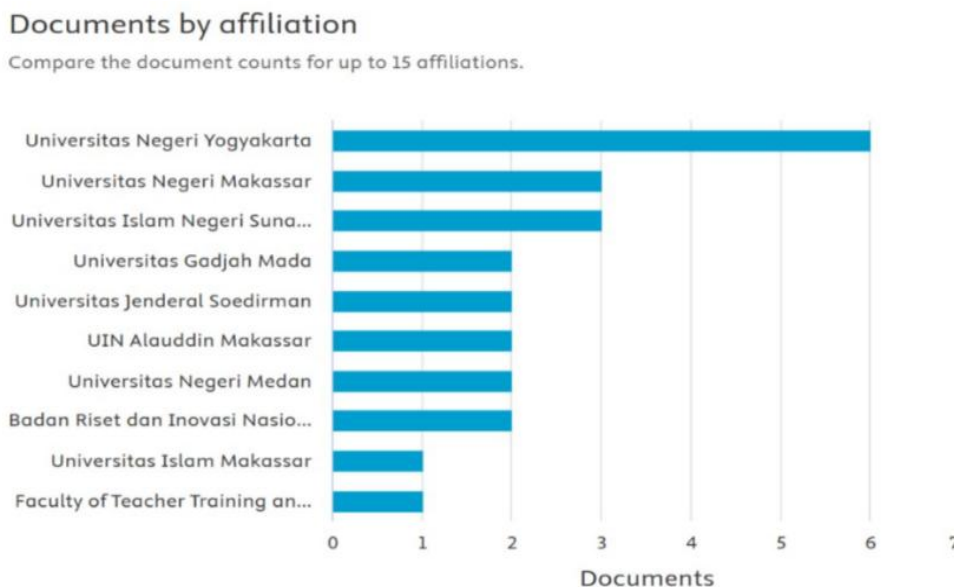
The annual publication distribution shown in Figure 3 indicates that research attention to multicultural education in Indonesia has increased over time, although the trend is not linear. Early publications in 2018, such as research by Nakaya (2018) on ethnic conflict in West Kalimantan, can be viewed as an initial phase that positioned multicultural education as a conceptual framework for addressing social tensions. Following this relatively modest initial phase, publication output increased between 2020 and 2022, reaching 8 articles in 2022. This period reflects a phase of consolidation, during which the topic gained greater stability and recognition within educational research.

The period from 2023 to 2024 reflects a relatively stable developmental pattern, followed by a marked increase in 2025, with 16 publications recorded. This significant rise signals an acceleration of research activity, potentially influenced by the cumulative development of prior research agendas, the strengthening of academic networks, and the growing prominence of diversity-related issues within national educational discourse. Thus, the trend illustrated in Figure 3 represents quantitative growth as well as the consolidation and subsequent acceleration of multicultural education as a distinct field of inquiry in Indonesia.

The institutional affiliation distribution presented in Figure 4 further indicates that research on multicultural education is unevenly distributed across Indonesian higher education institutions. Instead, research output is primarily concentrated within a limited number of state universities and Islamic higher education institutions. Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) emerges as the most prolific contributor, with six publications, followed by Universitas Negeri Makassar and UIN Sunan Kalijaga, each contributing three articles. Several other institutions, including Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, UIN Alauddin Makassar, Universitas Negeri Medan, and the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), each contributed two publications.

This concentration suggests the presence of institutional hubs that function as primary nodes of knowledge production within the field. It also reflects the prominent role of state and Islamic higher education institutions in shaping the academic discourse on multicultural education, indicating that the development of this field is closely linked to institutional and epistemic environments rather than being evenly institutionalized across the national higher education system.

Figure 4
Number of Articles by Institutional Affiliation



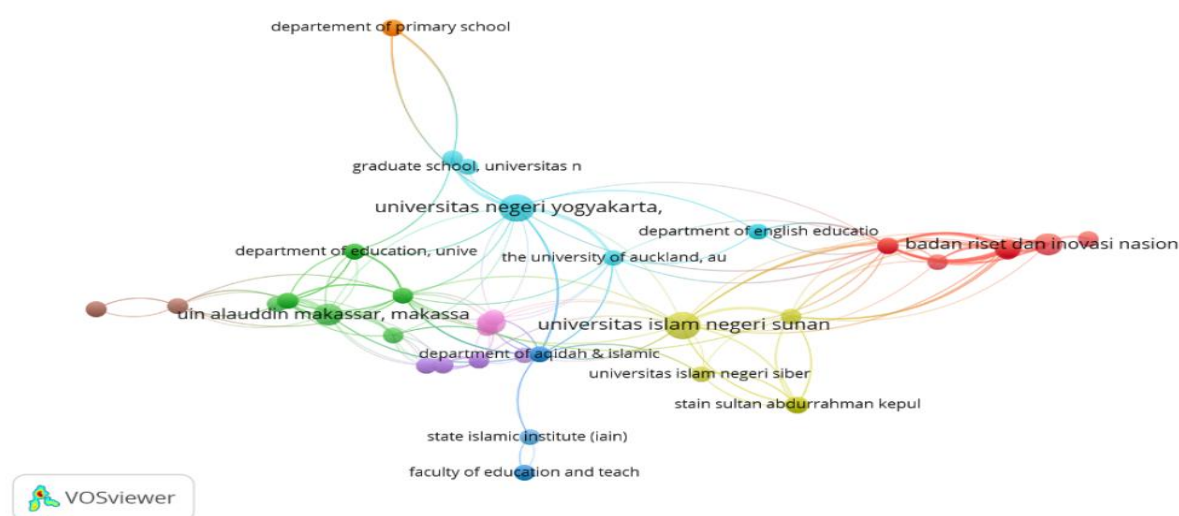
The predominance of state universities, particularly those with faculties of education and teacher training, indicates that multicultural education in Indonesia has primarily developed as a pedagogical reform agenda. These institutions hold formal academic mandates in curriculum development, teacher education, and instructional innovation, which explains their central role in structurally coherent knowledge production within this field. Their prominence suggests that multicultural education is largely framed as an educational strategy rooted in classroom practice and teacher professional development.

At the same time, the substantial contribution of Islamic state universities indicates that multicultural education in Indonesia is also advancing within the framework of religious moderation and Islamic education, rather than being limited to a general pedagogical approach. This pattern highlights the dual epistemic foundations shaping the field: pedagogical reform within state higher education institutions and the consolidation of moderation discourse within Islamic educational environments.

Collectively, this distribution reveals that two main directions shape the trajectory of multicultural education research in Indonesia: pedagogical transformation in public universities and the growth of moderation-oriented discourse in Islamic institutions. However, the concentration of publications within specific institutional clusters also suggests that intellectual production remains relatively centralized. This centralization presents an opportunity to expand cross-institutional collaboration and broader participation, thereby fostering a more geographically and institutionally diverse development of the field at the national level.

Network analysis presented in Figure 5 shows that multicultural education research in Indonesia is not only institutionally concentrated but also characterized by interconnected collaboration patterns. Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, and the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) emerge as central nodes within the network, indicating their strategic role both in terms of publication output and in facilitating academic connectivity. Their central positioning suggests that these institutions function as bridging hubs that shape both the research productivity and the relational structure of collaboration within the field.

Figure 5
Network Affiliation Visualization



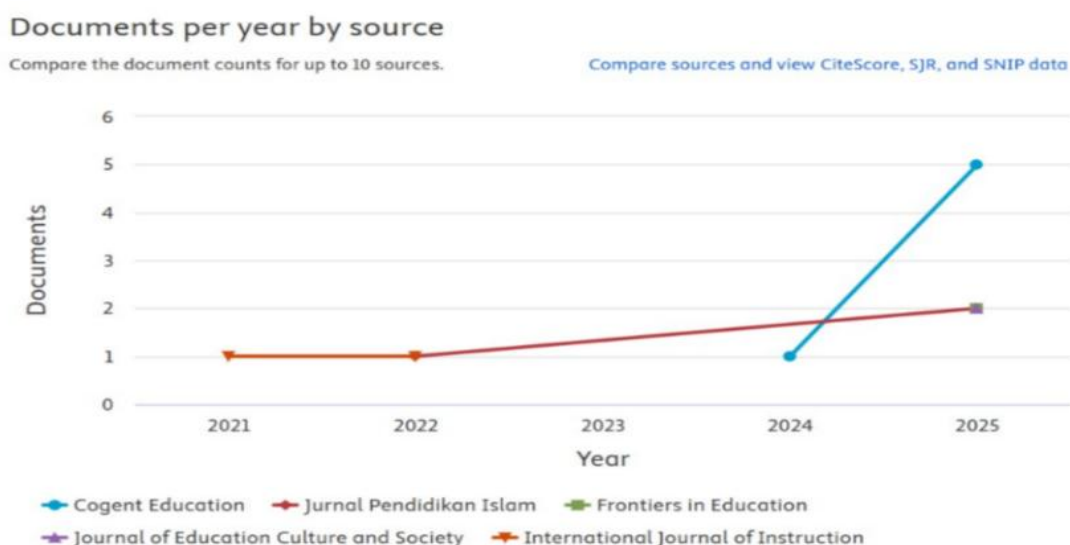
The network structure reveals two principal clusters: state universities with a predominantly pedagogical orientation and Islamic universities emphasizing religious moderation and Islamic education. The interconnections between these clusters indicate that

the development of multicultural education research occurs through cross-institutional interaction. However, research activity remains relatively concentrated within a limited number of academic hubs. This configuration indicates ongoing consolidation of the field while simultaneously highlighting the potential for broader, more evenly distributed national collaboration.

As illustrated in Figure 6, Cogent Education is the most prominent publication outlet, accounting for 6 of the 46 analyzed articles. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam contributes three articles, while Frontiers in Education, the International Journal of Instruction, and the Journal of Education Culture and Society each contribute two articles. Collectively, these five journals comprise 15 of the reviewed publications, representing a significant proportion of the total sample.

Figure 6

Number of Articles per Year by Journal Source

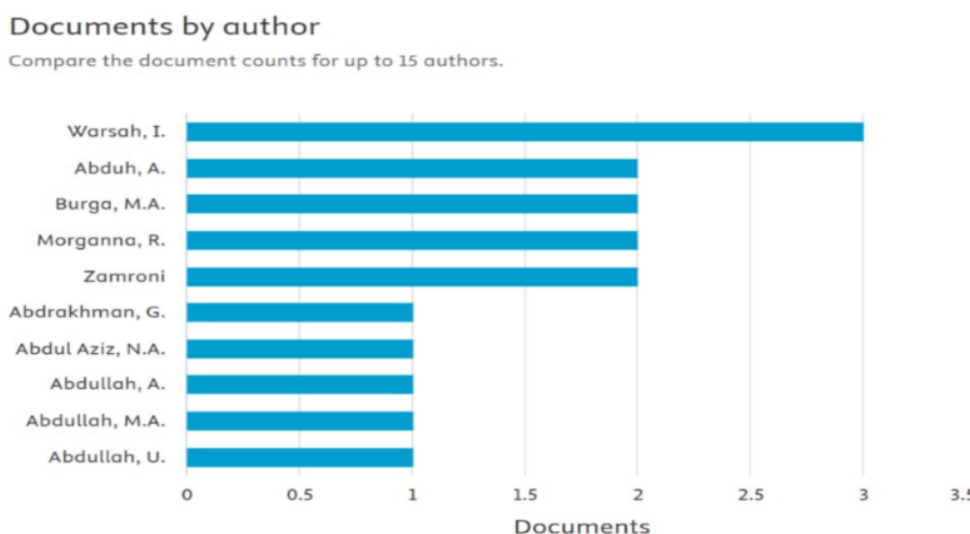


This distribution shows that 15 of the 46 articles analyzed are concentrated within five key journals. Cogent Education emerges as the most dominant outlet with six publications, followed by Jurnal Pendidikan Islam with three articles. Frontiers in Education, the International Journal of Instruction, and the Journal of Education Culture and Society each contribute two articles.

The prominence of Cogent Education can be associated with its broad disciplinary scope in educational research and its openness to contextually grounded studies from diverse national settings. The contributions of Jurnal Pendidikan Islam reflect the strong linkage between multicultural education and the discourse on religious moderation in Indonesia. At the same time, the presence of international journals such as Frontiers in Education and the International Journal of Instruction indicates that the topic is positioned within broader discussions of pedagogy and instructional innovation.

Regarding author productivity (Figure 7), the distribution remains relatively dispersed. Among the 46 articles analyzed, Warsah, I., is the most productive author, with three publications. Abduh, A.; Burga, M.A.; Morganna, R.; and Zamroni each contributed two articles. Other authors within the top ten, including Abdrakhman, G.; Abdul Aziz, N.A.; Abdullah, A.; Abdullah, M.A.; and Abdullah, U., each contributed one article.

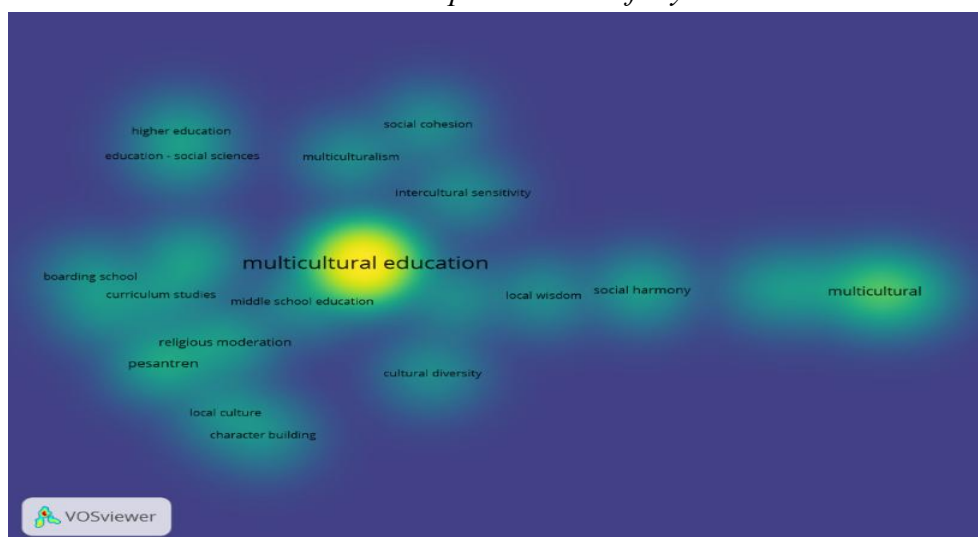
Figure 7
Number of Publications by Author (Top 10 Authors)



When compared to the total number of publications, the ten most productive authors contribute only a limited share of the articles that are being analyzed, while the remaining publications are produced by authors outside this group. This pattern indicates that research on multicultural education in Indonesia involves relatively broad participation, with contributions originating from diverse researchers and institutional backgrounds. Such a distribution suggests that the field remains in a growth phase, marked by dispersed research participation rather than dominance by a small group of authors.

The co-occurrence analysis conducted using VOSviewer provides insight into the conceptual structure underlying research on multicultural education in Indonesia. As shown in Figure 8, multicultural education is identified as the central node with the highest degree of connectivity, indicating its role as the main organizing concept within the term network. This centrality indicates that other key concepts are systematically linked to multicultural education, thereby reinforcing its role as the main conceptual reference that shapes the field's thematic configuration.

Figure 8
Co-occurrence Framework and Representation of key terms



Source: Output Nonviewer software

Table 1*Keywords Provided by Authors and Total Link Strength*

Rank	Keyword	Total Link Strength
1	Multicultural education	47
2	Islamic education	9
3	Religious moderation	8
4	Curriculum studies	7
5	<i>Pesantren</i>	6
6	Local culture	6
7	Middle school education	6
8	Boarding school	6
9	Multicultural	6
10	Social harmony	5

Table 1 indicates that, in addition to the primary term multicultural education (total link strength = 47), several other keywords show relatively strong connectivity within the network. The most prominent among these are Islamic education (9), religious moderation (8), and curriculum studies (7), which are highly interconnected. This pattern indicates that research on multicultural education in Indonesia is closely linked to Islamic education and curriculum development as central thematic domains.

Other terms, such as pesantren, local culture, middle school education, and boarding school, show similar levels of connectivity, indicating that institutional and cultural contexts play a significant role in the discourse. The presence of keywords such as social harmony and cultural diversity further demonstrates that literature extends beyond pedagogical practice to engage broader societal dimensions. However, compared to the stronger linkages associated with religious and curricular constructs, concepts related to local context and educational level appear more peripheral within the conceptual network.

Structurally, this mapping suggests that the development of multicultural education research in Indonesia is primarily shaped by the integration of Islamic education, religious moderation, and curriculum studies. These interconnected reinforce earlier findings that the field evolves at the intersection of pedagogical reform and religious discourse. At the same time, the relatively weaker positioning of several terms indicates the existence of conceptual spaces that remain insufficiently explored, thereby offering opportunities for further theoretical and empirical investigation in future research.

RQ3: From the perspective of educational reform in Indonesia, what are the theoretical and practical implications of these findings?

The comprehensive synthesis of the 46 analyzed articles indicates that the reform of multicultural education in Indonesia does not follow a single trajectory. Instead, it forms a layered configuration encompassing pedagogical transformation, the institutionalization of religious moderation, and contextual adaptation through local culture. These three dimensions appear consistently across the literature and are conceptually and practically interconnected.

At the theoretical level, literature indicates a clear shift from predominantly descriptive and normative approaches toward a more transformational paradigm. The revitalization of multicultural education in higher education is not framed simply as the promotion of diversity rhetoric, but as an effort to reconstruct students' social consciousness in more critical and reflective ways (FatmaWati et al., 2023). Similarly, multicultural education is seen as most effective when viewed as a process that fosters reflective attitudes, social empathy, and dialogue skills (Asrori et al., 2025; Raihani et al., 2025; Yani et al., 2025). Together, these developments

indicate that multicultural education in Indonesia is increasingly moving toward a socially critical character-formation approach, rather than remaining limited to the transmission of cognitive knowledge.

The religious dimension emerges as a distinctive feature within the Indonesian context. In Islamic educational settings, such as pesantren and madrasas, religious moderation is positioned as a pedagogical instrument for preventing extremism and strengthening social coexistence (Burga & Damopolii, 2022; Saleh, 2025). Furthermore, the integration of moderate Islamic values with local cultural frameworks expands the function of multicultural education into a mechanism for shaping balanced ideological orientations (Fahmi et al., 2025; Sopian et al., 2025). These findings imply that Indonesia's model of multicultural education is not purely secular; rather, it operates through the dialogical incorporation of moderated religious values within educational processes.

In addition, several studies emphasize the importance of local culture as a contextual variable influencing the effectiveness of reform initiatives. Approaches grounded in local wisdom are shown to enhance social legitimacy and community acceptance of multicultural education (Abdullah, 2024; Herlina et al., 2024; Muhajir et al., 2025; Sugiyanto et al., 2025). This pattern indicates that educational reform in Indonesia tends to be contextually adaptive rather than based on the direct transfer of global models. Theoretically, these findings support the view that multicultural education should be understood relationally, mediating between universal principles of diversity and locally embedded cultural structures.

At the practical level, literature consistently highlights that the success of reform depends on the capacity of educational actors. Teacher competence, including access to global academic literature and sustained professional development, is identified as central to consistent implementation (Diem & Abdullah, 2020; Rachmadtullah et al., 2020). Moreover, diversity values are recommended to be integrated across subjects and educational levels rather than being limited to specific subjects (Badrun et al., 2024; Bahtiar et al., 2024). These findings indicate that multicultural education reform requires a systemic approach encompassing curriculum design, teacher preparation, school culture, and institutional policy.

Several studies further position multicultural education as a strategic instrument for mitigating social conflict and strengthening cohesion in plural societies (Badrun et al., 2024; FatmaWati et al., 2023). However, such conclusions are generally based on changes in individual attitudes rather than on longitudinal assessments at the structural level. Consequently, reform implications extend beyond expanding programmatic implementation to include developing more rigorous evaluation designs capable of measuring long-term societal impact.

Overall, the findings indicate that multicultural education reform in Indonesia is conceptualized as a multilayered process integrating pedagogical transformation, the internalization of religious moderation, and culturally grounded adaptation. The literature does not point to a single reform model; instead, it shows that reform effectiveness arises from the interactions among pedagogical (micro-level), ideological (meso-level), and sociological (macro-level) dimensions within the national education system. Therefore, the theoretical and practical implications derived from this synthesis are grounded in empirically observable patterns across the research landscape, rather than resting solely on normative claims.

Discussion

This study identifies several significant findings that advance the understanding of multicultural education in Indonesia. First, multicultural education is conceptualized not as a singular pedagogical approach but as a layered and relational process involving pedagogical practices, religious moderation, and local cultural frameworks. Second, the bibliometric analysis reveals that research in this field is increasingly institutionalized but remains

concentrated within specific academic hubs, particularly teacher education institutions and Islamic universities. Third, the findings highlight a persistent gap between normative claims of social cohesion and the limited empirical measurement of its macro-level outcomes.

This study shows that multicultural education in Indonesia has evolved into a more complex configuration than the singular pedagogical models frequently referenced in mainstream literature. While in North American and European contexts multicultural education is commonly framed as a response to migration, racialization, and structural inequality (Banks, 2021; Osler, 2020; Torres & Tarozzi, 2020), in Indonesia, it evolves through the intersection of pedagogy, religious moderation, and local cultural articulation (Fathurrochman et al., 2025; Karwadi et al., 2025; Ramli et al., 2025; Bruijnzeel et al., 2022). The synthesis of 46 articles reveals that these three dimensions do not operate independently but instead interact closely and shape one another within a layered relational structure.

These findings contribute to the current empirical understanding presented in the literature review by demonstrating that multicultural education in Indonesia cannot be adequately explained using dominant Western frameworks alone. Previous studies have emphasized fragmented dimensions—such as pedagogy, curriculum, or cultural values—without integrating them into a coherent analytical model (Jayadi et al., 2022; Ramli et al., 2025; Saleh et al., 2025). This study extends that body of knowledge by empirically demonstrating the interconnections among pedagogical, ideological, and sociological dimensions, thereby offering a more comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of the field. This perspective is supported by recent scholarship that conceptualizes multicultural education as a complex and multidimensional process rather than a singular instructional approach (Morady Moghaddam et al., 2026). Recent studies emphasize the interconnected roles of culturally responsive pedagogy, social justice orientations, and institutional contexts in shaping educational practices and outcomes (Sant et al., 2026; Sun, 2026; Vu, 2024). Together, these insights highlight the importance of moving beyond fragmented approaches toward more integrated and context-sensitive analytical frameworks in the study of multicultural education (Macpherson, 2025; Morady Moghaddam et al., 2026).

This conceptual configuration is also reflected in the bibliometric patterns identified under RQ2. The increase in publications over recent years indicates the consolidation of multicultural education as an increasingly institutionalized research agenda in Indonesia (Bahri et al., 2025; Mulyana, 2023; Nuryadi & Suharno, 2020). However, the concentration of studies within teacher education institutions and Islamic universities indicates that the development of this field is shaped by specific institutional settings. From a sociology of knowledge perspective, institutional structures play a decisive role in directing epistemic orientations within academic fields (Kahl, 2025; Bucur & Daskalova, 2020). Viewed through the lens of knowledge geopolitics, this pattern illustrates how knowledge production in the Global South does not simply reproduce theoretical frameworks originating from dominant academic centers (Pesonen, 2024; R'boul, 2022). Instead, it repositions itself through the articulation of locally salient issues, such as religious moderation and cultural embeddedness (Burga & Damopolii, 2022; Kenter et al., 2019). Unlike Western academic research, which often emphasizes racialization, migration, and structural critiques (Banks, 2021; Tazzioli, 2021), the Indonesian discourse develops through the relational interactions among pedagogy, religiosity, and cultural context. Thus, the distribution of research reflects not only quantitative growth but also the epistemic positioning of Indonesian multicultural education within the global knowledge landscape.

At the pedagogical level, multicultural education in Indonesia aligns with several characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and inclusive education frameworks widely discussed in global academic research (Ahmad et al., 2025; Triyanto, 2026). Curriculum integration, dialogical learning practices, and the strengthening of intercultural competence emerge as dominant themes in the analyzed studies. However, unlike Western contexts that

often emphasize social justice and structural critique (Banks, 2021), Indonesian literature tends to position multicultural education as an instrument for fostering harmony and social stability (Badrun et al., 2024; Jayadi et al., 2022; Mariyono, 2024). This tendency indicates that multicultural education operates within a normative orientation emphasizing cohesion and integration rather than explicit structural contestation.

A second dimension that consistently emerges is religious moderation (Bahri et al., 2025; Muis, 2025; Nurhayati et al., 2025; Can & Soylu, 2025). Both thematic synthesis and co-occurrence mapping indicate strong linkages between multicultural education, Islamic education, and religious moderation. In international discussions, the relationship between religious education and multicultural education remains debated, particularly issues of secularism and pluralism (Johannessen & Skeie, 2019). In Indonesia, however, religious education serves as a primary medium for articulating multicultural values (Rahmawati et al., 2024). This articulation reflects the character of Indonesian society, which is religiously plural but does not adhere to a strict separation between religion and the public sphere. Consequently, multicultural education does not develop outside a religious framework but through the dialogical internalization of moderated religious values within the education system (Abdul-Jabbar, 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2024).

These findings indicate that religious moderation functions as an ideological mediator linking pedagogical practices to broader social objectives. Theoretically, this expands existing understandings of how religious values can contribute to the cultivation of tolerant and dialogical dispositions. Comparative research explains that interfaith-oriented religious education can reinforce inclusivity (Arain & Barzegar, 2022); however, it may also foster exclusivism if not accompanied by critical reflection (Gearon, 2023). In the Indonesian studies reviewed, the dominant tendency frames religious education as a vehicle for deradicalization and social harmony, although robust longitudinal evidence regarding its long-term societal impact remains limited (Effendy et al., 2025).

Beyond the pedagogical and ideological dimensions, local culture emerges as a contextual framework that shapes implementation. The integration of local values into curricula and instructional practices indicates that multicultural education is not understood as a universally transferable model applied uniformly across contexts. In global literature, contextual adaptation is often discussed through the concept of educational glocalization, the localization of global principles within specific cultural settings (Giuliani et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2024; Song & Sercu, 2025). In Indonesia, local culture functions not merely as background but as a source of social legitimacy, facilitating acceptance of multicultural education. This suggests that implementation effectiveness depends significantly on alignment with community values and traditions.

Nevertheless, the analysis also reveals a sociological gap. Social cohesion is frequently invoked as the ultimate objective of multicultural education. Yet relatively few studies directly measure its macro-level social effects. International academic research conceptualizes social cohesion as a multidimensional construct encompassing trust, participation, and structural equity (Aruqaj, 2023). Compared to these approaches, Indonesian research remains largely oriented toward normative assumptions that multicultural education contributes to social harmony, without sufficient cross-regional or longitudinal empirical investigation. This indicates that the relationship between education and broader social integration requires further methodological deepening.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis is based exclusively on Scopus-indexed and open-access publications, which may not fully represent the entire body of research on multicultural education in Indonesia. In addition, the reliance on bibliometric data and qualitative synthesis limits the ability to assess causal relationships or long-term societal impacts.

Based on these limitations, future research should prioritize several directions. First, longitudinal and comparative studies are needed to examine the long-term impact of multicultural education on social cohesion at the macro level. Second, more interdisciplinary approaches integrating sociology, political science, and public policy are necessary to expand the analytical scope of the field. Third, future studies should explore underrepresented regions and institutions to reduce the current concentration of knowledge production. Finally, the development of more robust measurement instruments is essential to move beyond normative claims toward empirically grounded evaluations.

Overall, this synthesis suggests that multicultural education in Indonesia can be conceptualized as a layered process: pedagogical practices shape value orientations; value orientations interact with religious and cultural contexts; and these interactions are expected to contribute to broader social dynamics. This relationship is neither linear nor automatic but unfolds within institutional and discursive networks. When read interactively, multicultural education in Indonesia emerges as a relational phenomenon reflecting the characteristics of a society that is both religiously plural and culturally diverse.

Conclusion

This study systematically examined the development of multicultural education in Indonesia by integrating a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. As outlined in the introduction, this study aimed to address the fragmented nature of existing research by providing a more integrative and context-sensitive understanding of how multicultural education is conceptualized, distributed, and developed in Indonesia. The findings confirm that multicultural education in Indonesia does not evolve as a singular pedagogical model; rather, it operates as a relational configuration that integrates instructional practices, religious moderation, and local cultural articulation within an interconnected structure.

The results of this study highlight three central findings. First, multicultural education is predominantly constructed at the pedagogical level, with a focus on curriculum integration and inclusive teaching practices. Second, it is strongly interconnected with the discourse of religious moderation, particularly within Islamic educational institutions, positioning education as a medium for ideological formation. Third, it is normatively linked to broader sociological goals, such as social cohesion, although this relationship remains insufficiently supported by empirical and longitudinal evidence. These findings demonstrate that multicultural education in Indonesia develops across multiple analytical levels that are dynamic, interrelated, and contextually mediated.

Conceptually, this study clarifies the distinction between pedagogical, ideological, and sociological levels in the analysis of multicultural education, demonstrating that the relationships among these levels are not linear but relational. By proposing a multilayered relational model, this study extends existing theoretical discussions by integrating these dimensions into a unified analytical framework, thereby addressing the lack of conceptual integration identified in previous studies.

Bibliometric findings further reveal significant growth in knowledge production; however, research output remains concentrated within teacher education institutions and Islamic universities. This pattern indicates that the development of multicultural education in Indonesia is shaped not only by educational needs but also by institutional and epistemic structures that influence research agendas and knowledge production. Thus, this study not only maps research trends but also provides insight into how the field is institutionally and intellectually structured. Importantly, the findings reinforce the argument that multicultural education in Indonesia represents a contextually grounded model that differs from dominant Western paradigms. Rather than being primarily driven by issues of race and migration, it is shaped by the interaction between education, religion, and local culture. This highlights the

need to move beyond universalist assumptions and to develop more context-sensitive frameworks in multicultural education research.

Overall, this study demonstrates that understanding multicultural education in Indonesia requires a relational and multi-level perspective that captures the interactions among pedagogical practices, ideological orientations, and socio-cultural contexts. By bridging fragmented empirical findings and providing an integrative analytical framework, this study contributes to strengthening both the conceptual clarity and empirical grounding of the field. Future research is therefore needed to further develop longitudinal, comparative, and interdisciplinary approaches to better understand the long-term societal impact of multicultural education.

Implications

The findings of this study offer several important implications for theory, practice, policy, and global scholarship on multicultural education. Taken together, these findings indicate that approaches to multicultural education cannot be treated as universally transferable models but must be carefully adapted to the specific social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which they are implemented. In the Indonesian case, educational practices are shaped by the interaction among formal schooling, value systems, and community-based traditions, suggesting that effective educational reform depends on alignment with broader societal structures rather than on classroom-level interventions alone.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to expanding existing understandings of multicultural education by demonstrating that it can function beyond dominant secular and structural paradigms. Rather than being limited to issues of race and migration, the findings suggest that multicultural education may also operate through value formation processes that support social cohesion in plural societies. This highlights the need to reconsider how key concepts in multicultural education are defined and applied across different cultural settings. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that improving multicultural education requires more than simply including diversity-related content. Greater emphasis should be placed on developing students' capacity for dialogue, critical reflection, and intercultural understanding. In addition, the role of teachers is particularly important, indicating the need for sustained professional development and stronger institutional support systems.

From a policy perspective, the study underscores the importance of translating broad educational initiatives into concrete and implementable strategies. Policies related to diversity and inclusion should be supported by clear guidelines, adequate resource allocation, and effective institutional coordination. Furthermore, the uneven distribution of research activity suggests the need to promote wider participation across regions and institutions to support more balanced knowledge development.

From a global perspective, this study offers insights that are relevant to international audiences. For scholars and practitioners in contexts such as the United States, Australia, and Europe, the findings suggest that models of multicultural education should not be applied uniformly across different societies. Instead, they should be adapted to reflect local priorities, belief systems, and social dynamics. In this regard, the Indonesian case illustrates how alternative approaches can emerge from non-Western contexts, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive understanding of multicultural education at the global level.

Author Contributions

All authors made substantial contributions to the development of this study. Andang, Anwar Sadat, and Sapiruddin contributed to the conceptualization and methodological design of the research. Agustinasari, Ferdiansyah, and Ahmad Abdan Syakur were responsible for

literature screening, data extraction, and bibliometric analysis. I Putu Eka Sudarsana and Maria Desidaria Noge contributed to the theoretical development, validation processes, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors participated in drafting and revising the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly accessible Scopus-indexed publications identified through the systematic search strategy described in the methodology section, and the extracted bibliometric data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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