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Models of Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology: The Reconstructive Findings from Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the ideology of multiculturalism in school management by reconstructing practices from three distinct educational institutions in Malang, Indonesia. These schools, with diverse approaches to applying multicultural principles, serve as case studies to explore how multiculturalism can be holistically integrated into school management, curriculum, and culture. SNL Public School merges military and civilian education to create a multicultural learning environment; SP Private School fosters inclusivity and social entrepreneurship for marginalized students; and TIB Islamic School blends Islamic values with multicultural principles to encourage religious and cultural harmony. Using a qualitative multiple-case study approach, data were gathered through observations, interviews, and document analysis. The findings reveal that although the implementation of multiculturalism differs based on institutional contexts, all schools emphasize inclusivity, leadership, and respect for diversity. This research contributes to the development of theory on multicultural education and provides practical insights for schools seeking to adopt a multicultural-based ideology in Indonesia's diverse educational landscape.

Keywords

Indonesia, multiculturalism, school ideology

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Modelos de Ideología Escolar Basados en el Multiculturalismo: Las Conclusiones Reconstructivas de Indonesia

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Resumen

Este estudio examina la ideología del multiculturalismo en la gestión escolar reconstruyendo las prácticas de tres instituciones educativas distintas de Malang (Indonesia). Estas escuelas, con diversos enfoques a la hora de aplicar los principios multiculturales, sirven como estudios de caso para explorar cómo el multiculturalismo puede integrarse holísticamente en la gestión escolar, el currículo y la cultura. La escuela pública SNL fusiona la educación militar y la civil para crear un entorno de aprendizaje multicultural; la escuela privada SP fomenta la inclusión y el emprendimiento social de los estudiantes marginados; y la escuela islámica TIB combina los valores islámicos con los principios multiculturales para fomentar la armonía religiosa y cultural. Utilizando un enfoque cualitativo de estudio de casos múltiples, los datos se recopilaban mediante observaciones, entrevistas y análisis de documentos. Los resultados revelan que, aunque la aplicación del multiculturalismo difiere en función de los contextos institucionales, todas las escuelas hacen hincapié en la inclusión, el liderazgo y el respeto a la diversidad. Esta investigación contribuye al desarrollo de la teoría sobre la educación multicultural y proporciona ideas prácticas para las escuelas que tratan de adoptar una ideología basada en la multiculturalidad en el diverso panorama educativo de Indonesia.

Palabras clave

Indonesia, multiculturalismo, ideología escolar

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The literature on multicultural education emphasizes the importance of diversity-responsive education in fostering inclusivity, social justice, and intercultural understanding. This study synthesizes key theories, such as Banks' Multicultural Education Model, to analyze and propose strategies for effective implementation in schools (Caingcoy, 2023; Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero, 2021; Pérez-Jorge et al., 2023; Shaeffer, 2019). However, there is a significant theoretical gap in the application of multiculturalism principles in school management. This study addresses this gap by proposing a comprehensive model for integrating multiculturalism principles into school policies, curriculum, and cultural practices, aiming to create inclusive and harmonious educational environments. Most studies focus only on aspects of multicultural education in the classroom, without deeply exploring how these values can be applied across the entire school management system (Bennet, 1990; Bennett, 2001; Vavrus, 2006). For instance, the Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education edited by Banks & Banks (2004), though comprehensive, remains partial as it emphasizes curriculum and teacher training aspects more than the holistic implementation of multiculturalism.

Research in Indonesia also reveals a similar gap. Existing studies tend to focus on issues of students' multicultural attitudes (Demirdağ & Ünlü-Kaynakçi, 2019), without exploring how multiculturalism can be optimized to support education more broadly. Raihani (2016a; 2016b), for example, shows that the rights of minority religious groups are often not fulfilled, indicating a gap in the implementation of multiculturalism at the institutional level. Moreover, some studies suggest that Indonesian schools need to adopt a more inclusive multiculturalistic model in religious education to promote acceptance and respect for religious differences, while other studies highlight existing efforts and challenges in integrating multiculturalism and managing diversity (Halidin et al., 2022; Asrori, 2016; Gunawan & Jaya, 2023; Harjatanaya & Hoon, 2020; Levinson, 2007; Nurlaelah et al., 2023; Thahir, 2023).

In the context of Indonesia, strengthening the ideology of multiculturalism-based schools is becoming increasingly important given the potential social conflicts that exist. Pancasila, as the national ideology, provides a robust foundation for applying multicultural values in education. This study explores how Pancasila's principles of unity in diversity can enhance multiculturalism by guiding policies, fostering respect for cultural differences, and promoting inclusive practices in schools (B. Hasan & Mursalin, 2011; Rini et al., 2020; Zamzani, 2014). Thus, efforts to implement an education model that emphasizes the values of Pancasila and multiculturalism must be done holistically, involving all stakeholders, including the government, educators, and the community, in order to create a generation that appreciates diversity and is able to coexist in harmony.

The ideology of multiculturalism-based schools is a concept that emphasizes the importance of acceptance and respect for diversity as the basis for managing and developing schools. Some studies suggest Indonesian schools promote multicultural education and harmony, while other studies indicate challenges in maintaining pluralism and integrating multiculturalism effectively (Budirahayu & Saud, 2021; Maulidiah et al., 2023; Noor et al., 2021; Nurlaelah et al., 2023; Thahir, 2023). This ideology is not only related to the implementation of multicultural education in the classroom but also encompasses all aspects of school management, including policies, curriculum, school culture, and interactions among school members (Matas & Bridges, 2008; 2009; Rosado, 1997; 2006). This ideology requires schools

to actively play a role in shaping students' characters to not only understand but also appreciate the differences around them.

To address these challenges, this research focuses on three schools in Malang Raya that have unique approaches to applying the ideology of multiculturalism-based schools: SNL Public School, SP Private School, and TIB Islamic School. "SNL Public School is a cadet school that integrates the national curriculum with a national defense and maritime curriculum, creating a multicultural learning environment through a combination of civilian and military education. The school reflects maritime multiculturalism not only in its curriculum but also in its extracurricular activities. Activities such as naval drills, maritime scouting, and leadership training emphasize discipline, teamwork, and respect for cultural diversity, aligning with multicultural values. On the other hand, SP Private School was established with a social mission to provide quality education for children from marginalized backgrounds, emphasizing inclusivity and tolerance in every aspect of its management (Ferdian & Putra, 2013). Meanwhile, TIB, as an Islamic school, emphasizes a holistic and balanced educational concept, focusing on the development of students from various socio-cultural backgrounds.

Each of these three schools presents a model of a multiculturalism-based school ideology that, although different, is equally committed to multicultural values. SNL Public School, for instance, combines military education with multicultural values reflected in its curriculum, which is rich in national defense and maritime content. SP Private School creates a truly inclusive learning environment where all students, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds, are given equal opportunities to grow. TIB Islamic School emphasizes the importance of inclusive Islamic education, where students are taught to respect differences and live in harmony with others.

This research aims to reconstruct the ideology of multiculturalism-based schools from the three research sites or loci. By strengthening the focus on the ideology of multiculturalism-based schools, this research not only contributes to the development of theory in multicultural education but also provides practical guidance for schools in Indonesia to implement school management that is responsive to the socio-cultural diversity that exists.

Through this research, it is expected that a model of multiculturalism-based school ideology can be found that is not only effective in managing diversity but can also be widely applied in various schools with different contexts. This research is expected to fill the existing gap in the literature and practice of multicultural education and significantly contribute to the development of inclusive and equitable education in Indonesia.

Method

Research Design

This research employs a qualitative approach using a multiple-case study design, adopted from Robert K. Yin. The focus is on reconstructing the ideology of multiculturalism-based schools from three selected schools in Malang City: SNL Public School, SP Private School, and TIB Islamic School. The qualitative approach was chosen to deeply understand the natural

phenomena within each school, while the multiple-case study design allows for a comprehensive analysis of the similarities and differences across these cases.

Informant and Data Collection Technique

The study aims to explore and reconstruct the ideology of multiculturalism-based schools through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The research locations include these three formal schools, each offering unique practices in implementing multiculturalism. Ethical protocols included obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality, and adhering to ethical guidelines when working with marginalized students. Researchers were trained to maintain cultural sensitivity and minimize any potential risks during data collection. Data collection involved purposive sampling, with snowball sampling employed to extend the range of informants. Key informants include school principals, vice principals, teachers, staff, and students.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using an interactive model, involving data collection, condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions. Single-Case Analysis was conducted for each school, involving steps such as data presentation, data condensation, and drawing preliminary conclusions. This process helped to develop an initial understanding of the specific multicultural practices and ideologies within each school. "Cross-Case Analysis was performed using the constant comparative method, involving systematic comparison of data to identify patterns. Categories were derived through iterative coding, ensuring theoretical saturation, and verified through triangulation of interview, observation, and document analysis data. The process included: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties to form simple theories (minor propositions), (3) delimiting the scope of these theories to generalize them into more comprehensive theoretical constructs, and (4) developing substantive theories by synthesizing these generalized categories. Validity and reliability were ensured through methodological triangulation, combining interviews, observations, and document analysis. Peer debriefing and member checks were also conducted to confirm findings and reduce potential researcher bias. The results are expected to reconstruct a relevant and applicable multiculturalism-based school ideology for broader educational contexts in Indonesia.

Results

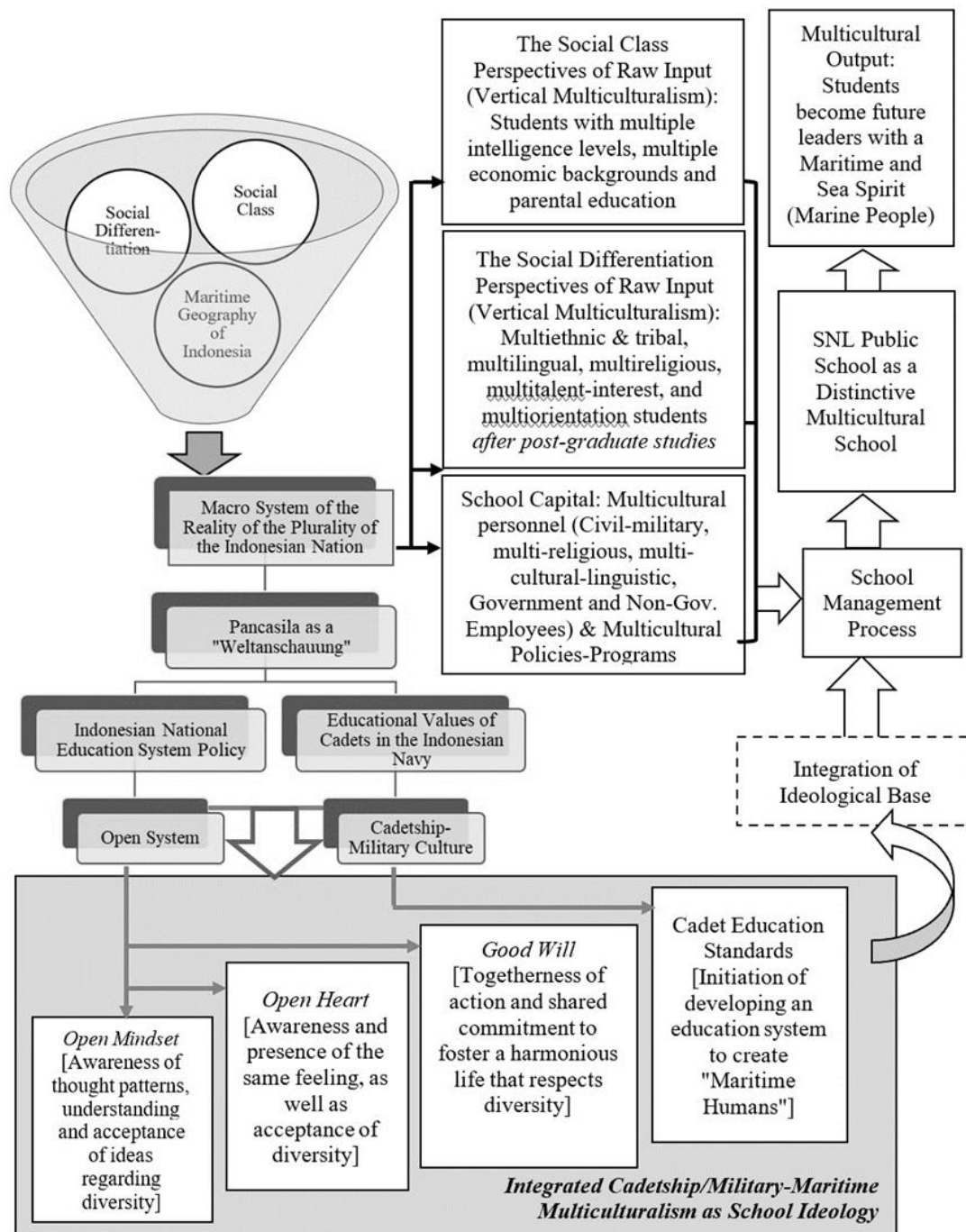
The research findings reveal that the ideology of multiculturalism in schools is shaped by a combination of historical development, institutional partnerships, and the educational vision of each school. The study focused on three schools—SNL Public School, SP Private School, and TIB Islamic School—each demonstrating a unique approach to integrating multiculturalism into their educational framework.

Ideological Model Findings in Case 1: Integrated Cadetship/Military-Maritime Multiculturalism

SNL Public School multicultural ideology is deeply rooted in its history and the evolution of its institutional identity. Initially, the school was part of SMA Negeri 10 Kota Malang, benefiting from a partnership with Sampoerna Academy, which emphasized an open system and leadership training. This foundation introduced students to a multicultural environment where diversity was valued and integrated into the school's daily practices. The partnership with the TNI AL (Indonesian Navy) further enriched this multicultural foundation by incorporating maritime and military values, which contributed to the school's unique identity.

The transition to becoming SNL Public School involved the deliberate integration of these civilian and military cultures, creating what can be described as an "open system with a cadet culture." This ideology was not only conceptual but also operational, as it influenced the design and implementation of the school's curriculum. The curriculum was structured to include national defense education, maritime studies, and character development programs, all aimed at fostering leadership qualities in students with a strong sense of national and maritime identity.

Furthermore, the school's recruitment and admission processes reflect its commitment to multiculturalism. Students are selected from various regions across Indonesia, ensuring a diverse student body in terms of ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomic background. This diversity is also mirrored in the teaching staff and the extracurricular activities offered, which are designed to promote inclusivity and a deeper understanding of Indonesia's diverse cultures (see Figure 1 for organizational structure).

Figure 1*Framework of Integrated Cadetship/Maritime Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology*

Ideological Model Findings in Case 2: Inclusive Social Entrepreneurship Multiculturalism

SP Private School embodies an inclusive approach to multiculturalism, rooted in its mission to provide education to underprivileged youth from diverse backgrounds. The school's ideology centers on inclusivity, tolerance, and social entrepreneurship, with a strong focus on creating

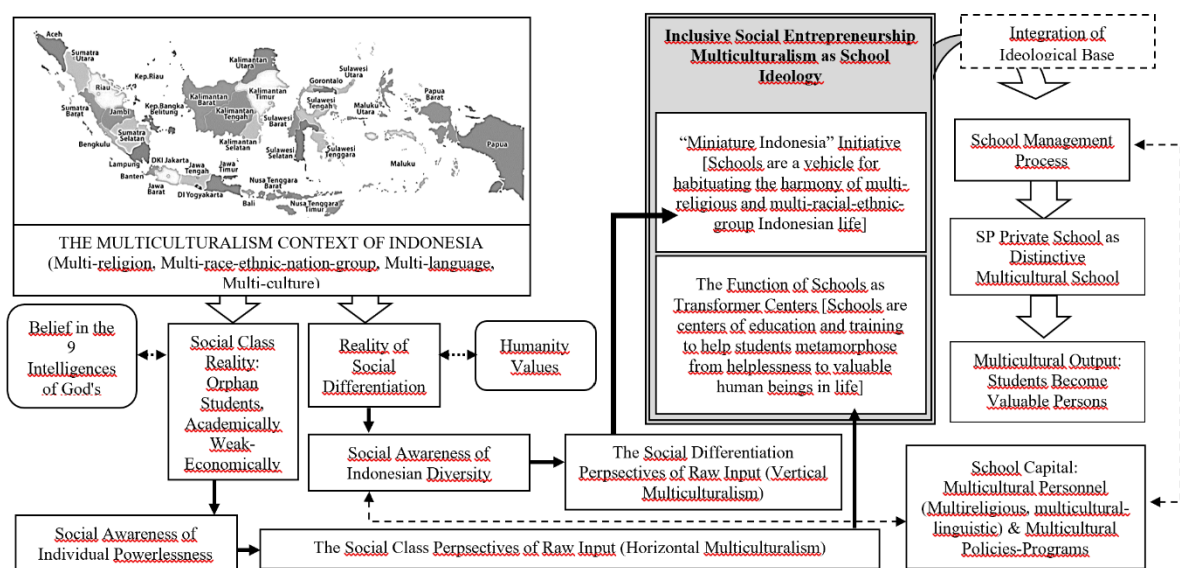
opportunities for students from marginalized communities. This approach to education is reflected in the school's admissions policy, which actively seeks to enroll students from different ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, promoting a truly multicultural environment.

The curriculum at SP Private School is designed to foster leadership and social responsibility among students. Programs are tailored to encourage students to understand and appreciate diversity, not only within their school but also in the broader societal context. The school emphasizes experiential learning, where students engage in real-world projects that promote social entrepreneurship and community service. These activities are integral to the school's mission of developing socially responsible leaders who are equipped to address the challenges of a diverse society.

Additionally, SP Private School's extracurricular activities further support its multicultural ideology. Through various clubs, events, and community outreach programs, students are exposed to different cultures and perspectives, which enhances their understanding and appreciation of diversity. This holistic approach to education ensures that students graduate with a strong sense of social responsibility and the skills necessary to contribute positively to a multicultural society (see Figure 2 for student demographics).

Figure 2

Framework of Inclusive Social Entrepreneurship Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology



Ideological Model Findings in Case 3: Islamic Multiculturalism

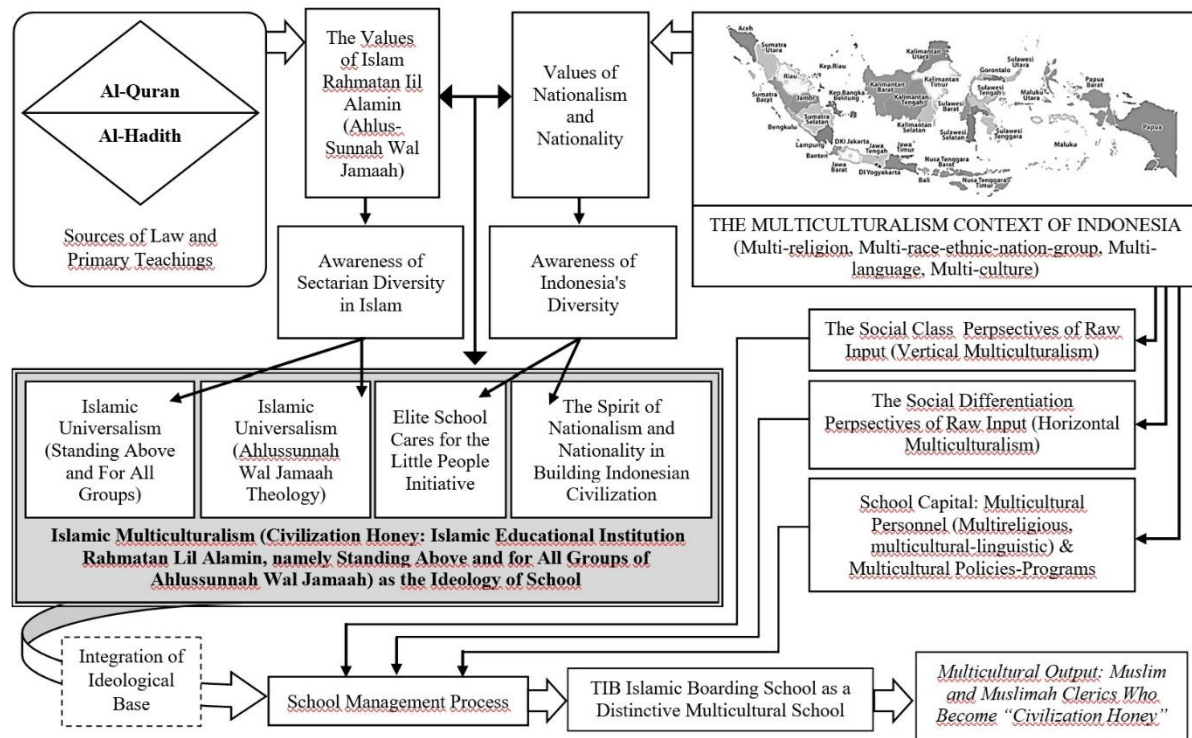
TIB Islamic School integrates Islamic values with multicultural principles, fostering an educational environment that promotes both religious and cultural inclusivity. The school's ideology, termed "Islamic multiculturalism," encourages students to embrace cultural differences while maintaining a strong foundation in Islamic teachings. This approach is evident in the school's curriculum, which includes a blend of religious studies, global perspectives, and cultural exchange programs.

The educational practices at TIB Islamic School are designed to produce students who are not only devout Muslims but also globally aware citizens. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting other cultures, within the framework of Islamic values. This is achieved through a combination of classroom instruction, cultural exchange programs, and extracurricular activities that provide students with opportunities to interact with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

TIB Islamic School also places a strong emphasis on character education, where students are taught to embody the values of respect, tolerance, and empathy in their daily lives. This is reinforced through the school's boarding environment, where students from diverse backgrounds live and learn together, fostering a deep sense of community and mutual respect. The school's commitment to Islamic multiculturalism is reflected in its comprehensive approach to education, which prepares students to navigate and contribute to a diverse world (see Figure 3 for cultural exchange programs).

Figure 3

Framework of Islamic Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology



Cross-Case Findings: “Comprehensive Multicultural Integration” as Model Construction of Multiculturalism-based School Ideology

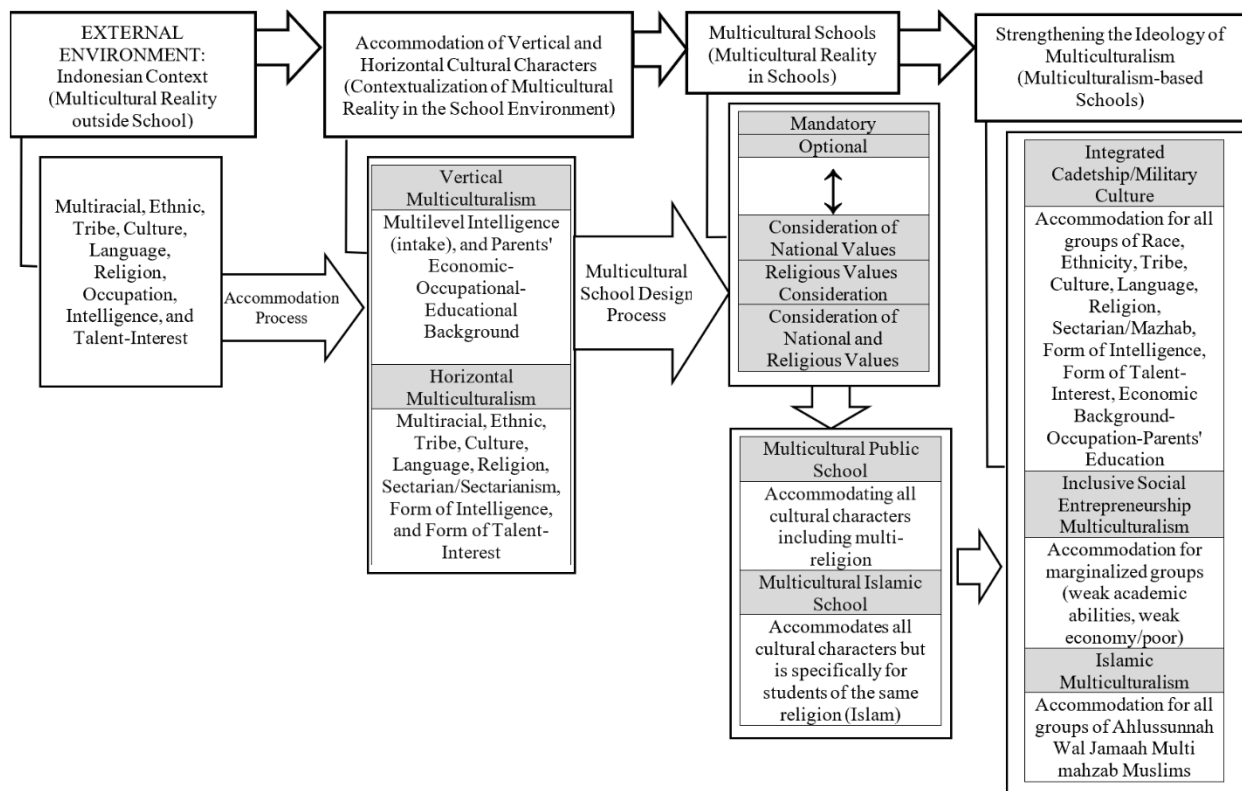
The cross-case analysis reveals several commonalities and differences in how these schools implement and operate their multicultural ideologies. A common theme across all three schools is the emphasis on leadership and inclusivity, which are central to their educational missions. However, the specific methods of implementation vary based on each school's unique context.

For example, SNL Public School blends civilian and military cultures to create a unique educational environment, while SPI focuses on social entrepreneurship and inclusivity, particularly for students from marginalized communities. TIB Islamic School, on the other hand, integrates Islamic teachings with a global outlook, promoting cultural understanding within a religious framework.

These differences highlight the adaptability of multicultural education to different contexts. The synthesis of these cases suggests that while the core principles of multiculturalism—such as respect for diversity and inclusivity—remain consistent, the implementation strategies must be tailored to fit the specific needs and characteristics of each school. This adaptability is crucial for the successful application of multicultural education in diverse educational settings (see Table 4 for cross-case comparison and Figure 4 for the synthesis model).

Figure 4

Framework of Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology in Indonesia



Discussion

The multicultural ideology implemented at SNL Public School shows that cultural, religious and ethnic diversity are valued and integrated into daily school activities. This finding is in line with the literature that emphasizes that schools as open systems act as a mirror of the wider society, where social and political interactions influence students' character development (Arifin & Ubaiddillah, 2017; Banks, 2006; 2009a; 2010; Pérez-Jorge et al., 2023; Sonhadji, 2015). By combining national defense and maritime curricula, SNL Public School succeeds in creating an inclusive learning environment that reflects the spirit of diversity and equality.

In addition, the admission policy of students from different regions of Indonesia demonstrates the school's commitment to diversity, similar to the principles of pluralism and social justice suggested by (Banks, 2010; Vavrus, 2006). Through this approach, SNL Public School creates an educational climate that not only respects differences but also builds students' character based on nationalism values, as emphasized by Fattah (2003) and Koopmans & Stamovlasis (2016).

This model also shows the real implementation of multiculturalism theory applied in school management, which, according to previous research, is often only focused on the classroom aspect of education (Banks, 2009b; 2014; Demirdağ & Ünlü-Kaynakçi, 2019; Raihani, 2016a). The findings from this school provide evidence that multicultural values can be applied holistically in school management, from the curriculum to the organizational structure.

Different from SNL Public School, SP Private School offers an inclusive multicultural ideology model, with a strong focus on social empowerment and entrepreneurship. This is in line with previous research findings that show that diversity-responsive education is not only important for improving academic achievement, but also for promoting social justice and intercultural understanding (Caingcoy, 2023; Pérez-Jorge et al., 2023; Rohmat et al., 2023). SP Private School reflects the spirit of inclusivity through an admission policy that targets students from diverse social and economic backgrounds, affirming the importance of equal racial and ethnic representation, as stated by Lareau (1987) and Hasan (2016).

In addition, SP Private School uses project-based and experiential learning to develop students' social awareness, which is in line with the social entrepreneurship principles proposed by Ferdiawan & Putra (2013). Through these programs, students are not only taught to value diversity but are also actively involved in poverty alleviation and community building efforts, as also proposed by Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero (2021).

This school model contributes significantly to the development of multicultural education theory and practice in Indonesia, especially in the context of empowering students from marginalized communities, as described by Stunell (2021) and Nurlaelah et al., (2023). SP Private School has also succeeded in creating an inclusive and socially just learning environment, which can serve as an example for other schools in facing the challenges of diversity in Indonesia (Halidin et al., 2022; Harjatanaya & Hoon, 2020).

In other case findings, TIB Islamic School offers a unique approach to multiculturalism through the integration of Islamic values with multicultural principles, known as “Islamic multiculturalism”. This reflects what some researchers identify as an important effort to combine religious values with intercultural tolerance, particularly in the context of Islamic education (Gunawan & Jaya, 2023; Levinson, 2007). This approach focuses not only on academic learning, but also on character education that emphasizes respect for differences, tolerance and empathy, as described by (B. Hasan & Mursalin, 2011) and (Zamzani, 2014).

The cultural exchange program implemented at TIB Islamic School allows students to interact with different cultures and religions, which strengthens the values of pluralism and social harmony, as described by (Maulidiah et al., 2023) and (Budirahayu & Saud, 2021). This holistic approach reflects the importance of integrating multicultural values not only in the curriculum but also in all aspects of school life, including dormitories and extracurricular activities (Rini et al., 2020; Rosado, 1997; 2006). TIB Islamic School also demonstrates how Islamic value-based education can play an important role in building an inclusive and tolerant

society, as proposed by Thahir (2023) and (Nurlaelah et al., 2023). By emphasizing cultural and religious inclusion, TIB Islamic School offers an educational model that is relevant and applicable in various educational contexts in Indonesia.

The cross-case analysis shows that although the approach to implementing multicultural values is different in each school, there are common threads in terms of the emphasis on leadership and inclusiveness. These findings reinforce the theory that schools as open social systems must be able to manage diversity comprehensively and strategically, to create a learning environment that respects differences, improves academic achievement, and encourages the building of tolerant and inclusive student characters (Arifin & Slamet, 2010; Hawkins & James, 2018; Sagala, 2007; Shaeffer, 2019).

The reconstruction of multiculturalism-based school ideology obtained from these three schools provides a practical model for other schools in Indonesia to integrate multicultural values into school management, whether through the curriculum, admission policies, or extracurricular activities. Thus, this model can serve as a reference for creating a more inclusive and diversity-responsive education in Indonesia (Banks, 2009b; Čamber Tambolaš et al., 2023; Raihani, 2016a).

Based on the findings in each case and across cases as stated, three research propositions are proposed as follows:

Proposition 1: “The ideology of multiculturalism serves as the foundational framework for educational institutions to manage diversity and promote inclusivity, particularly in schools with diverse student populations”

This proposition suggests that multiculturalism, as an ideology, provides a comprehensive approach to managing diversity within educational institutions. It emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive environment where students from various cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds can thrive.

Proposition 2: “Successful implementation of multicultural education requires a flexible approach that allows for the integration of historical, cultural, and institutional elements unique to each school”.

This proposition emphasizes the need for educational institutions to be adaptable in their approach to multicultural education. It highlights the importance of incorporating the unique historical and cultural contexts of each school into the educational framework, ensuring that the implementation of multiculturalism is both relevant and effective.

Proposition 3: “Collaborations and partnerships with external organizations play a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing the multicultural ideology within schools”.

This proposition underscores the significance of external collaborations, such as those with NGOs or government institutions, in strengthening a school's multicultural ideology. These partnerships provide additional resources and perspectives that enrich the educational experience and enhance the implementation of multicultural principles.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the implementation of a multiculturalism-based school ideology requires flexibility and adaptation to the unique characteristics of each educational institution. While the three schools examined—SNL Public School, SP Private School, and TIB Islamic School—adopt different methods, they share a common commitment to promoting inclusivity, respect for diversity, and leadership development. The findings imply significant contributions to educational policy by providing a scalable framework for implementing multicultural education. This model highlights the need for policy reforms that promote inclusivity, cross-cultural understanding, and equitable resource distribution in schools. By emphasizing multicultural values in both curricular and extracurricular activities, schools can create environments where students are not only exposed to diverse perspectives but also encouraged to actively engage with and appreciate those differences. The proposed model not only addresses gaps in implementing multiculturalism but also offers a replicable framework adaptable to diverse educational contexts. By emphasizing inclusivity and cultural respect, it provides actionable insights for policymakers and educators to create more equitable and harmonious school environments. This study recommends that schools adopt comprehensive multicultural training for educators, incorporate cross-cultural curriculum modules, and establish partnerships with local communities to foster inclusivity and mutual respect.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization, A.F.U. and F.F.; methodology, A.F.U.; software, A.F.U.; validation, A.F.U. and F.F.; formal analysis, A.F.U. and F.F.; investigation, A.F.U. and F.F.; resources, A.F.U.; data curation, A.F.U.; writing—original draft preparation, A.F.U.; writing—review and editing, A.F.U. and F.F.; visualization, A.F.U.; supervision, A.F.U.; project administration, A.F.U.; funding acquisition, F.F. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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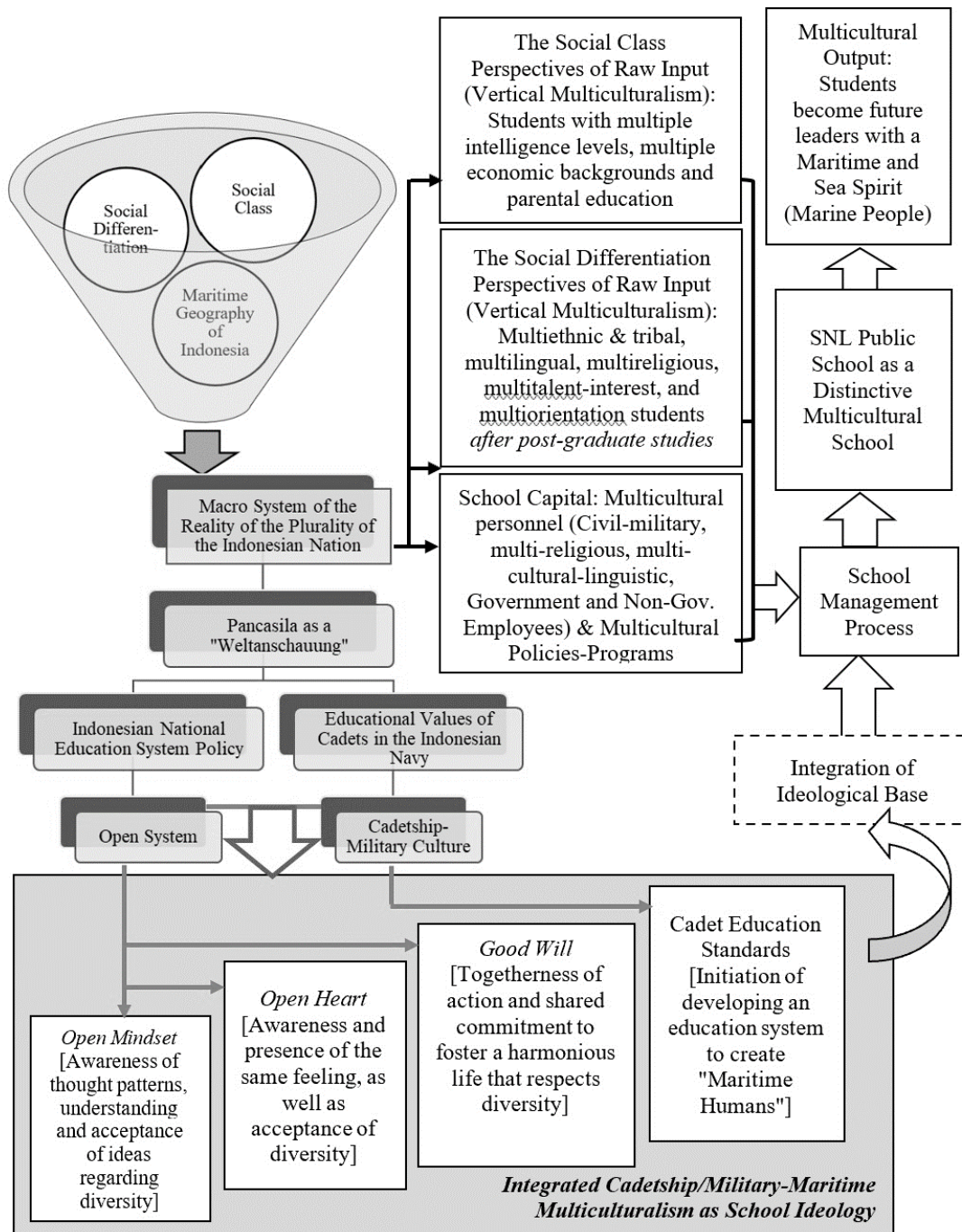
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Appendix A

Ideological Model Findings in Case 1: Integrated Cadetship/Military-Maritime Multiculturalism

Figure A

Framework of Integrated Cadetship/Maritime Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology

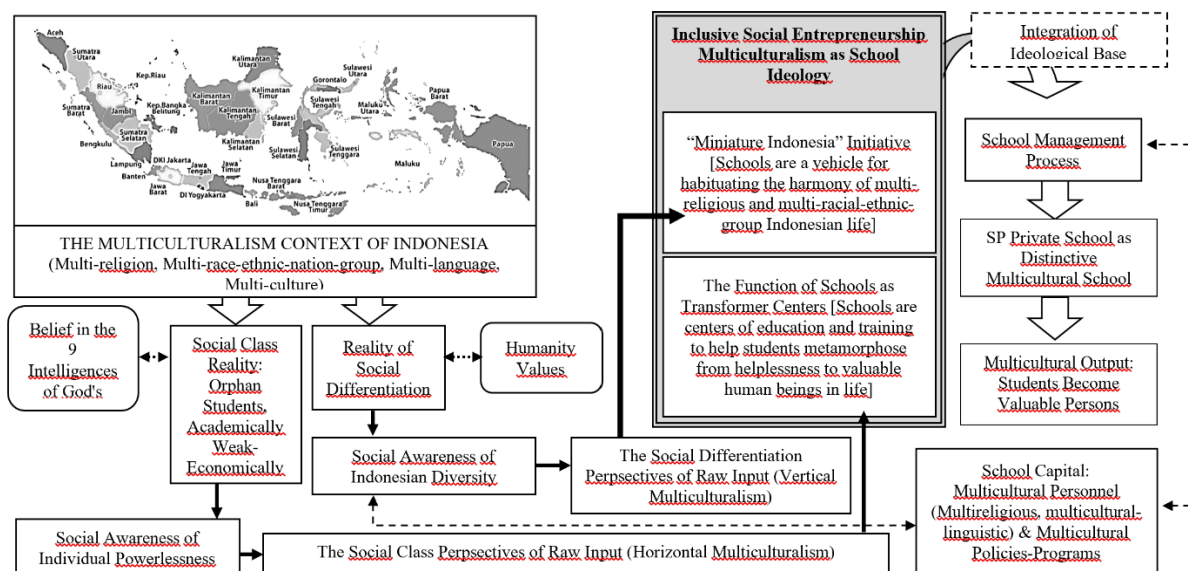


Appendix B

Ideological Model Findings in Case 2: Inclusive Social Entrepreneurship Multiculturalism

Figure B

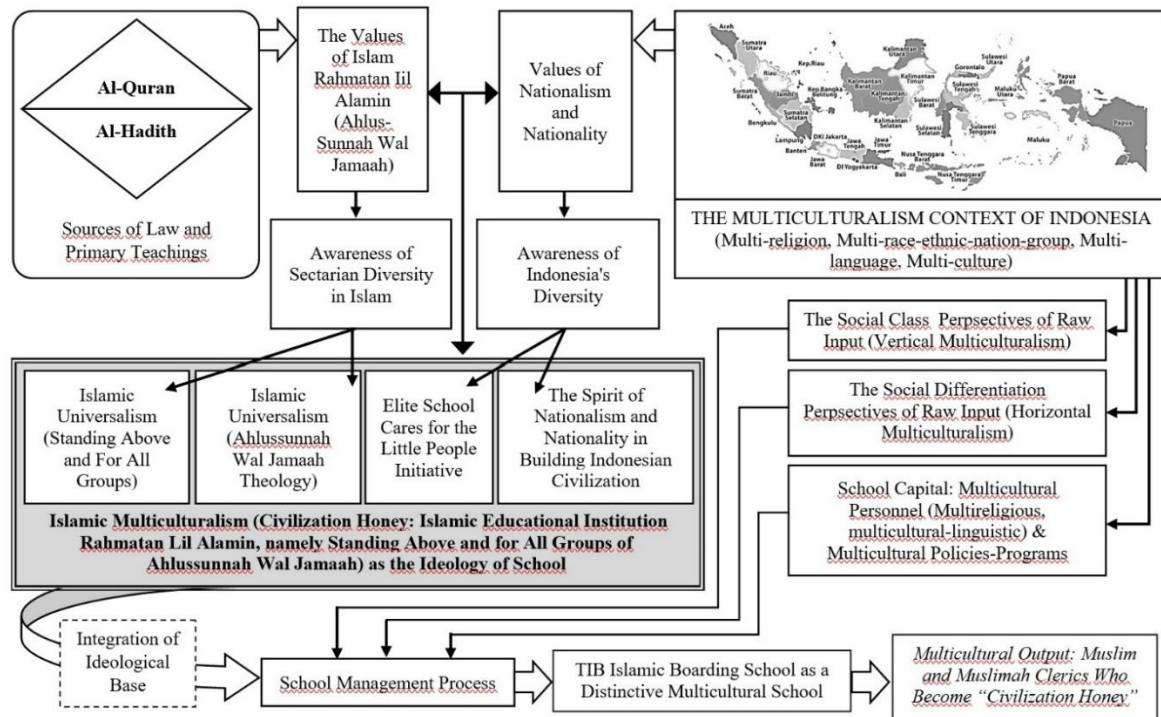
Framework of Inclusive Social Entrepreneurship Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology



Appendix C

Ideological Model Findings in Case 3: Islamic Multiculturalism

Figure C

Framework of Islamic Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology

Appendix D

Cross-Case Findings: “Comprehensive Multicultural Integration” as Model Construction of Multiculturalism-based School Ideology

Figure D

Framework of Multiculturalism-Based School Ideology in Indonesia

