

Global Diversity and Multicultural Education at Indonesian Schools in Japan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the implementation of multicultural education at Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo (SIT), Japan, in order to strengthen the national identity of Indonesian students living in a culturally homogeneous environment. The study adopts a qualitative approach using a descriptive-interpretive strategy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with SIT teachers and analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that multicultural education at SIT is implemented through intercultural teaching strategies, the integration of Indonesian and Japanese cultures in school activities, and the cultivation of national symbols and values. The school functions as a safe space and a bridge that supports students' adaptation to the local environment while simultaneously reinforcing their national identity. Various challenges, such as language barriers, cultural resistance from parents, and limited resources, are addressed through differentiated approaches, cross-role collaboration, and the utilization of local community resources. These findings highlight the importance of context-based multicultural education in maintaining the national identity of young Indonesians in the global arena. The SIT model may serve as a reference for developing similar strategies in Indonesian Schools Abroad in other countries.



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A. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, which brings significant socio-cultural changes, Indonesian diaspora communities face challenges in maintaining their national identity amid the influx of foreign cultures. Indonesian students who live and study abroad are particularly vulnerable to difficulties in preserving their original cultural identity and national character (Nurmanita et al., 2024). Indonesian Schools Abroad (Sekolah Indonesia Luar Negeri/SILN) have been established by the Indonesian government in various countries with the aim of ensuring that Indonesian children overseas continue to receive education aligned with the national curriculum and enriched with national values. The government seeks to ensure that young Indonesians abroad receive education with a strong national perspective so that they do not lose their sense of identity and connection to their homeland (Muhtarom & Andi, 2022). Nevertheless, differences in customs, culture, behavior, and social environments between Indonesia and the host countries are realities that cannot be ignored (Mustain et al., 2021). Therefore, efforts to integrate Indonesian culture with local cultures are necessary within the educational processes of SILN.

Multicultural education in SILN therefore involves more than introducing students to cultural differences: it also raises the question of how schools negotiate the relationship between national belonging and adaptation to another society.

Indonesia is widely recognized as a country with exceptionally rich and diverse cultural heritage, making multicultural education an essential component of the national education system (Handayani et al., 2024). UNESCO has even advocated the implementation of multicultural education as a global obligation since October 1994 (Sipuan et al., 2022). Conceptually, multicultural education is an approach that acknowledges, respects, and celebrates differences in culture, religion, ethnicity, and social identity within pluralistic societies. According to Banks (2016), multicultural education systems help educational institutions adapt to the aspirations and needs of students from diverse backgrounds. Meanwhile, Sleeter and Grant (2009) argue that multicultural education enables the examination of students' experiences across various cultural contexts, helps them recognize and address inequalities, and fosters a deeper understanding of social justice. At its core, the aim of multicultural education is to cultivate attitudes of tolerance, respect, and understanding of cultural diversity among students (Khoirunnisa, 2022). Through values such as equality, mutual respect, and pluralism, multicultural education is expected to shape an inclusive young generation without compromising its national identity.

Previous studies have demonstrated the important role of multicultural education in the context of Indonesian Schools Abroad (*Sekolah Indonesia Luar Negeri*/SILN). A case study conducted in SILN Malaysia and Singapore found that these schools strive to implement multicultural education to maintain and strengthen students' Indonesian identity through curriculum adaptation, school activities, and cultural integration (Nurmanita et al., 2024). These findings provide an important basis for understanding how diaspora schools connect national values with students' multicultural experiences. However, the existing discussion leaves room to examine more closely how this negotiation takes place in host societies whose public culture and national identity are often perceived as relatively homogeneous, and where Indonesian students may have fewer routine opportunities to encounter cultural diversity in the wider social environment. This question shifts the focus from whether schools preserve Indonesian identity to how they mediate national identity, cultural adaptation, and intercultural engagement in everyday educational practice.

Japan provides a distinctive context for examining this question. Its social environment is often characterized in the literature as relatively culturally homogeneous and shaped by established social norms and a strong national identity (Govinda & Hanami, 2023). These characteristics should not be taken to mean that Japanese society is culturally uniform; rather, they make it important to investigate how an Indonesian diaspora school creates opportunities for intercultural learning and negotiates the relationship between Indonesian identity and participation in local society. The case of *Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo* (SIT) can therefore extend research on SILN beyond Southeast Asian settings and illuminate how multicultural education operates in a different social context.

The Indonesian community in Japan includes expatriates, diplomats' families, and migrant workers who may live there with their spouses and children. The children's educational experiences are consequently shaped by varied family, linguistic, and cultural circumstances. According to data from the Data and Information Center of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency as of March 1, 2025, 2,354 Indonesian migrant workers had been placed in Japan, making Japan the fifth-largest destination for

Indonesian migrant worker placement at that time (Pusat Data Informasi, 2025). Although this figure does not represent the entire Indonesian community in Japan, it indicates one dimension of the social context in which Indonesian families and educational institutions operate.

For students at SIT, the school is a setting in which experiences of Indonesia and Japan meet. Its educational task is not only to transmit Indonesian curriculum content and national symbols, but also to help students interpret and engage with local language, routines, and cultural practices. The central issue is how the school brings these dimensions together without treating national identity and cultural adaptation as mutually exclusive. Research on SILN has acknowledged that schools integrate local cultural practices while reinforcing Indonesian identity (Nurmanita et al., 2024); what requires closer explanation is how these practices work together as a context-specific process of identity negotiation in a relatively homogeneous host society. Addressing this gap can clarify the roles of teaching strategies, cultural integration, national symbols, and responses to language and resource constraints in shaping multicultural education at SIT. The SILN context in Japan not only represents the challenges of cross-cultural education but also illustrates how schools serve as vital bridges between national identity and adaptation to local culture. As the number of Indonesian nationals in Japan continues to increase, SILN in the country face growing demands to function as spaces for the formation of national character as well as safe environments for students to navigate the challenges of multiculturalism while living abroad (Banks, 2016; Nurmanita et al., 2024; Sipuan et al., 2022).

Based on the discussion above, the research question of this study is: *How is multicultural education implemented at Indonesian Schools in Japan to negotiate and strengthen Indonesian students' national identity while supporting their adaptation to Japanese society?* The study examines teachers' strategies, experiences, and challenges in implementing multicultural education at SIT. Its intended contribution is a context-grounded conceptual framework, termed the SIT Diaspora Multicultural Education Model, developed by synthesizing the empirical patterns identified in the study. The model is intended to explain the relationships among (1) intercultural and differentiated teaching, (2) the integration of Indonesian and Japanese cultural practices, (3) the reinforcement and negotiation of national identity, and (4) contextual mediation through collaboration and available resources. The study presents it as an empirically informed conceptual contribution that may guide further research and adaptation in other Indonesian Schools Abroad, particularly as an effort to preserve the national identity of young Indonesians in the global arena.

B. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive–interpretive approach informed by a constructivist perspective, as proposed by Crotty (1988). It examined how multicultural education is understood and enacted at Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo (SIT), Japan, as a single, context-specific case. The case was examined holistically to understand how teaching practices, school activities, and national-identity work are shaped by the school's location in Japan. Three SIT teachers served as the primary interview informants because they were directly involved in teaching and school activities. Informants were selected purposively using the following criteria: they were Indonesian citizens, had taught at an Indonesian School Abroad (SILN) for at least one year, and were actively involved in teaching or curriculum-related processes. To strengthen the evidence base beyond

teacher accounts, the study also analyzed publicly available school information and program descriptions published on SIT's official website.

Data were gathered from two sources: semi-structured in-depth interviews with three teacher informants and documentary materials published on SIT's official website (silntokyo.sch.id). Interviews were conducted face to face or online according to participants' circumstances. An interview guide, developed from the research questions and relevant literature, explored multicultural teaching strategies, the integration of Indonesian and Japanese cultures, national identity, and implementation challenges. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes, was audio-recorded with participants' consent, and was transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were processed using NVivo. The documentary corpus comprised the school's official profile and publicly available descriptions of its academic and student programs, including information on the Indonesian national curriculum, language and cultural learning, and extracurricular activities. The materials were retrieved from SIT's official Profile, Academic, and Student Affairs pages. These online materials were treated as evidence of the school's publicly stated profile and programs.

Data were analyzed through descriptive–interpretive thematic analysis. First, interview transcripts and website documents were read repeatedly and organized according to their source. Interview data were coded inductively, while documentary data were extracted and coded for information related to curriculum orientation, teaching and language programs, cultural activities, national-identity practices, and school–community engagement. Codes were then grouped into the four themes: (1) multicultural teaching strategies, (2) integration of Indonesian and Japanese cultures, (3) formation and negotiation of national identity, and (4) challenges and responses in implementing multicultural education. To strengthen triangulation, the researchers compared the interview accounts with the school's published profile and program descriptions, identifying points of convergence, complementary detail, and differences between teachers' accounts and the publicly stated program information. Documentary evidence was used to contextualize and cross-check interview interpretations; it was not treated as a substitute for participants' lived accounts. Where the website did not provide enough detail to verify a practice, the analysis retained the distinction between teacher-reported practice and publicly documented program information. Findings were synthesized by linking the thematic patterns to the research question and conceptual framework.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the analysis of field findings based on in-depth interviews with teachers at *Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo (SIT)*, Japan. The analysis was conducted using an interpretive approach within the framework of multicultural education. Data from the three informants were coded and categorized into major themes. The discussion is organized into four main themes: (1) Multicultural Teaching Strategies, (2) Integration of Indonesian and Japanese Cultures, (3) Formation and Strengthening of National Identity, and (4) Challenges and Solutions in the Implementation of Multicultural Education. These four aspects are interrelated in shaping a holistic picture of the dynamics of multicultural education within the SILN environment, particularly in the context of a destination country that is relatively culturally homogeneous, such as Japan. The following section elaborates on these themes.

1. Multicultural Teaching Strategies

In the context of *Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo (SIT)*, teachers implement a variety of multicultural teaching strategies to meet the needs of diaspora students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Mariyono (2024) emphasizes that multicultural education helps schools adapt to the aspirations and needs of students from various backgrounds. At SIT, this adaptation is reflected in a flexible curriculum and teaching methods. The Indonesian national curriculum continues to be implemented to ensure that students receive education grounded in national values, in line with the mandate of Indonesian Schools Abroad (SILN). However,

"Still following the Indonesian curriculum" (Informant 1)

"Learning is also mixed with basic TOEFL preparation" (Informant 1)

Teachers at SIT modify the curriculum to align it with international and local contexts. One teacher noted that instruction at the junior and senior secondary levels is expected to equip students with global English language competencies. This step reflects teachers' proactive strategies in preparing students to compete in the global arena while still adhering to the Indonesian curriculum. This approach aligns with Hakala & Kujala (2021), who emphasize the role of teachers as autonomous and reflective curricular actors in connecting the curriculum with global challenges. The curriculum should be able to respond to global crises proactively and ethically through flexibility in design and teacher interpretation, particularly in providing meaningful learning experiences that are relevant to real-world contexts. This interpretation is also consistent with culturally responsive teaching, which treats students' lived experiences and cultural knowledge as resources for instructional decisions rather than as obstacles to learning (Douglas, 2020).

Teaching strategies at SIT also reflect an intercultural thematic approach. Three languages are formally taught at all educational levels: Indonesian, English, and Japanese. The use of these three languages aims not only to fulfill curricular requirements but also to serve as a multicultural strategy to connect students with their national identity while engaging with the local culture. Local teachers as well as native speakers are involved in language instruction, for example, Japanese language teachers recruited from Japan. This practice aligns with the concept of *celebrating diversity* in multicultural education, in which linguistic and cultural differences are acknowledged and utilized as learning resources (Risager, 2023). Research on multilingual classrooms similarly shows that drawing on students' full linguistic repertoires can support meaning-making and participation, although the effects depend on how such practices are enacted in a particular classroom (Rajendram, 2023; Tai, 2022).

In addition, teachers make use of the Japanese cultural context in their teaching methods. For example, popular Japanese children's songs are sometimes used in science or mathematics classes to help students memorize basic concepts. Teachers recognize that students feel familiar and comfortable with local songs they frequently hear in their daily lives in Japan, so incorporating these elements can facilitate their understanding of the material. This strategy reflects a constructivist approach that connects lesson content with students' everyday cultural experiences. Such efforts are consistent with O'Brien et al. (2019), who argue that multicultural education involves examining students' experiences across diverse cultural contexts to enhance their understanding.

Beyond the integration of language and local media, another strategy involves active learning that engages the surrounding environment. Teachers at SIT facilitate field observations for senior high school students. Students are invited to observe various

places in Japan and then present their findings in the form of small seminars. This model encourages students to interact with a multicultural environment while developing critical thinking skills and self-confidence. Through question-and-answer sessions and discussions, students learn to appreciate differing perspectives, which lies at the core of multicultural education. Such participatory teaching strategies help create an inclusive classroom climate.

"Inclusivity is also practiced through the 'pika-pika' program, where students can play songs... sometimes Western songs, sometimes Indonesian songs, sometimes Japanese songs." (Informant 1)

Each student is also given opportunities to share their cultural experiences within the school environment in a contextual and direct manner. This indicates the presence of mutual respect in the multicultural classrooms at SIT. Such activity-based strategies instill values of tolerance from an early stage. In line with the goals of multicultural education outlined by Arifin et al., (2024), teachers are able to cultivate attitudes of tolerance, respect, and understanding toward cultural diversity without compromising students' national identity.

2. Integration of Indonesian and Japanese Cultures

SIT consciously integrates Indonesian and Japanese cultures into various aspects of school life. This cultural integration is carried out to enable diaspora students to balance adaptation to a foreign environment while maintaining Indonesian identity values. In practice, many Japanese school cultural practices are adopted at SIT because they are considered beneficial for character development. One clear example is the *pika-pika* program (from the word *pika*, meaning "shiny" or clean). This program is inspired by the Japanese school tradition that requires students to clean their classrooms and school environments daily. The practice is adopted at SIT with thoughtful adjustments. As one teacher explained, in Tokyo there are no janitors:

"All students, from elementary to senior high school... clean their own classrooms" (Informant 1)

Inspired by this practice, SIT implements a daily duty roster in which school areas are assigned to classes on a rotating basis. After lunch, an announcement is made that "*pika-pika* will begin shortly." SIT students then clean their classrooms together, accompanied by music played to boost enthusiasm. Unlike Japanese schools, where cleaning is done without music, SIT adopts the essence of the practice while modifying it to make it more engaging using songs. The music played varies, ranging from Japanese and Indonesian songs to popular selections chosen by students, if the lyrics comply with norms and ethical standards. The *pika-pika* program not only fosters responsibility and independence, as practiced in Japan, but also strengthens multicultural togetherness. Although there was initial resistance from some Indonesian parents who viewed learning as separate from cleaning activities, teachers continuously socialized the idea that this activity is an integral part of character education. Through creative approaches, the program was eventually successfully implemented and has now become part of the school culture. This finding aligns with Nurmanita et al., (2024), who note that SILN seek to integrate local culture into school activities as an important bridge between national identity and adaptation to foreign cultures.

In addition to cleanliness culture, Japanese discipline and school regulations are also integrated. SIT students are accustomed to removing their outdoor shoes and changing into *wabaki* (indoor shoes) upon entering the school, in accordance with practices in Japanese schools. Dress code regulations also reflect Japanese culture. The daily SIT uniform consists of a neat outfit with a blazer and tie, resembling Japanese school uniforms. Students are prohibited from wearing flashy accessories or excessive makeup and are encouraged to wear dark-colored jackets during cold weather. Values of simplicity and harmony, which are characteristic of Japanese school culture, have thus become part of the norms at SIT. Practices such as queuing, punctuality, politeness, and a sense of *shame culture* are also instilled. Teachers further habituate students to use three key expressions in daily interactions, namely saying thank you, apologizing, and asking for permission, accompanied by the Japanese-style bow. Japan emphasizes the importance of education that prioritizes moral values, ethics, and social norms as the foundation of its society (Hanggoro, 2022). These positive habits are reflected in the character of SIT students, indicating the internalization of local values. A curriculum integrated with local culture can guide students to understand their own culture while appreciating and respecting other local cultures, thereby supporting the development of students' cultural identity (Shih, 2022). Such integration aligns with the concept of character education in the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

"Habituation like that is good... what's wrong with us also adopting such programs?"
(Informant 3)

On the other hand, SIT simultaneously preserves Indonesian culture, creating a symbiosis between the two cultures. Every Friday, students and teachers wear batik to school as a distinctive Indonesian uniform. The use of batik serves as a symbol of national identity that continues to be nurtured despite being abroad. The school also regularly commemorates Indonesian national events, such as Independence Day, Kartini Day, and flag-raising ceremonies, as is common in schools in Indonesia. In extracurricular activities and cultural arts subjects, Indonesian content is highly dominant. SIT offers activities such as angklung, gamelan, and traditional dance. Teachers explained that for elementary school students, Indonesian traditional games are also taught. Moreover, during collaborations with Japanese schools, SIT introduces Indonesian traditional games while also learning Japanese traditional games, creating a two-way cultural exchange.

Sister school programs with Japanese schools further support this integration. Each year, SIT students and local students visit each other. Japanese students learn to play the angklung or practice the Indonesian language, while Indonesian students participate in Japanese cultural activities at partner schools.

"Japanese students are invited to dance or play Indonesian traditional musical instruments when visiting SIT, and conversely, SIT students try Japanese songs or games when visiting local schools." (Informant 1)

This exchange represents a concrete implementation of cross-cultural learning that enriches the cultural understanding of both parties (Seeberg & Minick, 2012). These activities are consistently carried out every year, including events such as Language Month at SIT, which celebrates both Indonesian and Japanese through drama competitions, speeches, and bicultural artistic performances. Through this comprehensive integration, the SIT environment becomes a reflection of Indonesian-

Japanese cultural hybridity. Children grow up absorbing both cultures, adopting Japanese discipline and work ethic while remaining rooted in Indonesian values. As one teacher described to the students in Tokyo:

"They are... not entirely Japanese, but also not entirely Indonesian. Both Indonesian and Japanese characteristics are present in our students." (Informant 2)

They are known to be more orderly and punctual than typical standards in Indonesia, as the influence of local disciplinary culture becomes embedded in their behavior. At the same time, they continue to demonstrate the warmth and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) characteristic of Indonesian culture within the school. This integration of two cultures aligns with the function of SILN as an important bridge between national identity and local cultural adaptation. In other words, SIT has succeeded in serving as a space where the Indonesian identity of diaspora students is strengthened without hindering their ability to adapt to the surrounding Japanese society. Research on minority youth further suggests that national identification and school belonging are shaped by how young people perceive their fit with prevailing ideas of national identity (Gharaei et al., 2024). Although that study concerns minority youth in European settings rather than Indonesian diaspora students in Japan, it offers a useful comparative lens for understanding identity as a contextual and relational process.

3. Formation and Strengthening of National Identity

One of the primary mandates of multicultural education in Indonesian Schools Abroad (SILN) is to strengthen the national identity of Indonesian students living overseas (Riski et al., 2024). At SIT, efforts to cultivate national identity are evident through the curriculum, activities, and school culture that emphasize national values. Accordingly, SIT consistently adheres to the Indonesian National Curriculum, including subjects such as PPKn (Pancasila and Citizenship Education), Indonesian Language, National History, and Religious Education. These subjects are introduced from an early age to instill knowledge of and pride in the homeland. Although the learning context is situated in Japan, teachers strive to use Indonesian as the primary language of instruction in the classroom so that students become accustomed to thinking and communicating in the national language.

The strengthening of national identity at SIT is also carried out through national symbols and rituals. In addition to wearing batik every Friday as a national uniform, the school regularly holds flag-raising ceremonies featuring the red-and-white flag, commemorates Independence Day on August 17, and sings *Indonesia Raya* as well as patriotic songs on various occasions. Even in daily activities such as the *pika* program, national values are incorporated, for example by playing regional and national songs. Teachers shared that regional songs have been played during cleaning sessions and that students enjoyed them. At times, some students choose Indonesian-language religious songs, which are also appreciated by their multicultural peers. This positive reception of Indonesian songs indicates that Indonesian identity holds an honored place in students' hearts, even though they are growing up in a foreign country.

In addition, SIT functions as a diaspora community hub for preserving Indonesian culture. Teachers play the role of *cultural brokers* who connect students with their cultural roots (Chang, 2020). One teacher shared that their background as a traditional dance artist was actually a key reason for being selected to teach at SIT. This is because the school is often invited to perform at diplomatic and cultural events, requiring teachers who are capable of teaching Indonesian culture as part of Indonesia's cultural promotion

in collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI). Such activities are not merely extracurricular programs, but constitute an integral part of SIT's mission as a cultural ambassador of the nation abroad.

Student participation in angklung performances, traditional dances, or Indonesian song choirs in front of Japanese audiences produces two positive impacts: introducing Indonesia to the international community and instilling a sense of national pride in the students themselves. This finding is consistent with Nurmanita et al. (2024), who reported in other SILN contexts that cultural integration through school activities is effective in strengthening students' Indonesian identity. SIT Tokyo thus fulfills its role as a guardian of national identity for the younger generation of the diaspora. Through well-planned multicultural education, the school has succeeded in shaping students into globally minded individuals who are proud of their Indonesian identity. This generation is expected to become tolerant and pluralistic ambassadors of the nation while remaining firmly grounded in national values, in line with the goals of multicultural education to nurture inclusive young people without sacrificing their national identity.

4. Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Multicultural Education

The implementation of multicultural education at SIT is not without challenges. One of the main obstacles is the variation in students' language proficiency and background. Many SIT students were born or raised in Japan, and some have grown up with limited proficiency in Indonesian. This condition creates difficulties, particularly in teaching subjects that are heavily embedded in Indonesian contexts.

"For me, the biggest challenge is language, especially when teaching students who have just joined at the junior or senior high school level and are not yet fluent in Indonesian."

Students experience difficulties because they cannot fully understand teachers' explanations delivered entirely in Indonesian. To address this issue, teachers apply bilingual and visual strategies. They allocate special time for these students and use more accessible language, such as a mix of Indonesian and Japanese when necessary, while also employing visual media and teaching aids to explain Indonesian cultural concepts. For younger students, this approach is quite effective, as children tend to acquire new languages more easily. For older students, teachers provide additional support until they are able to catch up. These solutions reflect the principle of differentiation in multicultural pedagogy, as teachers adjust their instructional approaches to meet students' linguistic needs. The literature also emphasizes the importance of language support for diaspora children (Canagarajah, 2011); Yacoub & Golzar (2025) highlight that linguistic and cultural differences between students' countries of origin and their host countries must be bridged within multicultural education.

Another challenge arises from differences in perspectives and habits between Indonesian and Japanese cultures, affecting both students and parents. Cultural integration programs such as *pika-pika* initially encountered resistance from some Indonesian parents who were unaccustomed to having their children participate in cleaning activities at school. They viewed such tasks as being outside the role of students. To address this issue, the school conducted intensive socialization efforts to explain the benefits of character education through cleaning activities. Teachers also made the activities enjoyable and more acceptable by playing students' favorite music during cleaning sessions and involving all classes on a rotating basis. As a result, students became

enthusiastic, and over time parents began to support the program after observing its positive impact on their children's independence.

In terms of eating habits at school, challenges emerged due to some students' initial preference for instant food. The Japanese school culture, which emphasizes balanced nutrition, inspired teachers to take an active role in ensuring that students bring nutritious meals. In one case, a student consumed instant food every day, which led to decreased concentration in class and declining academic performance. Teachers then collaborated closely with the student's parents, requiring the child to bring nutritious meals daily under close monitoring. After the student's eating habits improved, their concentration and academic performance increased significantly. Such collaboration with parents represents an effective solution to addressing health and discipline challenges, while also bridging differences in parenting cultures between Indonesia and Japan. This case aligns with Banks' (2016) perspective on multicultural education, which emphasizes that multicultural schools should function as "safe spaces" and as bridges between different cultures.

From the internal perspective of the school, limited human resources and facilities also pose significant challenges. SIT Tokyo has a relatively small student population, approximately 150 students across all levels, along with a limited number of teachers. As a consequence, teachers at SILN Tokyo often assume multiple roles simultaneously. A single teacher may teach several subjects across different levels while also managing various school activities. For example, a biology teacher may also teach junior secondary science, serve as a homeroom teacher at the elementary level, coach angklung and journalism extracurricular activities, and be a member of the curriculum team. This multi-role workload requires constant adaptation and innovation in teaching practices. The solutions implemented include collaboration among teachers to support one another in subjects outside their primary expertise, as well as the utilization of the local Indonesian community as supporting resources. The recruitment of local teachers with specialized skills, such as dance or arts instructors, has also been carried out to fill gaps that cannot be addressed by government-appointed teachers. This approach has proven effective, as these teachers not only meet academic needs but also bring cultural skills that enrich school programs, for instance by training students in traditional dance for cultural promotion. Limited learning facilities are also addressed by maximizing the surrounding environment as a *living classroom*. For example, for science or social studies practice, students are taken on educational visits to museums, botanical gardens, or cultural festivals, making use of public facilities in Tokyo. This practice aligns with the principle of resourcefulness in education within small communities, which emphasizes optimizing available resources (Avendano-Urbe et al., 2022).

In the context of the external environment, the homogeneous nature of Japanese society also presents challenges for implementing multicultural education at SIT. Japanese society is known for strongly upholding its national identity and maintaining its own social norms. The challenge lies in ensuring that students can socially adapt without losing their own identity. Some local values cannot be fully adopted due to contextual differences. The school actively builds networks with local communities to prevent SILN students from becoming isolated. Initiatives such as sister-school programs, joint cultural festivals, and participation in city events in Tokyo are proactive efforts to enable direct interaction between Indonesian and Japanese students. Through these activities, students learn to understand the host society in a controlled manner, reducing the potential for culture shock, while local communities also gain exposure to Indonesian culture. These

efforts demonstrate that, even within a culturally homogeneous environment, SIT is able to create a multicultural space for its students.

The various challenges in implementing multicultural education at Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo are addressed through creative and collaborative solutions. Teachers play a central role as agents of change, bridging differences in culture, language, and habits. These findings confirm Nurmanita et al.'s (2024) observation that each SILN faces unique challenges based on its geographical and demographic context, yet they share the same goal: integrating education with the multicultural needs of students. Across the first three themes, the documentary review offers contextual corroboration of the school's stated curriculum orientation and selected cultural programs, while the interviews provide the primary evidence about how teachers understand and enact these practices. The sources are complementary rather than interchangeable: website statements describe the school's public-facing profile, whereas accounts of classroom routines, parent responses, and implementation challenges remain interview-based. The findings indicate that teachers respond to linguistic, cultural, and resource-related challenges through differentiated instruction, communication with parents, staff collaboration, and engagement with local communities. These responses suggest context-sensitive adaptation, although the study did not evaluate their outcomes systematically. The challenges identified here can inform further refinement of multicultural education at SIT and future research involving students, parents, curriculum materials, and classroom observations. These findings can be interpreted alongside international research suggesting that culturally responsive teaching and supportive school relationships may be relevant to students' belonging, while the links between teaching practices and student outcomes are context-dependent (Ialuna et al., 2024). The present study did not directly assess student outcomes, so its contribution lies in describing teachers' reported strategies and the contextual conditions in which they are used.

D. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that multicultural education at *Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo (SIT)*, Japan, is implemented through adaptive teaching strategies, the integration of local and national cultures, and the reinforcement of national identity symbols within learning activities and school culture. Multicultural education practices are carried out in a contextual and holistic manner. This is evident in the continued implementation of the Indonesian national curriculum alongside the adoption of positive Japanese cultural values, such as discipline, cleanliness, and social ethics.

Teaching strategies include the use of an intercultural thematic approach, instruction in three languages (Indonesian, English, Japanese), utilization of the surrounding environment, and cultural integration through activities such as *pika-pika*, wearing batik uniforms, and celebrating Indonesian cultural events. The strengthening of national identity is achieved through curriculum content with a national context as well as participation in diplomatic activities as cultural ambassadors. The school also serves as a safe space for diaspora students to develop pride in Indonesia without losing their ability to adapt to the homogeneous Japanese society.

Various challenges, such as language barriers, cultural resistance from parents, limited human resources, and the closed social context of Japan, are successfully addressed through collaborative approaches, pedagogical differentiation, and the engagement of local communities. These findings underscore that multicultural education is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical strategy that enables schools to act as bridges between national identity and global adaptation. Therefore, the implementation

model at SIT can serve as a reference for developing contextualized multicultural education in other diaspora schools around the world.

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