



## Revitalizing Minangkabau Traditional Values to Overcome The Multicultural Education Crisis

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### Abstract

This study analyzes the paradox of multicultural education in West Sumatra, where the Minangkabau traditional philosophy, rich in egalitarian and tolerant values, has not been optimally integrated into the formal education system. This crisis is marked by religious intolerance, bullying, and ethnic tensions. Using a qualitative approach with hermeneutic methods and content analysis of policy documents, media reports (2024-2025), and academic literature, this study identifies systemic failures in Banks' five dimensions of multicultural education: Prejudice Reduction, Equity Pedagogy, Empowering School Culture, Content Integration, and Knowledge Construction. The findings show that the crisis is not caused by the absence of tolerance values, but rather by the failure to translate traditional philosophy into concrete practice. This study proposes a model for revitalizing Minangkabau traditional values as a contextual solution: (1) ABS-SBK interpreted inclusively to reduce prejudice; (2) deliberative consensus as the basis for equitable pedagogy; (3) the principles of “*Duduak Samo Randah, Tagak Samo Tinggi*” (sit low, stand tall) and “*Dima Bumi Dipijak, Disinan Langik Dijunjuang*” (wherever you step, that is where heaven is) to build an egalitarian school culture. The proposed “Contextual Multicultural Education” model synthesizes the universal principles of multicultural education with local wisdom in a transformative manner. This research contributes theoretically by enriching the discourse on multicultural education through the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge, empirically by documenting concrete cases in West Sumatra, and practically by offering policy recommendations for the reformulation of local content curricula, teacher training based on local wisdom, and school culture transformation.

**Keywords:** *Education, Multicultural, Revitalization, Minangkabau Local Wisdom*

## INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education has become an urgent need in an era of globalization and increasingly intensive mass migration (Hajisoteriou et al., 2024). Multicultural education is not merely the addition of content about diversity in the curriculum, but rather a systemic transformation that encompasses five fundamental dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture (Moussa et al., 2023). At the global level, UNESCO has made multicultural education an important pillar for achieving peace and social cohesion in an increasingly diverse society (Ovsienko et al., 2023). Multicultural education is no longer seen as a marginal issue, but rather as a strategic necessity for building a democratic, inclusive society that is capable of managing diversity as an asset, not a threat (Papadopoulou et al., 2022).

Indonesia, as a country with more than 300 ethnic groups and 700 regional languages (Suwito Eko et al., 2020), faces complex challenges in implementing multicultural education (Cathrin & Wikandaru, 2024). The national curriculum has accommodated character education and Pancasila as a unifying ideology, but in practice, many regions still experience social tensions stemming from ethnic, religious, and cultural differences (Amarullah et al., 2024). This phenomenon shows that a top-down approach that adopts a Western multicultural education model is not fully effective without considering local wisdom and the specific sociocultural context of each region (Yuniar et al., 2023). This failure indicates the need to reformulate a more contextual multicultural education approach, one that is rooted in local values but remains in line with universal principles of justice, tolerance, and respect for diversity (Abdullah et al., 2023).

West Sumatra is an interesting and paradoxical case in the context of multicultural education in Indonesia. On the one hand, the Minangkabau people have a traditional philosophy that is rich in values of tolerance, equality, and deliberation. The philosophy of "*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*" (ABS-SBK) emphasizes that customs are based on religion and religion is based on holy scriptures, which, in a progressive interpretation, can be understood as recognition of spiritual plurality derived from transcendent values (Aldi & Kawakib, 2025). The principle of "*Duduak Samo Randah, Tagak Samo Tinggi*" (sit equally low, stand equally high) reflects egalitarianism that rejects hierarchies based on birth, ethnicity, or social status. Meanwhile, the philosophy of "*Dima Bumi Dipijak, Disinan Langik Dijunjuang*" (wherever you set foot, that is where you honor the sky) teaches the principles of adaptation and respect for cultural diversity, a value that was born from centuries of tradition of migration (Abderrahim & Gutiérrez-Colón Plana, 2021). These values should make West Sumatra an ideal model for multicultural education, where tolerance and diversity are not only taught but practiced in daily life.

However, the reality of education in West Sumatra presents a picture that contradicts its traditional philosophy. In recent years, there have been a number of cases that indicate a multicultural crisis in the educational environment. First, the most prominent case of religious intolerance was the dissolution and destruction of the prayer house of the Indonesian Faithful Christian Church (GKSI) Anugerah in Padang Sarai Village, Padang City, on July 27, 2025 (BBC News, 2025). This incident occurred during a worship service and religious education activity for children, with around 30 children present, some of whom were injured. This case is not only an attack on religious freedom, but also a violation of children's rights to receive religious education

in accordance with their beliefs, a right guaranteed by the constitution and international conventions (Amnesty International Indonesia, 2025). Second, the viral bullying case in Agam Regency in January 2024 shows that the school environment is not yet a safe space for all students. A 28-second video recording of the beating of a junior high school student in Tanjung Mutiara District sparked public concern and police intervention (DetikNews, 2024). Bullying in schools is often linked to undemocratic social relations, stereotypes based on ethnicity or economic status, and the absence of fair conflict resolution mechanisms. Third, ethnic tensions between students from the Minangkabau group and migrants (Batak, Javanese, Nias, and others) are a latent issue that is rarely discussed openly but is often felt in daily interactions at school. A study by the West Sumatra Education Research shows that migrant students in several schools in West Sumatra experience difficulties in adapting due to the dominance of the Minang language, negative stereotypes, and a curriculum that does not accommodate cultural diversity.

This paradox shows a significant gap between traditional philosophy and educational practice. Although Minangkabau traditional values are actually very compatible with the principles of multicultural education, the formal education system in West Sumatra has not succeeded in translating these values into concrete curricula, pedagogy, and school culture. The existing local content curriculum focuses more on aspects of Minangkabau history and cultural arts, but lacks teaching of egalitarian values, deliberation, and tolerance as the basis for social interaction in diverse spaces (Syafri et al., 2024). Furthermore, studies on multicultural education in Indonesia tend to be dominated by the Javanese context or generic national-level analysis (Hadi et al., 2024). Specific research on West Sumatra with a focus on the integration of local wisdom is still very limited. Some studies have explored the Minangkabau traditional philosophy in the context of education, but the majority are philosophical or anthropological in nature without offering operational models that can be applied in formal education practices.

This study aims to fill this gap by integrating empirical analysis of multicultural education cases in West Sumatra (2024-2025) and the operationalization of Minangkabau traditional values into an applicable educational model. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) identify and analyze multicultural education problems in West Sumatra in three key domains of religious intolerance, bullying, and ethnic tension and explain these systemic failures using Banks' theoretical framework; (2) explore Minangkabau traditional values that are relevant and have the potential to form the basis of multicultural education solutions, with a focus on the principles of ABS-SBK, deliberative consensus, egalitarianism, and openness to diversity; and (3) formulate a model for revitalizing Minangkabau traditional values that can be operationalized into formal educational practices through curriculum reformulation, pedagogical transformation, and school cultural empowerment. Using Banks' theoretical framework of the five dimensions of multicultural education and the Indigenous Knowledge perspective (Mo'tasim et al., 2022), this study not only identifies the failures of the formal education system but also offers alternative solutions based on local wisdom.

This research is expected to make a significant contribution both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study fills the gap in research on multicultural education in West Sumatra, which has been very limited, enriches the academic discourse on the integration of Indigenous Knowledge in multicultural education, and contributes to the development of a theoretical

framework for multicultural education that not only adopts Western models but also explores the potential of local values that are more contextual and sustainable. In practical terms, this study provides policy recommendations for the West Sumatra Provincial Education Office in formulating a local content curriculum that is more responsive to multicultural challenges, provides guidance for education practitioners in integrating Minangkabau traditional values into learning practices and school management, and offers alternative solutions for indigenous communities and local stakeholders in revitalizing traditional values that are relevant to contemporary educational needs.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm. This paradigm was chosen because the focus of the study is to understand the meaning, interpretation, and sociocultural context of the phenomenon of multicultural education in West Sumatra (Agustini et al., 2023). More specifically, this study adopts two main complementary methods: hermeneutics and content analysis. Hermeneutics is used as a philosophical and methodological approach to interpret educational policy texts, curriculum documents, and Minangkabau traditional values. Gadamer asserts that hermeneutics is not merely a technique for analyzing texts, but a dialogical process between the text (policy document), context (social reality), and interpreter (researcher). In the context of this study, hermeneutics allows researchers to explore the gap between the idealism written in education policy documents and the reality in the field, particularly in the form of cases of intolerance, bullying, and ethnic tensions. Content analysis is used as a systematic technique to identify, categorize, and interpret patterns in policy documents, mass media reports, and academic literature (Arianto et al., 2025). The content analysis in this study is qualitative-thematic, where researchers not only count the frequency of keyword appearances but also focus more on identifying themes, narratives, and dominant discourses that emerge in various data sources.

This study uses three complementary categories of data sources to achieve data triangulation (Arianto, 2024). First, educational policy documents relevant to multicultural education and local content in West Sumatra, including the Merdeka Curriculum and the West Sumatra Local Content Curriculum, to identify the extent to which multicultural values and Minangkabau customs are integrated into the formal curriculum. Ministry of Education and Culture Regulations on Character Education and Pancasila Student Profiles to understand the normative framework of character education at the national level, as well as West Sumatra Provincial Regulations related to education, culture, and the implementation of traditional values in social life. The analysis of these documents focused on identifying the rhetoric and vision of multicultural education, the proposed implementation mechanisms, the success indicators set, and the presence or absence of references to Minangkabau traditional values as the basis for character and multicultural education.

Second, mass media reports and social media discourse on specific cases that occurred in West Sumatra during the 2024-2025 period, including cases of religious intolerance such as the dissolution of the GKSI Padang prayer house (July 2025) reported by Amnesty International Indonesia, KontraS, national media, and official statements from the Ministry of Religious

Affairs and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection; a viral bullying case in Agam Regency (January 2024) reported by various local and national media, including responses from the Agam Police and the school; and cases of ethnic tension based on academic and media reports of ethnic-based discrimination in educational settings. In addition to formal media reports, researchers also observed discourse on social media to identify patterns of cynicism, stereotypes, and narratives of intolerance circulating in the digital public sphere, as social media often becomes an arena where prejudices and social tensions are expressed more openly than in face-to-face interactions (Nasrullah, 2021).

Third, academic literature covering multicultural education theory, particularly Banks' (2015, 2019) works on the five dimensions of multicultural education, as well as literature on inclusive pedagogy and social justice in education, studies on Minangkabau traditional values from the works of Navis (2020), Kato (2019), Graves (2021) examining the ABS-SBK philosophy, matrilineal system, and egalitarian values in Minangkabau culture, as well as research on multicultural education in Indonesia by (Ovsienko et al., 2023) (Cathrin & Wikandaru, 2024) (Abdullah et al., 2023) which examine the implementation of multicultural education in various regions. In addition to academic literature, researchers also use personal experience reflections as part of the education community in West Sumatra. In the hermeneutic approach, the researcher's position as an insider is not a bias that must be eliminated, but rather a source of situational knowledge that enriches interpretation (Cahyadi et al., 2025). These personal reflections include informal observations of social interactions in the educational environment, experiences of witnessing or hearing narratives about cases of discrimination or intolerance, and a deep understanding of how Minangkabau traditional values are practiced or not practiced in daily life.

Data analysis was conducted in several iterative and dialogical stages, in accordance with Gadamer's hermeneutic principles and qualitative content analysis (Arianto et al., 2025). The first stage was initial reading and theme identification, in which the researchers read all policy documents, media reports, and academic literature to gain a general understanding of the dominant narratives, emerging themes, and initial patterns, using Banks' theoretical framework as an initial lens to identify systemic failures. The second stage is coding and categorization, in which researchers perform thematic coding to categorize data based on three key domains: religious intolerance, bullying, and ethnic tension, linking each case to Banks' failed multicultural education dimensions and Minangkabau traditional values that have the potential to be solutions. The coding process was carried out manually using a matrix table that linked cases, problems, failed Banks dimensions, relevant traditional values, and potential solutions.

The third stage was an analysis of the gap between idealism and reality, which was the core of the hermeneutic approach in this study. The researcher conducted a comparative analysis between what was written in education policy documents (rhetoric about tolerance, diversity, and Pancasila character) and what happened in media reports and personal experiences (cases of intolerance, bullying, and ongoing ethnic tensions). From this analysis, the researcher identifies an implementation gap that shows that existing policies are not yet effective in preventing or overcoming the multicultural crisis, and this gap is then explained using Banks' framework to show that the failure is systemic. The fourth stage is a hermeneutic interpretation of Minangkabau traditional values, in which the researcher conducts an interpretation with two key

questions: how can traditional values be interpreted in the context of contemporary multicultural education, and which values are most relevant and operational for overcoming the specific problems that have been identified. This interpretation is dialogical, in which the researcher does not merely quote traditional philosophy verbatim but interprets it in the context of 21st-century educational challenges. The fifth stage is data triangulation and validation of findings, in which researchers compare findings from three data sources to confirm that the patterns found are consistent (Arianto, 2024) , as well as conducting informal member checking by discussing preliminary findings with several colleagues who also have experience in education in West Sumatra.

In qualitative research with a hermeneutic approach, the researcher's position needs to be explained transparently to show how the researcher's background and experience influence the interpretation process (Berger, 2013). The researcher is part of the education community in West Sumatra and has a deep understanding of Minangkabau traditional values through life experiences and daily social interactions. The position as an insider gives the researcher access to situational knowledge that is not easily obtained by outside researchers, such as nuances in traditional practices, the dynamics of unwritten social relations, and a contextual understanding of how Minangkabau society interprets tolerance and diversity. However, the researcher also recognizes that the insider position carries the risk of confirmation bias and a tendency to romanticize traditional values without seeing their contradictions or limitations. To overcome this risk, researchers consistently engage in critical reflexivity by questioning their own assumptions, seeking data that may contradict their initial interpretations, and remaining open to the possibility that Minangkabau traditional values also have limitations or internal contradictions that need to be acknowledged.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

This study identified three main domains of multicultural education crisis in West Sumatra, each of which is related to the failure of specific dimensions in Banks' multicultural education framework. Each domain shows a gap between the ideal Minangkabau traditional philosophy and the actual educational practices in the field.

### **Religious Intolerance and Failure to Reduce Prejudice**

The most striking case illustrating the crisis of religious intolerance in West Sumatra was the dissolution and destruction of the prayer house of the Indonesian Faithful Christian Church (GKSI) Anugerah in Padang Sarai Village, Padang City, on July 27, 2025. This incident occurred during a worship service and religious education activity for children, with around 30 children present, several of whom suffered injuries due to panic and acts of violence committed by the mob. Reports from Amnesty International Indonesia (2025) and KontraS (2025) note that this incident was not only an attack on religious freedom, but also a violation of children's rights to receive religious education in accordance with their beliefs. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection strongly condemned the incident and requested psychosocial recovery for the traumatized child victims. What is interesting about this case is the reaction of some people on social media who justified the mob's actions on the grounds of

protecting the beliefs of the majority or maintaining the sanctity of Muslim areas. These narratives show that prejudice against religious minorities is not only individual in nature but has become a normalized discourse in the public sphere (Seo et al., 2025).

An analysis of this case of religious intolerance using the Prejudice Reduction dimension from Banks (2015) reveals systemic failures in several aspects. First, the curriculum does not teach minority perspectives. An analysis of the West Sumatra Local Content Curriculum shows that material on religious diversity is minimal, with more emphasis on Minangkabau history and culture from a Muslim majority perspective, without providing space to understand the experiences and contributions of Christian, Buddhist, or Hindu minority groups who are also part of West Sumatra society. Second, the absence of contact hypothesis programs, where Banks emphasizes in (Imbar & Mesra, 2024) the importance of positive interactions between different groups under equal conditions to reduce prejudice. However, in many schools in West Sumatra, students from religious minority groups are often isolated or do not have the opportunity to interact equally with majority students in meaningful activities. Third, teachers are not trained in anti-bias pedagogy, where informal observations show that most teachers do not have specific training on how to teach tolerance and overcome implicit bias. Some teachers even unconsciously reinforce negative stereotypes through comments or jokes that normalize prejudice. Fourth, schools do not respond seriously to incidents of intolerance, where when incidents of religious discrimination or bullying occur in schools, the school's response is often reactive and unsystematic without restorative justice or educational mechanisms to help students understand why their actions are problematic.

The philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), actually has great potential as a basis for prejudice reduction if interpreted inclusively. ABS-SBK emphasizes that customs are based on universal spiritual and ethical values derived from holy scriptures. In a progressive interpretation, the holy book here does not have to be understood literally as the Quran alone, but as transcendent values of justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity that are also found in other spiritual traditions. A.A Navis in (Judiasih et al., 2025) explains that in Minangkabau history, the ABS-SBK principle was actually born as a result of dialogue between local customs and Islam that came from outside, showing that Minangkabau tradition has the capacity to accommodate and integrate different value systems without losing its own identity. This principle can be revitalized in the context of multicultural education by teaching ABS-SBK as a principle of interfaith dialogue, using ABS-SBK's " " to criticize extremism by emphasizing that true Islamic values are a blessing for the universe, not exclusive or intolerant, and by developing a curriculum based on universal values such as justice, compassion, and honesty found in various spiritual traditions as the basis for character education.

### **Bullying and the Failure of Equity Pedagogy and Empowering School Culture**

The viral bullying case in Agam Regency in January 2024 is a clear example of how the school environment is not yet a safe space for all students. A 28-second video recording of the beating of a junior high school student in Tanjung Mutiara District sparked public concern and legal action, with the victim and perpetrator coming from the same school and the victim's parents reporting the case to the Agam Police. Although this case appears to be an isolated incident, analysis of bullying patterns in West Sumatra schools shows that bullying is often linked to

undemocratic social relations, where certain students feel they have the power to oppress other students based on economic status, popularity, or certain stereotypes. Bullying also often occurs because students are unable to resolve conflicts through deliberation, and schools do not provide effective mechanisms for conflict mediation. From informal observations by researchers in several schools in Padang and its surroundings, bullying based on ethnic or religious stereotypes also often occurs, although it is rarely reported formally, where students from minority or immigrant groups are often the targets of ridicule, social exclusion, or even physical violence without any systematic intervention from the school.

(Banks, 2015) defines Equity Pedagogy as the use of teaching methods that facilitate the academic success of students from various backgrounds fairly and inclusively, while Empowering School Culture is the transformation of school culture so that all students feel valued, safe, and have equal opportunities to develop. The cases of bullying in West Sumatra show failures in these two dimensions in several aspects. First, undemocratic teaching methods, where observations of teaching practices show that the dominant methods are still teacher-centered and authoritarian, with the teacher as the sole authority in the classroom, and students rarely allowed to express their opinions, discuss, or resolve conflicts collectively. This method creates a hierarchical culture where students learn that the strong win and the weak must submit, a pattern that is then replicated in the form of bullying. Second, the absence of deliberative conflict resolution education, although deliberation is a core value in Minangkabau culture, this value is not taught systematically in schools, and when conflicts arise between students, schools often use non-educational punishment approaches without giving students the opportunity to learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully and fairly. Third, a non-egalitarian school culture, where analysis of school rules shows that many rules are discriminatory or unfair. For example, students from wealthy families often receive preferential treatment, while students from poor families or migrants are often ignored or even treated more harshly, creating a school culture that is not empowering for all students. Fourth, teachers lack inclusive pedagogical competence, where teacher training in West Sumatra is still very lacking in terms of inclusive pedagogy that takes into account student diversity, so that teachers often do not know how to teach heterogeneous classes, and teaching methods tend to be one-size-fits-all, which is ineffective for all students.

The principle of deliberation to reach consensus is at the heart of the Minangkabau customary decision-making system, represented by the proverb "*Buliah digayuah, indak buliah dicabuik; buliah dianjak, indak buliah digoyah*" (issues can be discussed, but the honor of others must not be violated). This principle of deliberation is highly relevant to building Equity Pedagogy in schools in several ways. First, integrating deliberation as a learning method, where teachers can use group discussion, deliberation, and collective decision-making methods in learning. For example, when there is conflict in the classroom, teachers can facilitate a deliberation session where all parties are allowed to express their perspectives and together find a solution that is fair to all, teaching students that conflict is not resolved through violence but through dialogue. Second, building a democratic classroom culture, where teachers can form a democratically elected class council and give it the responsibility of resolving minor conflicts between students through deliberation, empowering students to become agents in creating a safe and fair environment. Third, train teachers in deliberation facilitation, where schools need to provide training to teachers on how to

facilitate effective deliberation, including active listening, conflict mediation, and creating a safe space for all voices to be heard.

The principle of "*Duduak samo randah, tagak samo tinggi*" (sit equally low, stand equally high) is also very relevant to building an Empowering School Culture. This principle can be operationalized by removing unfair hierarchies, where schools must apply the principle of egalitarianism in which all students, regardless of economic, ethnic, or religious background, are treated with respect and have equal opportunities without any student being more entitled or privileged. In addition, involving all students in decision-making, where schools can form student forums involving representatives from various groups to provide input on school policies, embodies the principle of *duduak samo randah* that all voices have equal weight. Finally, using traditional proverbs in character education, where teachers can teach Minangkabau proverbs about equality and deliberation as part of character education, so that students understand that these values are not just rhetoric but principles that must be practiced in everyday life.

### **Ethnic Tension and the Failure of *Content Integration* and *Knowledge Construction***

Ethnic tensions in the educational environment of West Sumatra are often latent and unspoken, but they are strongly felt by students from immigrant groups such as Batak, Javanese, Nias, and Mentawai. A study by Dewi et al. (2024) identified several significant forms of tension. First, the dominance of the Minang language in the school environment, where even though the official language of instruction is Indonesian, informal interactions between teachers and students or among students often use Minang, making immigrant students who do not master Minang feel marginalized and find it difficult to fully participate in school social life. Second, negative stereotypes against certain ethnic groups, where Batak students are often stereotyped as harsh or rowdy, Javanese students are considered weak or overly polite, while Mentawai students are sometimes ridiculed for being considered primitive or uncivilized. These stereotypes are reinforced through jokes, ridicule, and sometimes through learning materials that are insensitive to diversity. Third, a monocultural curriculum, in which the West Sumatra Local Content Curriculum focuses heavily on Minangkabau history, language, and culture without providing space to understand the history and contributions of other ethnic groups also living in West Sumatra, creating the perception that only Minangkabau culture is important and correct while other cultures are considered foreign or inferior. Fourth, economic disparities overlap with ethnic differences, where a study by (Sollis et al., 2023) shows that conflicts between the Minangkabau and Javanese ethnic groups are often triggered by economic disparities and competition over the management of local resources. and these economic tensions then spill over into the realm of education, where children from more affluent immigrant families become targets of jealousy or bullying.

(Banks, 2015) asserts that *Content Integration* is a process in which teachers use content and examples from various cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subjects, while *Knowledge Construction* is a process in which teachers help students understand how knowledge is created and influenced by cultural, social, and political biases. The case of ethnic tension in West Sumatra shows failure in these two dimensions in several aspects. First, the curriculum does not integrate content from various cultures, where subjects such as History, Regional Language and Literature, and Cultural Arts in West Sumatra

focus almost entirely on Minangkabau culture without any systematic effort to integrate the history of the migration of the Javanese, Batak, or Nias ethnic groups to West Sumatra or to teach about their contributions to regional development. So that students from immigrant groups feel that their history and culture are not valued or considered important. Second, there is no education on how knowledge is constructed, where students are not taught that the history they learn is the result of a particular perspective and that there may be other perspectives that differ. For example, when teaching Minangkabau history, teachers rarely explain that this is history from the perspective of the dominant group and that minority groups may have different experiences and narratives. Third, biased textbooks and learning materials, where analysis of the textbooks used shows that the representation of non-Minang ethnic groups is minimal or even stereotypical. For example, in local history textbooks, Javanese ethnic groups are often described only as migrants who work on plantations without explaining their contributions to the economy, education, or culture of West Sumatra. Fourth, teachers lack the competence to teach from a multicultural perspective, where most teachers in West Sumatra are Minangkabau, and they are not trained to teach from a multicultural perspective or to integrate content from various cultures into learning, so that teaching tends to be ethnocentric, using Minangkabau culture as the only standard for assessing other cultures.

Ironically, Minangkabau culture actually has a very strong tradition of openness and adaptation, reflected in the proverb "*Dima Bumi Dipijak, Disinan Langik Dijunjuang*" (wherever you set foot, that is where you honor the sky), which teaches the principles of social flexibility and respect for local norms. When Minang people migrate, they are expected to respect and adapt to the local culture. However, this principle must also apply reciprocally: when outsiders come to West Sumatra, the local community must also respect and make room for their culture. The proverb "*Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*" (nature is our teacher) teaches that learning can come from anywhere and anyone, not just from one's own group. This value is very relevant to building inclusive Knowledge Construction in several ways. First, integrating the history and culture of immigrant groups into the curriculum, where schools can revise the Local Content Curriculum to include the history of migration and contributions of the Javanese, Batak, Nias, Mentawai, and other ethnic groups in West Sumatra. For example, in local history lessons, students can learn about how the Javanese contributed to the development of the agricultural and plantation sectors or how the Batak contributed to the trade and education sectors. Second, use a comparative approach in teaching culture, where teachers can teach Minangkabau culture not as the only correct culture but as one of many cultures in West Sumatra. For example, when teaching about the Minangkabau matrilineal kinship system, teachers can also explain the Batak patrilineal system or the Javanese bilateral system and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each system without judgment. Third, hold a cultural diversity festival at school, where the school can hold an event where students from various ethnic backgrounds are given the opportunity to present their culture, such as food, dance, and folklore, not only to increase students' knowledge about diversity but also to give recognition and appreciation to students from minority groups. Fourth, teach the principle of *alam takambang jadi guru* (nature becomes the teacher) as an inclusive epistemology, where teachers can teach that knowledge does not only come from textbooks or teachers but also from the experiences and perspectives of people who

are different from us, encouraging students to learn from their friends who come from different ethnic backgrounds and to appreciate differences as a source of learning.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings Based on Three Crisis Domains

Problem Domain	Case Form	Banks' Dimension Failure	Main Impact
<b>Religious Intolerance</b>	Dissolution of the GKSI Padang House of Prayer (2025)	Prejudice Reduction	Prejudice against minorities, violation of children's rights, and normalization of intolerance
<b>Bullying</b>	Case of student assault in Agam (2024)	Equity Pedagogy & Empowering School Culture	Unsafe school culture, undemocratic power relations
<b>Ethnic Tensions</b>	Stereotypes against migrant students (Batak, Javanese, Nias, Mentawai)	Content Integration & Knowledge Construction	Cultural exclusion, adaptation barriers, and marginalized minority identities

Table 2. The gap between Minangkabau traditional values and educational practices

Minangkabau Traditional Values	Ideal Meaning	Current Educational Practices	Emerging Gap
<b>ABS-SBK</b>	Universal ethics, living based on justice and compassion	Interpreted exclusively, dominant for the justification of the majority	Emergence of religious intolerance and prejudice
<b>Consensus</b>	Fair and democratic conflict resolution	Authoritarian learning, conflicts resolved through punishment	Bullying emerges and is not resolved through dialogue
<b>Sit Low, Stand High</b>	Egalitarianism between individuals/groups	Hierarchical and discriminatory school culture	Inequality among students, social bullying
<b>Wherever you tread, that is where heaven resides</b>	Cross-cultural respect	Expectations of one-way assimilation (immigrants must adapt)	Ethnic tensions and stereotypes
<b>Nature is the Teacher</b>	All experiences are sources of knowledge	Minority students' knowledge is not considered a source of learning	Monocultural curriculum and Minang bias

## Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a fundamental paradox in multicultural education in West Sumatra, where the Minangkabau traditional philosophy, rich in values of egalitarianism, tolerance, and deliberation, fails to translate into concrete educational practices. This paradox requires in-depth analysis to understand why these theoretically ideal values do not function in the reality of education. Using Bourdieu's sociological perspective in "On Cultural Capital and Symbolic Violence, it can be understood that the education system is never neutral; it always reproduces and legitimizes the dominance of certain groups through mechanisms that appear natural or neutral, but are in fact biased. The philosophy of ABS-SBK, which should be the basis for tolerance and pluralism, is often interpreted in practice in an exclusive and hegemonic manner. The case of the dissolution of the GKSI Padang prayer house shows that some people understand ABS-SBK not as a dialogue between customs and universal spiritual values, but as a justification for the domination of the Muslim majority over other religious minorities. The exclusive interpretation of ABS-SBK is a form of symbolic violence, namely domination that is legitimized through a system of cultural meanings and symbols that are accepted as natural or correct. A study by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2023) on identity-based persecution in West Sumatra confirms that Minangkabau customary values can be displaced by narrower identity sentiments when identity politics exploits customary symbols for the interests of certain groups.

The principle of deliberative consensus, which should be the basis for democracy and equality, in practice often only applies at the customary elite level but is not applied in everyday relationships, including in schools. The transformation of Minangkabau customs in the contemporary era shows a large gap between egalitarian rhetoric and hierarchical practices in Minangkabau society (Abderrahim & Gutiérrez-Colón Plana, 2021). In schools, although teachers often teach about the value of deliberation in local content lessons, their teaching methods are authoritarian and teacher-centered (Zuwirna et al., 2020). This is a clear example of what is known as banking style education, where teachers passively deposit knowledge into students without dialogue or active participation (Susanto et al., 2020). This method creates a culture that contradicts the value of deliberation, where students learn that power lies in the hands of authority rather than in collective dialogue. The case of bullying in Agam Regency can be understood as a manifestation of the hierarchical culture that students learn from authoritarian teaching methods (Purwandari et al., 2024). Students who are accustomed to undemocratic teacher-student relationships will replicate the same pattern in peer relationships, where the strong dominate the weak without any deliberative mechanisms to resolve conflicts. Banks emphasizes that *Equity Pedagogy* is not only about what is taught but how it is taught, and authoritarian methods will never produce democratic and tolerant students, no matter how good the material on tolerance is (Raihani, 2022).

The proverb "wherever you set foot, that is where you must respect the sky above" teaches the principles of adaptation and respect for diversity. Ironically, however, these principles are often only expected of Minang people who migrate, but are not reciprocally applied to migrants who come to West Sumatra (Saija et al., 2021). The ethnic tensions experienced by migrant students show that the openness of Minangkabau culture has asymmetrical limits. Using Bhabha's

concept of the third space in intercultural interactions, it can be understood that healthy cultural interactions require a space for negotiation where both parties are willing to change, not just one party having to adapt while the other remains dominant (Ashadi, 2020). In the context of education in West Sumatra, what happens is that migrant students are expected to fully assimilate into Minangkabau culture, such as learning the Minang language and following Minang social norms, but Minang students and the education system do not make equivalent efforts to understand and accommodate migrant cultures. The dominance of the Minang language in the school environment creates linguistic exclusion for migrant students (Hamid et al., 2021). In this context, the dominance of the Minang language in schools is a form of symbolic violence that creates an ethnicity-based hierarchy, even though it is never explicitly stated.

The findings of this study also criticize the mainstream top-down model of multicultural education, which adopts a Western framework without considering the local context (Moeis et al., 2022). (Banks, 2015) Although highly influential in the discourse on multicultural education, still originates from the context of the United States, which has a very different history and sociocultural configuration from Indonesia. One of the main criticisms is the assumption of universalism, that principles such as equality, tolerance, and social justice have the same meaning in all contexts. However, postcolonial studies show that concepts considered universal are often projections of Western values disguised as universal. In the context of Indonesia, and West Sumatra in particular, the concepts of equality and tolerance cannot be separated from existing local value systems. The concept of "*Duduak Samo Randah, Tagak Samo Tinggi*" (sit low, stand high) is a form of contextual egalitarianism that differs from the liberal individualistic concept of equality. Minangkabau egalitarianism is communal egalitarianism, where equality does not mean that all individuals have the same rights to do anything, but that all groups have an equal position in collective decision-making (Fadri & Prayoga, 2025).

The failure of multicultural education in West Sumatra can be explained as a failure to connect universal principles with local particular values. A curriculum that teaches tolerance as an abstract concept without connecting it to traditional values that are familiar to students will feel foreign and irrelevant. Conversely, if multicultural education is integrated with traditional values such as ABS-SBK, deliberation, and alam takambang jadi guru (Abderrahim & Gutiérrez-Colón Plana, 2021), students will find it easier to understand and internalize these values because they feel rooted in their own identity. Paulo Freire emphasizes that true education is not about the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, but about a dialogical process in which teachers and students together reflect on their reality and act to change it. Freire's concept of dialectical reflection and action praxis is highly relevant to understanding how the revitalization of Minangkabau traditional values can be a tool for liberation in multicultural education. Revitalizing traditional values does not mean returning to the past in a romantic way, but reinterpreting traditional values in the context of contemporary challenges. This is praxis in Freire's sense, where students not only learn about traditional values as dead knowledge, but are invited to critique how these values have been misused, such as ABS-SBK being used to justify intolerance, and then imagine and practice alternative interpretations that are more inclusive and fair.

The use of Minangkabau traditional values as the basis for multicultural education is not only a pragmatic strategy but also an epistemological challenge to the hegemony of Western knowledge in the Indonesian education system (Sibawaihi, 2022). The most persistent form of colonialism is epistemological colonialism, which is the assumption that valid knowledge only comes from Western academic traditions, while local or Indigenous knowledge is considered primitive, unscientific, or irrelevant (Ortley, 2005). One of the biggest obstacles in revitalizing traditional values is the lack of legitimacy of traditional knowledge in the formal education system. Teachers and students often view traditional values as interesting stories from their ancestors but irrelevant to modern life, or not equivalent to Western scientific theories. However, studies in the field of Indigenous Knowledge Systems show that local knowledge has epistemological validity equivalent to Western academic knowledge, because local knowledge is based on empirical experience and critical reflection that has been tested for centuries in specific contexts. Minangkabau traditional values, such as *musyawarah mufakat* (consensus-based deliberation), are the result of a trial-and-error process in managing conflicts and making collective decisions in a diverse society. This is a form of practical knowledge that is highly relevant to multicultural education (Moeis et al., 2022).

To legitimize indigenous knowledge, the education system needs to undergo an epistemological transformation by teaching indigenous values not as traditions but as theories, where teachers can teach that the principle of "*Duduak Samo Randah, Tagak Samo Tinggi*" (sit low, stand tall) is a theory of social justice equivalent to the theories of Rawls or Habermas but originating from a local context and therefore more relevant (Wiratraman & Budi, 2023). In addition, using comparative methods, where teachers can compare the concept of *musyawarah mufakat* with Habermas' concept of deliberative democracy or compare ABS-SBK with theories about the relationship between religion and the state, shows that indigenous knowledge can dialogue with Western academic knowledge on an equal footing (Siregar, 2023). The proverb "*Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*" (nature is our teacher) is a very progressive Indigenous epistemology that is relevant to multicultural education. This proverb teaches that knowledge does not only come from authorities such as teachers or textbooks, but from experience, observation, and interaction with diverse realities. In the context of multicultural education, this principle can be interpreted as: everyone, regardless of ethnic background, religion, or social status, is a valid source of knowledge. Students from minority or immigrant groups are not just objects that need to be helped or integrated, but they are subjects who have knowledge and perspectives that can enrich the learning of all students. Transformative learning theory explains that deep learning occurs when individuals are confronted with perspectives that differ from their assumptions, and through critical reflection, they change their frame of reference (Singer-Brodowski, 2025). The principle of "*Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*" (nature is the teacher) is the basis for *transformative learning* in a multicultural context, where Minang students learn from the perspectives of Batak, Javanese, or Nias students, and through dialogue, they change their stereotypical assumptions and develop a more complex understanding of diversity.

Although the revitalization of Minangkabau traditional values offers promising solutions, its implementation faces a number of structural challenges that cannot be ignored. First, there are limitations in teacher competence, with research findings showing that most teachers in West Sumatra lack the competence to teach from a multicultural perspective or to integrate traditional

values into pedagogy (Hamid et al., 2021). This is not the fault of individual teachers but a systemic failure in the teacher education system. Teacher training institutions in West Sumatra need to revise the teacher education curriculum to include compulsory courses on multicultural education based on local wisdom, inclusive pedagogical training, such as *discussion-based learning* and *restorative justice* in line with the principle of deliberative consensus, and teaching practices in diverse contexts so that prospective teachers understand the real challenges of multicultural education. Second, resistance to change from dominant groups, where the revitalization of traditional values in an inclusive sense will face resistance from groups that have benefited from exclusive interpretations. Dominant groups will always try to maintain their cultural capital because it is a source of power and *privilege*. In the context of West Sumatra, groups that have benefited from an exclusive interpretation of ABS-SBK or the dominance of the Minang language and culture may reject efforts to make education more inclusive on the grounds of protecting traditional identity or preserving cultural purity. To overcome this resistance, strong leadership is needed from education policymakers who dare to declare that the revitalization of traditional values is not a betrayal of tradition but rather the true fulfillment of the egalitarian and tolerant values that are at the core of Minangkabau customs. Third, limited resources and infrastructure, where the implementation of multicultural education based on local wisdom requires investment in the development of learning materials, teacher training, and school infrastructure transformation. But many schools, especially in rural areas, face serious budget constraints, indicating that the revitalization of traditional values cannot be merely a cultural project but must be supported by political commitment and adequate budget allocation from local and central governments (Amarullah et al., 2024).

This discussion shows that effective multicultural education requires a synthesis between universal principles and particular local values. The proposed model in this study can be referred to as the Contextual Multicultural Education Model with characteristics based on a solid theoretical framework using Banks' five dimensions of multicultural education as a diagnostic framework to identify systemic failures, rooted in local wisdom by exploring and revitalizing existing Minangkabau traditional values that are familiar to the community, critical of romanticization by not romanticizing traditional values as a panacea without problems but acknowledging that these values have been misused and need to be critically reinterpreted. Transformative and emancipatory by using Freire's critical pedagogy principles to not only teach tolerance but empower students to become agents of social change who can critique and change structures of injustice, as well as contextual and adaptable by being designed for the context of West Sumatra but with an analytical framework and principles that can be adapted to other regions in Indonesia with different local wisdom. This model makes a significant theoretical contribution by showing that solutions to the multicultural crisis do not have to be sought from outside but can be explored from within, from existing local wisdom that has been neglected or misused.

Table 3. Analysis of the Causes of Crisis Based on Banks' Framework

<b>Banks' Dimensions</b>	<b>Field Failure Indicators</b>	<b>Case Examples / Evidence</b>
<b>Prejudice Reduction</b>	No anti-bias education, high religious prejudice	GKSI Padang Case
<b>Equity Pedagogy</b>	Authoritarian teaching, no conflict resolution	Agam bullying case
<b>Empowering School Culture</b>	School is not inclusive, with a strong hierarchy	Inequitable treatment among students
<b>Content Integration</b>	The curriculum only covers the Minang culture	Lack of representation of immigrant ethnic groups
<b>Knowledge Construction</b>	Students are not taught that knowledge is multi-perspective	Bias toward the narratives of dominant groups

Table 4. Solutions for Revitalizing Traditional Values as a Model for Multicultural Education

<b>Components of Traditional Values</b>	<b>How to Operationalize in Schools</b>	<b>Expected Impact</b>
<b>Inclusive ABS-SBK</b>	Character education based on universal values	Reduction of prejudice and intolerance
<b>Consensus-based deliberation</b>	Conflict resolution through classroom dialogue	Democratic school environment
<b>Minang egalitarianism</b>	Joint decision-making, student forums	Strengthening an inclusive school culture
<b>Openness to other cultures</b>	Integration of immigrant cultures in projects and curriculum	Ethnic harmony
<b>Nature as a Teacher</b>	Using students' experiences of " " as a source of learning	-based learning on diversity

## CONCLUSION

The problem of multicultural education in West Sumatra manifests itself in three concrete domains: (1) religious intolerance, marked by the dissolution of the GKSI Padang house of prayer in July 2025, (2) viral bullying in Agam Regency in January 2024, and (3) ethnic tensions between Minangkabau students and migrants (Batak, Javanese, Nias, Mentawai). Systemic failures occurred in five dimensions of Banks' multicultural education: the Prejudice Reduction dimension failed because the curriculum did not teach minority perspectives and there were no programs for positive interaction between different groups; the Equity Pedagogy dimension failed because teaching methods were still authoritarian and teacher-centered without space for democratic dialogue; the Empowering School Culture dimension failed because the school culture was hierarchical and discriminatory, without a deliberative conflict resolution mechanism; the Content Integration dimension failed because the curriculum was monocultural, only covering Minangkabau culture; and the Knowledge Construction dimension failed because

students were not taught that knowledge is multi-perspective. The root of this failure is not the absence of tolerance in Minangkabau culture, but rather the inability of the education system to translate traditional philosophy into concrete practice, coupled with an exclusive interpretation of traditional values for the benefit of the majority group.

Four Minangkabau customary values have proven to be relevant and have the potential to form the basis of a solution: (1) *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) which, if interpreted inclusively, can form the basis for interfaith dialogue by emphasizing universal transcendent values such as justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity found in various spiritual traditions; (2) *Musyawarah mufakat* (consensus-based deliberation), which can be operationalized as a method of discussion-based learning, collective deliberation, and conflict mediation, teaching students that conflicts are resolved through dialogue rather than violence; (3) “*Duduak Samo Randah, Tagak Samo Tingg*” (sit low, stand tall), which teaches communal egalitarianism, can be applied to eliminate unfair hierarchies in schools and ensure that all students are treated with respect regardless of their economic, ethnic, or religious backgrounds; (4) “*Dima bumi dipijak, disinan langik dijunjuang*” (Wherever you set foot, that is where you belong) and “*alam takambang jadi guru*” (nature is our teacher), which teach openness to cultural diversity and inclusive epistemology, that everyone is a valid source of knowledge. These values were chosen because of their compatibility with the principles of universal multicultural education while being rooted in local identities that are familiar to the people of West Sumatra.

The proposed “Contextual Multicultural Education” model operationalizes Minangkabau traditional values through three strategic interventions: (1) Reformulating the local content curriculum by integrating the history and culture of immigrant groups, teaching ABS -SBK as a principle of interfaith dialogue rather than a justification for majority domination, using a comparative approach in cultural teaching that positions Minangkabau culture as one of many cultures rather than the only correct one, and adopting the proverb “*Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*” (nature is our teacher) as an inclusive epistemology that recognizes the experiences of minority students as a source of learning; (2) Pedagogical transformation through teacher training in discussion-based learning methods, facilitation of deliberation for conflict resolution, anti-bias pedagogy to reduce prejudice, and teaching competencies from a multicultural perspective, as well as the formation of democratic class councils that resolve conflicts through deliberation rather than punishment; (3) Empowering school culture by applying the principle of “*Duduak Samo Randah, Tagak Samo Tingg*” (sit low, stand high) to eliminate background-based privilege, forming student forums that involve representation from various groups in school decision-making, holding cultural diversity festivals to give recognition to minority students, and establishing deliberation-based restorative justice mechanisms when incidents of discrimination or bullying occur. This model is transformative in that it does not romanticize traditional values but interprets them critically to address contemporary challenges, and is contextual yet adaptable to other regions with different local wisdom.

The contribution of this research is multidimensional: theoretically, it enriches the discourse on multicultural education with the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and challenges the hegemony of Western epistemology in the Indonesian education system. empirically documents concrete cases of multicultural crises in West Sumatra during the 2024-2025 period, which have

been under-documented in academic literature, and practically offers applicable policy recommendations for the West Sumatra Provincial Education Office in formulating curricula, training teachers, and transforming school culture. However, the implementation of this model faces structural challenges that require political commitment and adequate budget allocation: limitations in teacher competence that require restructuring teacher education in teacher training colleges, resistance from dominant groups that benefit from an exclusive interpretation of traditional values, and limited resources, especially in rural schools. Further research using action research or pilot projects in schools is needed to test the effectiveness of this model and identify practical challenges in its implementation.

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, this study uses a hermeneutic approach and content analysis without collecting empirical field data through in-depth interviews or participatory observation in schools, so that the understanding of the micro-dynamics in teacher-student interactions depends on media reports and the researcher's personal reflections. Second, this study focuses on three problem domains (religious intolerance, bullying, and ethnic tension) and has not explored other multicultural issues such as gender diversity, disability, or sexual orientation. Third, the proposed model for revitalizing traditional values is still conceptual and has not been tested through pilot projects in schools, so its effectiveness and practical challenges are not yet fully known. Fourth, the researcher's position as an insider in the Minangkabau community may influence interpretation, despite critical reflexivity. Fifth, the findings of this study are specific to the context of West Sumatra and cannot be directly generalized to other regions in Indonesia that have different sociocultural configurations. Further research using ethnographic, action research, or comparative study methods in various regions would be very useful to validate and develop the findings of this study.

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