



# The Integration of National and Religious Identity: An Overview of Identity Development in Elementary Schools

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Article History	Abstract
Received August 02, 2023	<i>Conflicts between groups in Indonesia continue to occur, and diverse studies have attempted to find solutions. As one of the efforts to find these solutions, this research focuses on national identity development as a long-term effort to establish an inclusive national identity to reduce conflict between groups. This study aimed to provide an overview of the national identity development process implemented in public and private elementary schools. The data collection methods employed were observation, interviews, and document analysis. Coding analysis is applied to sort the data and generate themes for the findings. The empirical findings and discussion generate the following conclusions: First, efforts to develop a national identity in public and private elementary schools run comprehensively through cognitive aspects (thoughts, understanding, and principles), affective aspects (attitudes and appreciation), and behavioral aspects (actions and habits). These three aspects are well implemented in the school's vision, curriculum, subject matter, learning process, non-academic activities, and social life. Second, there are kinds of national identities such as national symbols, religious identity, ethnic identity, and environmental identity. However, national identity and religious identity are boldly emphasized. This is to anticipate the tension between national identity and religious identity, which might stimulate conflict between identities. Therefore, national and religious identities are socialized as two unified identities. Finally, the success rate of the development of national identity in schools varies due to various factors. However, this is a prospect for further research, especially in schools, families, and society.</i>
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## INTRODUCTION

The cultural wealth is a fundamental asset of the Indonesian nation. Multicultural education, a healthy democratic life, the tourism industry, to the creative economy are

some of the nation's potentials that rely on the nation's cultural wealth. The proper utilization of diversity will help Indonesia to become a developed nation.

That utilization has a complex history because cultural diversity is like a double-



edged sword: on the one hand, it has substantial positive benefits. On the other hand, it also carries the risk of creating conflicts. In reality, this risk has been happening and still to be counted. The national landscape recorded that from 1963 to 1999, there were at least 20 anti-Chinese conflicts (Susetyo 2010). In addition, 600 people became victims in the conflict between Madurese and Dayaks in Sampit Regency in 2001 (Sanjaya 2023). The conflict between Islam and Christianity in Poso District (1998-2000) (Pramono 2013) and Ambon (2011) has not yet completely subsided (Ambon.go.id 2014). Between 1955 and 1998, it was recorded that 30 mosques/madrasahs and 400 churches were closed, damaged, or burned (Susetyo 2010). Intra-religious conflicts are no better. Problems in Muslim community groups, for instance, Ahmadiyah and Indonesia Institute of Islamic Dawah (LDII) congregations, have often been victims of discrimination by dominant Islamic groups. Furthermore, violence against religious freedom increased, especially after the emergence of heretical fatwas against Ahmadiyah and haram fatwas against pluralism (Susetyo 2010).

This phenomenon will continue to occur in the coming years. In 2016-2017, Indonesians were polarized into two parties in response to a case where non-Muslims insulted the holy verses of the Quran. Moreover, it was related to the gubernatorial election, where virtual spaces were overwhelmed with discrimination and bullying among the parties - even after the gubernatorial election was over (Firmansyah 2020). Another case is the explosion of the Shia community from Madura Island, which deferred for years until it showed signs of reconciliation in 2020 (Rasi 2020). Likewise, the mosque construction in Sentani reaped some adverse reactions from other religions, forcing the Minister of Religion to intervene (Sutari 2018). This dynamic revived the trauma of a similar accident in Tolikara several years earlier (Ilham 2015). Based on the data from the mid-1960s to the present, inter-group conflicts may be an iceberg metaphor where

the actual conflicts are more significant than the known ones.

These conflicts theoretically reflect the poor intergroup relations in a pluralistic Indonesian society. According to Meinarno and Sarwono, deteriorating inter-group relations are indicated by the emergence of prejudice, ingroup favoritism bias, and low inter-group helping behavior (Meinarno and Sarwono 2018). In contrast, it is in line with the finding that healthy inter-group relationships are characterized by high outgroup tolerance, helping behavior, and intergroup peace. The cases of the burning of worship houses, the exclusion of community groups, online discrimination, and social media bullying show that Indonesians have serious problems with intergroup relations (Dovidio, Gaertner, Validzic et al. 1997).

Zein reviewed that the negotiation between ethnic and national identity in the Indonesian context has been a positive consensus (Zein 2018). That is, both identities can get along with each other. However, the author is also convinced that the negotiation between religious and national identity has been in a complex state (Lestari 2018). In other words, both can be either beneficial or conflictual. Furthermore, this article aims to deepen the anticipation at an early age.

This article states that the root of these intergroup conflicts has been unconsciously developed during the earlier age through the education system. It relates to Roccas and Brewer's concept that social identity does not develop in a short period of time. Rather, it develops longitudinally during one's lifetime trajectory (Roccas and Brewer 2002). It could be through family, school, and society that one feels part of a group. Furthermore, the following analysis will explain the roots of these conflicts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Efforts to form a national identity have been developed since childhood. Practically, these efforts are made through education at

home, school, and community. This research focuses on the school context. If the education system develops a national identity formation program well, students will tend to be inclusive and tolerant of group differences. The difference still exists, but it is no longer an issue as they remain fellow Indonesians. It is a process of re-categorizing outgroups into ingroups. On the other hand, if the development of national identity in schools does not work well, students tend to have a low national identity where different sectarian social identities dominate their awareness. This pattern has emerged in many countries. Moreover, when a national identity stands strong, the government is considerably successful in promoting national identity (Verkuyten and Martinovic 2012).

The concern about developing an exclusive social identity is not a mere assumption. The Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah reported that 43.88% of the 1,859 high school students who participated in the study tended to support intolerant actions (Suyanto 2021). Halili's report found a potential for passive intolerance among students at around 35.7%, active intolerance at 2.4%, and 0.3% in the form of terror. The remaining 61.6% of students remain tolerant (Wardah 2023). While the percentage of tolerance is still higher, the potential for this intolerance can become a "cancer" if not followed up. Research by the Institute for Islamic Studies and Peace (Dja'far 2015) found that intolerant thought occurs among students and teachers of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This is evidenced by their support for vandalism and sabotage of places of worship (41.1% students, 24.5% teachers). In addition, they also agree with destroying the property of religious congregations that are considered heretical (51.3% students, 22.7% teachers) (Dja'far 2015).

School type also seems to influence tolerance among different religious identities. Cholilurrohman's research shows that students in public senior high school (SMA) have

different levels of tolerance than students in private senior high schools based on religion, and students in senior high schools with dormitories (*pesantren*) (Cholilurrohman 2016). Furthermore, the level of multiculturalism level as the impact of Islamic education lessons was investigated in three types of senior high schools (SMA, MA, and SMK). The result revealed that the students of *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) showed higher multiculturalism than SMA and SMK (Wibowo 2018). Whereas, in senior high schools, it was found that the philanthropic behavior of senior high school students was higher towards their ingroup (religious identity) than their outgroup (Anto 2022).

The data above are examples where students and teachers show an exclusive social identity. Schools, as places of education, formation, and development of an inclusive national identity, have become places to develop the opposite group identity. The strength of the exclusive social identities will weaken the national identity, indicated by the decrease in intergroup harmony, lack of mutual assistance, and an increase in the potential for intergroup conflict (Anto 2015).

Based on the phenomenon in Indonesia, cases of intolerance, prejudice, and intergroup conflicts are generally committed by adults. However, based on this research, the seeds of intolerance have emerged since they were in school. Theoretically, it is safe to assume that the agenda of developing a national identity at the school level is under serious question. Schools, families, and communities as incubators of national identity development are failing to establish national identity; thus, society is being isolated into more sectarian identities. This is the critical point of this research.

This study aims to describe the development process of national identity in public and private schools. Various journal articles on social identity and intergroup relations found that these studies were generally conducted on adult respondents and adolescents, such as high school students

(Sartana and Saptandari 2023). Meanwhile, research and literature on national identity development at the age of children (elementary school stage) remain quite limited, even though identity development has started since childhood. Therefore, the research team believes that this project is not only urgently needed, but will also bring novelty to expanding the field of social identity research and other relevant topics.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Indonesia's representation as a friendly and welcoming country is associated with intergroup mutual cooperation throughout its cultural diversity. This is the idealized image of Indonesia. The diversity of ethnic groups, religions, races, and political affiliations (SARA) is relevant to the research findings by Dovidio about intergroup health relationships (Dovidio et al. 1997). The motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" is also a "spell" to unite the various groups. Furthermore, the state has determined the national identity (flag, language, national anthem, and national anthem) in CHAPTER XV of the 1945 Constitution.

National identity results from a sense of attachment to the nation (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar and Diamantopoulos 2015). And it contains psychological and social properties as a citizen of a nation (Jaspal and Cinnirella 2013). Social psychology has also investigated the importance of national identity as a symbol of integration. Integration epitomizes one identity that contains diverse identities to live together in harmony. Various research reveals the importance of common identity (Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes et al. 2016), collective identity (Alcantud and Andrés Calle 2017), collective self (Smeekes and Verkuyten 2013), and superordinate identity that transcends the barriers of group differences and unites the diverse communities (ingroup). In this case, national identity, which has an integrative function, has the same position and function as collective identity, common identity, collective

self, and superordinate identity: to transcend the barriers of religion, ethnicity, race, and groups. However, national identity ideally becomes the main social identity compared to others. If it becomes the people's collective consciousness, they might feel united in a large ingroup that transcends differences. This is the society that embraces *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity). With a solid national identity, the sense of nationality is well preserved. Thus, the intergroup relationship becomes healthier.

Intergroup relationships in Indonesian society are vulnerable. Theoretically, this results from a weak national identity and the strengthening of more sectarian group identities. The condition of Indonesia, which is often characterized by conflicts of ethnicity, religion, race, and the like, indicates the weakening of national identity as a common identity. The function of national identity to harmonize all social differences is not working effectively. As a result, public awareness is no longer dominated by a unitary nation and state, but rather by conflicting group identities. The Islam-Christian conflict in Tolikara-Papua in 2015, the Javanese & Chinese conflict in many places, and the riots among groups of football fans are examples of intolerant behavior driven by certain identities and overlapping with other groups.

National identity is part of the self-concept that makes a person feel, think, and believe that he or she is part of the nation. Their association with national identity sometimes involves an emotional dimension (Tajfel 1974). In the Indonesian context, the degree of national identity is characterized by the awareness of being a nation above other identities such as ethnicity, religion, race, and sectarian groups. However, the formation of national identity is not a quick process. It is formed along with life experiences (Roccas and Brewer 2002). Besides, research shows that ethnic minority groups in the United Kingdom identify themselves more with their place of origin than with their current place of residence (Platt 2013). This finding shows the

strength of attached social identity, which remains unchanged despite the citizenship changes. It also explains that social identity is instituted along with life experiences. The same thing happened to Muslim-Turkish citizens who immigrated to the Netherlands and have lived there for a long time. Despite changing nationality, they see themselves more as Turks (Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007).

In other words, from the process viewpoint, identity education should ideally be implemented consistently since childhood. Hence, the identity is robustly established and integrated into the self-concept as one approaches adulthood. Another real example is the 1945 independence generation of Indonesia. Their struggle against colonialism throughout their lives to achieve Indonesian independence has formed their national identity.

Internalized identity in children develops over a long period of time and through a continuous educational process in the family, school, and community. For example, in developmental psychology, gender identity education in children begins at the age of three through the provision of gender-specific toys (Marjanovič-Umek and Fekonja-Peklaj 2017), as does the education of national identity. It is the result of the national education within the family, school, and society.

This perspective leads us to understand that the insight and behavior of a person's nationality when they grow up result from an extended education of developing national identity in the family, school, and community. Therefore, with the continuous occurrence of various intergroup conflicts in Indonesian society, this study intends to draw a picture of the development of national identity in schools.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research conducted from March to July 2022 is a qualitative descriptive study of two elementary schools (*Sekolah Dasar/SD*) namely, SD Negeri 1 Sekaran, and SD Hj. Isriati Baiturrohman. Both are located in

Semarang City. Isriati Elementary School is a private elementary school based on Islamic and nationalistic values. Therefore, the school became the subject of this research. Meanwhile, the goal of public elementary school (SDN) 1 Sekaran is to produce quality students who have intense religiosity and strong national character, love the nation's culture, are polite, and love the environment. This is the consideration basis for selecting the two educational institutions as research partners.

The research data were generated from secondary data and primary data. Secondary data was produced from online and offline literature studies. The primary data were obtained using observation, interviews, and document analysis. The explanation is as follows: 1). The observation method focuses on various behaviors (student activities, etc.), audio (songs, jargon, etc.), and visuals (pictures, posters, banners, written rules, paint colors, uniforms, etc.) which - directly or indirectly - have implications for the identity development process. Technical observations were delivered with anecdotal notes and with the help of audio and visual recorders. 2). The interview method was conducted to reveal the formation of national identity in schools based on cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. In addition, to confirm the results of observations and document analysis. The interviewee of this research is the principal or the representative teacher using a semi-structured interview. 3). Document analysis is applied by analyzing the national identity agenda in the syllabus and lesson plans (RPP) for Pancasila subjects, Citizenship, Religious Education, and other relevant subjects in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. These two upper grades were chosen due to more appropriate material in the curriculum related to the research objective and approval by the school camps.

The observations, interviews, and document analysis data were processed qualitatively by conducting coding analysis, data reduction, drafting research findings concept cards, and compiling research



findings.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research objectives, the discussion of this research focuses on three points: the development of national identity in public and private schools, the impact of identity development programs, the constellation of developing identities, and the dynamics of identity development in schools (Table 1).

### National Identity Development in Public Elementary School

The results of observations, interviews, and curriculum analysis are employed to describe how national identity is developed at SDN Sekaran 1, Semarang City. Identity development is discussed based on cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects.

#### *Cognitive aspect*

SDN 1 Sekaran has the vision to create students who have religious, nationalist, environmental, and polite characters. One application of instilling nationalist values is to play national songs on the school's audio system, such as singing Indonesia Raya with three stanzas. In addition to the national anthem, students were asked to sing songs from other regions at the end of the lesson, such as the *Bungong Jeumpa* song from the Nangro Aceh Darussalam province and the *Apuse* song from the Papua province. The two songs from the west and the east show the students that Indonesia is truly diverse. It teaches the students that Indonesia consists of different identities but is united as a national entity.

The material is a thematic subject matter, wherein one subject, it has three different themes, namely Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKN), Social Sciences (IPS) and Indonesian Language. The identity of nationalism is taught through readings such as "*Kerukunan umat beragama*", which discusses diversity and harmony. Previously,

students were asked to observe and discuss diversity in their environment with the group and in readings entitled "*Gotong Royong Modal Pembangunan*", students learn about the values of Pancasila. Through these materials, students learn how to live in a diverse society.

In addition to national identity, religious identity is also developed through religious education subjects. For example, in combating terrorism, the teacher might understand that contextual jihad is the fight against ignorance and studying seriously, not by taking up arms and spreading terror. Teachers teach that it is unacceptable for Muslims to insult and denigrate other religions. Although they have different religions, Muslims must respect each other. Every human being must be respected and treated fairly. The school also gives Christian students the right to learn about Christian education in Kalisegoro Elementary School because there are only two Christians at SDN 1 Sekaran, so there is no particular subject in Christian education. However, the school is responsible for providing a shuttle for the transportation of the two students. This shows that interfaith respect is fully maintained.

The school also develops an environmental identity through posters hung in the school corridors. The posters contain various environmental care messages. In addition, the teacher also teaches students to care for the environment. However, this is an indirect teaching because the current curriculum no longer contains an environmental conservation agenda. Thus, the message to take care of the environment is addressed through the hidden curriculum.

#### *Affective Aspect*

The national identity development in the affective aspect refers to the instillation of supported attitudes. At SDN 1 Sekaran, for example, this is produced by doing prayer before studying. Although the prayer is carried out in an Islamic manner, the teacher always reminds his Christian students to pray according to their beliefs and not to be

**Table 1.** The Outline of the findings

	Public elementary school	Private elementary school
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Playing national songs throughout the school audio system and singing songs from other regions (ethnic songs).</li> <li>– National-identity-related curriculum &amp; subject matters in Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKN), Social Sciences (IPS) and Indonesian Language (Bahasa Indonesia).</li> <li>– Promoting harmony-in-diversity values and combating religious radical thinking and action through religious education.</li> <li>– Using school spaces to promote pro-environmental identity.</li> <li>– Developing comprehension of Javanese values through Javanese language lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Videos of national unity as learning material.</li> <li>– Enriching some lesson plans with national values such as unity in diversity, nationalism, and local wisdom.</li> <li>– Applying some cooperative learning methods in various subject matters to involve students more in lessons about national identity.</li> <li>– Learning to love and respect the culture of other regions in Indonesia.</li> <li>– Comprehending religious values beyond cultural expression like <i>Grebeg syawal</i> and <i>Sekaten</i>.</li> <li>– Teaching students to have religious tolerance toward other religious groups.</li> <li>– Developing values such as morality, cooperation, and collaboration through games.</li> </ul>
<b>Affective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Developing respect for performing prayer based on students' respective beliefs before starting the lesson.</li> <li>– Internalizing the love for the nation and reminding people of the sacrifice of the national heroes through regular ceremonies.</li> <li>– Encouraging positive attitudes toward other social groups in daily social interaction despite the diversity in religion, ethnicity, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Developing an attitude of being more grateful to God Almighty for the diversity in Indonesia through academic and non-academic activities.</li> <li>– Encouraging students to express their appreciative views of cultural diversity in Indonesia on many occasions.</li> <li>– Giving positive reinforcements to students for their effort to develop respect, courtesy, honesty, accountability, and other noble attitudes.</li> <li>– Prohibiting students and teachers from expressing stigmatization.</li> </ul>
<b>Behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Performing Dhuha and Dzuhur prayers together on a daily basis.</li> <li>– Strengthening <i>rebana</i> (tambourine-like musical instruments) extracurricular which is strongly associated with the Islamic culture.</li> <li>– Conducting the “<i>pesantren kilat</i>” program periodically.</li> <li>– Engaging students in <i>qurban</i> activities during Eid al-Adha.</li> <li>– Obligating students to attend flag ceremonies every Monday morning including singing the national anthem (Indonesia Raya), reciting the introduction of the 1945 constitution, reciting the national ideology (Pancasila), and performing prayers.</li> <li>– Encouraging students in various community service and outing activities</li> <li>– Reciting prayers before and after the lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Habituating students and their parents to always wear Muslim clothing.</li> <li>– Routinely doing religious worship, like praying and reciting at school.</li> <li>– Encouraging collaboration with the parents to assist the school's programs.</li> <li>– Every Monday and on several occasions, the students must perform flag ceremonies, including singing the national anthem (Indonesia Raya), reciting the introduction of the 1945 constitution, reciting the national ideology (Pancasila), and performing prayers.</li> <li>– The teacher must become the student's behavioral role model.</li> <li>– Implementing the motto: be polite, be cooperative, and be helpful.</li> <li>– Strengthening the <i>Paskibra</i> (flag-bearer squad) extracurricular.</li> <li>– Practicing local arts and games to internalize a sense of identity</li> </ul>

influenced by their friends. The teacher reinforces to students that religion is a matter of the heart and that respect for one another is a must.

Another way to become a routine school obligation is to sing the three stanzas of the Indonesian national anthem every Monday

ceremony. They hoped that students would remember the services of the national heroes who fought for Indonesia's independence and feel their nationalist spirit. The ceremony is also held on special days, such as the Independence Day, to remind students that independence requires great sacrifice. These continuous habits will eventually give the sense

of being part of the Indonesian nation.

SD Negeri 1 Sekaran is also an elementary school with diverse students as many come from other provinces. Being aware of this, the school always emphasizes that students respect unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). Accordingly, teachers frequently misunderstand individual differences and mutual respect through subject. Thus, diversity is a valuable opportunity for schools to instill and habituate attitudes that support diversity, such as respect and helping each other.

Teachers practice character education (such as using the Javanese *Kromo* language) through Javanese language lessons and other subjects. This subject is in accordance with the school's mission, stating that the implementation of education is also based on the Javanese culture, which is renowned for demanding polite and refined manners. Courtesy is also something that is taught continuously. Moreover, the Semarang City education authority has been relentlessly instructing schools to promote good manners among students. SDN Sekaran 1 strongly confirmed this. Thus, ingraining good manners in a Javanese society also means associating politeness with ethnic (Javanese) identity.

In addition to national and religious identity, the school teaches respect for the environment, courtesy, and honesty. This is done through posters in every corner of the school, lessons, and binding rules. They are serious about this; therefore, it has been incorporated into the school's vision.

### *Behavioral Aspect*

In developing identity, SD N 1 Sekaran conducted it through lectures and various activities leading to the identity establishment of the student. Although SD N 1 Sekaran is not a religion-based school, many activities encourage the students to increase their worship. Some activities held by the school to improve the religiosity of its students are *Dhuha* and *Dzuhur* prayers together. The prayers are for students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6. The teacher becomes the *imam* (priest) in

worship. For late students, they must become an *imam* for their friends. In addition, SD N 1 also has a *rebana* (tambourine-like instruments) extracurricular whose activities are associated with the Islamic religion.

SDN 1 Sekaran also holds routine activities for Muslim students during Ramadan, such as *pesantren kilat* (a short course in Islamic studies). *Pesantren kilat* is an activity carried out for 3-4 days to increase students' religiosity. However, this activity is routinely held by involving Islamic boarding schools in conducting studies. The activity was filled with Islamic ritual and monotheism material and ended with breaking the fast together and paying *zakat fitrah*. In addition to the *pesantren kilat*, the school will hold *qurban* activities every *Eid al-Adha* in which the students are also involved in cutting and wrapping meat. The activity will end with eating together with the results of the sacrificial animals that have been slaughtered. These activities are a way for schools to help strengthen students' religious identities.

SDN 1 Sekaran routinely organizes flag ceremonies every Monday morning to disseminate national identity. Schools also hold flag ceremonies on special days, such as Pancasila Sanctity Day and Independence Day. In addition, in certain subjects, students are required to sing the Indonesia Raya anthem and several other national songs, such as *Garuda Pancasila*. Another activity supporting nationalism is scouting, conducted every Friday afternoon by students in grades 3, 4 and 5. In addition to scouting, SDN 1 Sekaran also has a *paskibraka* (flag-raising squad), that is frequently called upon to compete in the *paskibraka* festival.

Environmental identity is also instilled through various pro-environmental activities. One of the activities is community service every two weeks. In this activity, the students work together to clean the bathroom, sweep the yard, and clean the classroom and the school environment. In addition to routine activities, the students are required to pick up rubbish after each gymnastics activity. The teacher also



regularly invites the students to walk around the school to learn about the environment around their school.

These research findings show that the SDN 1 Sekaran school has an identity development program, national identity, religious identity, and other identities. In addition, the results reveal that SDN Sekaran emphasizes the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of identity development. However, the applied curriculum also supports the development of identity through the cognitive domain, while affective and behavioral elements are formed through the students' practices and activities. The discussion about the identity development process and the nature of identities will be further explained in the discussion chapter.

### **National Identity Development in Private Elementary School**

Observations, interviews, and curriculum analysis were also used to describe the development of national identity in the private schools of SD Hj. Isriati Baiturrohman Semarang (Isriati Elementary School). Identity development is defined based on cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects.

#### *Cognitive aspect*

Isriati Elementary School is a school based on religious and national values. In developing these values, the school makes various efforts. One of the school's efforts in instilling the importance of nationalism is through poster media. This media is considered appropriate because the poster can serve as a reminder when there is no teacher.

In addition to using posters, the school integrates sophisticated media such as video to address values. In an academic context, students are asked to define their knowledge and understanding of nationalism based on their perceptions. In addition, teachers encourage students to find practical examples in everyday life regarding unity and diversity values. Teachers also encourage students to associate their personal experiences with the

values taught in the school. The school also systemically instills democratic and educational values to all school staff. The school also involves parents in the learning process.

In developing nationalistic values, the school also tries to increase students' knowledge of Semarang's local culture. Students are asked to express their perceptions and think critically about the cultural diversity in Semarang. The school then examines the students' understanding of Semarang culture, such as Semarang dances and songs, and assigns tasks related to this culture. Furthermore, the school strengthens students' knowledge of their culture as local Semarang people through video screenings. Besides, the school conducts practical session on the *Gambang Semarang* dance.

Beyond the local culture, the school also teaches about other regions, such as the Balinese, Acehnese, and Minang cultures. Learning about cultures beyond their native culture can help build the values of unity and diversity. In this learning, the teacher also involves students who have similar cultural background as the subject matter. These actions indirectly aim to strengthen the students' cultural identity and build the enthusiasm to share information about their culture. In addition to using the students with indigenous culture as learning models, the teacher conducts group discussion activities to achieve a collective understanding of the studied culture. Thus, discussing about cultural diversity helps students understand the values of unity and diversity in Indonesia.

In addition to various folk dances and songs, the school also introduces traditional games. Through these activities, the school associates the students' favorite activities with various local cultures. The school also teaches the values of diversity and culture through stories and fairy tales, and asks students to identify and associate these stories with the importance of cultural diversity to the nation. Furthermore, introducing cultures from other regions indirectly builds students' perceptions of Indonesia's togetherness and diversity.

Additionally, teachers encourage students to think critically, creatively, and scientifically by observing or being directly involved in the cultural process to strengthen these perceptions. Teachers also encourage students to enrich their cultural knowledge – not only from teachers.

Along with developing national and cultural identities, the school also develops a religious identity for their respective students. It has been highlighted in the school's vision and mission. For instance, many posters contain popular aphorisms in Islam. Religious values are transmitted through school rituals such as praying together before classes begin. The school also integrates religious values into the learning process. For example, teachers often introduce cultural issues related to religious expression, such as the *Grebek Syawal* tradition in the Demak Regency and the *Sekatenan* in Solo City. Although the Isriati elementary school does not have any non-Muslim students, it should be underlined that it also teaches interfaith tolerance to its students. In a broader perspective, the school tries to instill these values in parents, for example, through one of the posters where the school urges parents, especially girls, to wear Muslim clothing.

In addition to the two identities above, the school develops other values such as morality, cooperation, and collaboration. For example, the school teaches morality through traditional games. In the game, the teacher requires students to make, agree on, and obey the game's rules. Subtly, it helps instill obedience to authority and responsibility for one's decisions. In class, the teacher also encourages students to engage in group work and discussion and present the results. These activities are related to the habituation of cooperation and mutual respect in daily activities. In addition, in the learning process, the teacher often reminds the importance of community service and collaboration, both intragroup and intergroup. For instance, students are required to complete a puzzle collectively. Besides practice, the teacher

encourages students to contextualize behaviors related to community service and cooperation in everyday life based on students' personal experiences.

### *Affective Aspect*

The development of religious identity at Isriati Elementary School focuses more on improving students' attitudes. This identity is embodied in the school's vision to educate students' personalities to be more competent and to possess noble character. The school carries out religious identity development in activities such as praying together before classes. Additionally, the school's weekly activity such as flag ceremonies also supports the development of these religious attitudes. During the ceremony, students also learn to be grateful and to pray so that the activities of the day will run smoothly. The ceremony also teaches students to be thankful to God Almighty for the diversity given to Indonesia.

The messages in the visual posters at the school contains not only many noble attitudes for Muslims but also calls for the nationalist spirit, for instance: "A great nation is a nation that appreciates the services of its heroes." In addition to posters, the school also requires students to sing national and regional songs before starting teaching and learning activities. Isriati Elementary School's students also responded positively to the habituation. The interviews showed that the teachers increased students' interest in cultural diversity in Indonesia through reading short stories and brainstorming. Besides, the teachers also awaken an attitude of appreciating the cultural diversity of the students through the students' preferred perspectives. Furthermore, the teachers also urge students to get used to engaging in group work with group members from different cultural backgrounds.

In developing attitudes towards diversity, nationalism, and religion, the school also tries to motivate students to excel. The school gives outstanding students inspiration and motivation for other students. Accomplished students are usually appreciated

during the routine ceremony. In this way, the school also increases the achievement motivation of other students. However, the school tries to build students' achievement motivation and shape good attitudes and behaviors. Often, students with good attitudes and behaviors also receive appreciation and become an inspiration for other students. The attitudes the school tries to develop are honesty and responsibility. Students' achievement motivation is more meaningful if it is based on honesty and responsibility.

The school also develops respect, courtesy, and other good values through school activities. For example, during the flag ceremony, students must stand neatly and firmly. Students must also greet and shake hands with parents and teachers. Isriati Elementary School itself does not stigmatize students with problems but seeks to understand the problems experienced by students more profoundly. Besides, both teachers and students are prohibited from stigmatizing. As a result of these efforts, many alumni showed positive attitude changes after graduating from Isriati Elementary School. Attitude assessment is essential because, based on the applicable curriculum, students' attitudes are also a reference for the school's assessment.

### *Behavioral Aspect*

The behavioral dimension of identity development at Isriati Elementary School emphasizes habituating behaviors under religious rules. For example, the school actively encourages students, especially girls, to wear Muslim clothing. The school also teaches students that good Muslims should not litter and should always be obedient to worship. The manifestation of religious values is mostly habituated through routine rituals and recitation activities at school. In habituating student behavior, the school hopes that parents will support the school plan by developing these various identities with relevant active roles at home.

Ceremonial rituals mean the integration

of religious values and values of nationalism. Students learn to pray to God during the ceremony before starting the lesson. They also train themselves to greet teachers as a small example of religious behavior. Students must also be disciplined to pray and thank God for the blessing of knowledge they receive while participating in activities. In line with this, students always sing the national anthem, Indonesia Raya, the opening of the 1945 Constitution, and read the state ideology (Pancasila). This behavior becomes a regular menu in ceremonial rituals. It is hoped that through this habituation, students will internalize religious values and nationalism as part of their self-concept. Over time, these will become unified identities.

The teacher's role cannot be separated from this process. Teachers teach students to respect their teachers and parents. This behavior is conditioned by kissing the teacher's hand when they meet. Students also learn good behaviors such as respect and courtesy to parents. The teacher often reminds students to do the action if the student forgets. Likewise, the school teaches students to smile at others because it is good behavior. The school also tries to familiarize students with the three national educational mottos: politeness and courtesy, cooperation, and community service. Overall, these prayer activities are examples of the development of religious behavior carried out by schools.

The behavioral internalization of nationalist values is carried out through ceremonies, singing national and regional songs. In addition, at Isriati Elementary School, *Paskibra's* activities are supporters of the internalization of nationalist values. The Isriati Elementary School *Paskibra* team won the ceremonial competition throughout Central Java. They have also been the flag bearers at the Semarang City Hall. Many alumni are former *Paskibra* members who are now continuing their education at military and police academies. This achievement is a source of pride for the school. The picture above is a glimpse of Isriati Elementary School in

successfully developing a national identity for its students.

Academic learning about the values of nationalism and religion has been quite intensive. However, the school considers it necessary to add practical learning to compensate for the shortcomings of non-practical learning. Therefore, the school expects students to comprehend cognitively, affectively, and motorically when doing practicums related to Indonesian culture. Practical learning is also an input for sensory information for students in associating the lessons they receive. The school and teachers believe that cognitive understanding will be more robust if it is complemented with affective and behavioral competencies.

Students at Isriati Elementary School learn various arts, customs, and cultures from other regions and practice the local culture of Semarang and Central Java. One of them is through the traditional *Gambang* Semarang dance and traditional Semarang games. The teacher hopes this practice will be the proper method for students to internalize regional ethnic identities. The play approach is also more effective because it functions students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in learning. But it is not a quick process. The teacher admits that it takes time to change students' attitudes and behavior. In fact, behavioral changes appear when the student graduates from school or enters a higher level of education. The school realizes that identity development is a long and continuous process. The most crucial point in education for the school is how student progress towards a better life.

Isriati Elementary School has done well with its identity development program. Be it national identity, religious identity, or other identities. Based on these findings, it also appears that Isriati Elementary School emphasizes cognitive aspects in identity development. The current thematic curriculum also supports this. Meanwhile, identity development through affective and behavioral approaches is mainly carried out through

conditioned activities and rituals. The constellations and dynamics of identity development are discussed in the following.

### **The impacts of identity development programs**

The research findings in Table 1. show a similar impact on identity development between public and private elementary schools. The impacts of identity development are described in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects.

#### *Cognitive aspect*

Based on the findings, it is evident that the identity development programs have meant to cognitively construct a grand unifying identity consisting of various sub-identities such as national, religious, ethnic, etc. Religious identity, in particular, which in some publications appeared as a conflicting identity against other identities, has been promoted as a fluid identity capable of merging with diverse identities.

The results of the cognitive aspect of the identity development program can be comprehended from the students' acceptance of the idea that nationalism and religion are not two conflicting identities, but complementary. Further understanding of these thoughts can also be seen from the lessons containing inclusive ideology, religious values, and identity development materials such as Pancasila, Indonesian language, social science, or religious lessons. The students took the lesson seriously and in an orderly manner.

Based on observations, the cognitive effects of the identity development program are epitomized by the emergence of a specific awareness. This awareness is characterized by patriotism, a mutual relationship between nation and religion, and respect for diversity. This kind of awareness produces less prejudice and discrimination against different identities, and leaves no room for radical ideas to infiltrate. It also makes students more open-minded to differences and respectful of the opinions of others.

### *Affective aspect*

Based on the findings, the impact of the identity development program from an affective point of view could be seen mainly from the school's success in developing emotions and internalizing positive attitudes in students regarding national identity, religious identity, ethnic identity, environmental identity, etc.

Students developed a sense of love for the country because the school explained the love for the nation and reminded them of the sacrifice of the national heroes through academic and non-academic activities. Students also developed an inclusive attitude because the school taught them, through various activities, to be more grateful to God Almighty for the diversity in Indonesia through various activities.

Above all, the positive attitudes toward identities in the students' lives are the result of teachers and other students giving positive reinforcement to each student for their efforts to develop respect, courtesy, honesty, accountability, and other noble attitudes.

### *Behavioral aspect*

The behavioral aspect of the research findings expressed that the schools' method of developing and strengthening the identity of their students consists of any habituation process: some compulsory rules, routine activities, and repeated actions define what is expected of the students.

From a behavioral perspective, habituation occurs when the students begin to feel that something is wrong if they do not do what they used to do. For example, the field data showed that the students would feel bad when they missed flag ceremonies every Monday. On another occasion, they would automatically worship together and felt guilty when they were late. Furthermore, the student became accustomed to wearing the uniform and felt inconvenienced when their uniform did not meet the school's standards.

Later in the habituation process, the schools expected the students to make a

positive association between these habituated behaviors and positive attitudes and thoughts about national, religious, ethnic, environmental identities, etc.

### **The Constellation of The Developing Identities**

The field investigations in public and private elementary schools above show that various identities, such as national identity, religious identity, ethnic identity, and environmental identity, have developed. Nevertheless, among the many identities, two primary identities are shared in the extensive section: national identity and religious identity. Other identities such as ethnic and environmental identities are considered subsets of national identity. The importance of national and religious identities is even expressed in the vision of those two institutions that explicitly seek to develop religious and nationalist (or nationalist and religious) characters in their students.

The urgency of identity development is embodied in the curriculum and subjects such as Religious Education, Pancasila and Citizenship Education, Indonesian Language, Regional Languages, and several subjects relevant to national and religious identity development. The development of these identities is also often implicit in learning. The development of national and religious identities as two complementary identities can also be recognized from various routine school activities such as flag ceremonies, scouting extracurriculars, *paskibraka*, and various other extracurricular activities.

Along with the development of national identity, there are routine religious activities such as the Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers in the congregation and the implementation of a *pasantren kilat* (a short course of Islamic studies). These are some activities to develop religious identity apart from religious subjects. In addition to the curriculum and non-academic activities, this development is implemented through quotes of wise words on various audio-visual displays in the school

environment, such as posters and playing national/local songs.

The position and essential role of religious identity is an exciting result. Because religious identity, which is conceptually part of national identity, is actually on an equal position with national identity. The vision of the two educational institutions even explicitly emphasizes national and religious identities. This is, of course, reasonable. Recent studies have shown that religious and national identities are critical forces that must be balanced, as polarity in one identity could lead to instability, reduce public trust in the government, and decrease intergroup harmony in the country (Lestari 2018). Firdaus argues that a balance between religious and national identities is fundamental; therefore, community groups do not fall into extreme religious views on the one hand and narrow nationalism on the other end (Firdaus 2018). In line with this argument, the religious and national identities of Indonesian youth are positively correlated (Abraham and Meinarno 2013). Thus, the school's effort to integrate religious and national identities is a fundamental decision.

In the global landscape, the duality of religious and national identities also occurs in various parts of the world. The report in Northern Ireland concluded that the root of the conflict within the state is that national and religious identities stand as opposing groups (Muldoon, Trew, Todd et al. 2007). Continuing the findings, among the Muslim minority group in the Netherlands, empirical data shows that religious identity and national identity are negatively correlated. They feel that they are not part of the Dutch nation even though they have lived there for a long time (Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007). In line with these findings, Sitnikov noted the importance of integrating religious identity into the practice of the nation and state (Sitnikov 2020). If community groups with strong religious identities do not support the state's rule and do not trust the government, horizontal conflicts between religious and national groups are vulnerable.

This is as well reflected by an investigation in Germany, Finland, Australia, and Norway, where religious identity was associated with higher support for the rights of religious minorities in general and Muslims in particular. At the same time, national identification had no direct association with the support for either groups' religious rights (Eskelinen, Renvik, Pauha et al. 2022).

Anto has also emphasized that religious identity is more sensitive than ethnic, political, and other identities. In this sense, social conflict is prone to 'explode' when it involves religious identity (Anto 2015). Therefore, as Sitnikov and Eskelinen mentioned, religious identity must be managed carefully in order to support the state. Apart from this finding, Shady found that the importance of religious identity toward national identity is generally declining, except in Islam, where religion's socio-political power integrates with its social identity (Shady 2022). Furthermore, Bennett considered that religious diversity has nothing to do with national identity (Bennett, Parameshwaran, Schmid et al. 2022).

Based on these reviews in Indonesia's scope, it is safe to conclude that the data on the development of religious and national identities in public and private schools confirm the results of previous studies. Nevertheless, since research findings from other countries report the conflicts between religious identity and national identity, it is crucial to prevent these conflicts earlier.

### **The Dynamics of National Identity Development in Elementary School**

Data from interviews, observations, and curriculum analysis indicate that both public and private elementary schools attempt to make the diverse identities of the pluralistic Indonesian society into an ingroup. Mainly two massive identities: national identity and religious identity. The study results clearly explain that both educational institutions try to introduce, establish thought, develop attitudes, and condition students' behavior to believe that religious and national identities are two



identities that support each other, not vice versa. This is similar to the prior research in which the mutual relationship of religious and national identity must be promoted through cultural events (Rujanac 2013). Another research analyzed that religious values such as Islam are instrumental in developing people's sense of belonging to their nation (Hamid 2018). Moreover, Wibisono investigated that the mutual relationship between national and religious identity is crucial to counteract the tendency of religious fundamentalism (Wibisono, Louis and Jetten 2019).

We found that this integration is not only at the conceptual level but also empirical. The identity development practice in SD N 1 Sekaran and Isriati Elementary School is consistent with Meinarno & Juneman's research where religious identity and national identity among Indonesian adolescents show a positive correlation (Abraham and Meinarno 2013). Another support comes from Tambak's research. His research discovered that to construct mutual relationship to national identity, each school should develop a curriculum of tolerance and living in harmony, oversee Islamic spiritual activities, patronage religious activities, instill moderate Islamic teachings, and transmit *Islâm kâffah* thought (Tambak 2021). In addition, the findings of Rosidin & Aeni, high school students (SMA) who are members of the student's Islamic group (*Rohis*) show moderate religious practices, respect each other and tolerate religious differences. It definitely cannot be separated from efforts to develop the national identity in their respective institutions (Rosidin and Aeni 2017). Similarly, Istiyani and Wibowo report that the spirit of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*'s positively supports the internalization of national identity in Islamic early childhood educational institutions (Istiyani and Wibowo 2020).

From Goalwin's perspective, the integration of religious identity and national identity is not natural, but a deliberate, conscious endeavor. Integration requires a long process. He cited the success of Turkey.

Although it is known as a secular state, it is considered successful in integrating religious and national identities (Goalwin 2018). Even Turkish Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands prefer Turkish citizenship, albeit they have lived in the Netherlands for a long time (Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007). In the Indonesian context, lessons such as civic education, religious education, local content, flag ceremony rituals, and various religious and national activities are the backbone of religious and national identity integration. According to social identity complexity theory, identity integration means regular interaction among outgroups over a long period of time. Whether they realize it or not, those who were initially outgroups are then recategorized and considered ingroups (Maloku, Derks, Laar et al. 2019).

Contrary to the research results above, several minor studies confirm the extreme tendency of students and even Islamic Religious Education teachers to engage in discriminatory and persecutory behavior towards outgroups of their religious identity (Dja'far 2015, Suyanto 2021, Wardah 2023). Theoretically, it results from a lack of education, socialization, and interaction with the outgroups. If someone (student or teacher) does not experience enough introduction, socialization, and interaction with outgroups, they will easily experience ingroup favoritism bias (Meinarno and Sarwono 2018). This bias causes them to favor the ingroup and discriminate against the outgroup. On a large scale, this pattern will set religious and national identities as two conflicting identities.

In developing national and religious identities, it can be safely concluded that the origin of various intergroup conflicts is a long process of developing and unifying diverse identities as an ingroup. Suppose the process of developing national identity is successful; it will transcend beyond sectarian identities (religious, ethnic, racial, political, and other identities) and make these identities part of the national identity. On the other hand, if the development is less optimal, then the national

identity will not be able to encapsulate different identities as an ingroup.

Based on a review of various relevant research findings, no consistent research results have been found on either the process of developing a national identity or the products of the development process. Some reported a positive correlation between identities, while others found the opposite. The inconsistency of these results means further research is required to draw a complete picture of the issue.

In short, the results of empirical research on the success (or failure) of developing national identity remain limited in quantity. It also means that this field remains prospective for further study, particularly in the context of school, family, and community.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, this research has primarily succeeded in describing the efforts to develop a national identity in public and private elementary schools. The efforts run comprehensively in cognitive (thoughts, understanding, and principles), affective (attitudes and appreciation), and behavioral aspect (actions and habits). These three aspects are well implemented in the classroom's vision, curriculum, subject matter, and learning process. National identity development is also carried out through non-academic activities that are held regularly, such as ceremonies, and extracurricular activities such as scouts and *paskibra*. In addition, various public spaces in schools are also employed to develop national identity by attaching posters and playing national and regional anthems to establish a national identity.

Second, various identities have developed, such as national symbols, religious identities, ethnic identities, and environmental identities. However, based on the empirical findings, two identities explicitly receive more attention in the two educational institutions:

national and religious identities. This implies that the educational authorities and agencies have anticipated the potential tension between the two central identities to prevent horizontal conflicts in society. Therefore, in both levels (concept and practice), national and religious identities are introduced as two integrated identities.

Finally, the success rate of developing a national identity in schools is diverse due to various factors. However, it becomes an opportunity for future researchers to explore further various developments of national identity and its impact – especially in school, family, and community.

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