



Cultivating Critical Citizenship and Democratic Resilience Among Indonesian Youth: A Participatory Framework for Preventing Violent Extremism

Memupuk Kewarganegaraan Kritis dan Ketahanan Demokratis di Kalangan Pemuda Indonesia: Kerangka Kerja Partisipatif untuk Mencegah Ekstremisme Kekerasan

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Abstract

This study examines strategies for building national integrity among Indonesian youth as a countermeasure against radicalism. Radicalism, defined as ideological movements seeking drastic social and political change through extreme means, poses significant threats to Indonesia's national unity. Youth, as the nation's assets and future leaders, are particularly vulnerable to radical recruitment due to their idealism and energy. National integrity encompasses qualities of wholeness, honesty, and consistency toward truth that manifest in dignified behavior. The research identifies that radical movements in Indonesia, including terrorism and separatist activities, frequently involve youth participation, making it crucial to strengthen their nationalist and patriotic values. The study proposes nine strategic approaches: (1) instilling nationalism through the four pillars of nationhood (Pancasila, 1945 Constitution, NKRI, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika); (2) developing patriotism through family, educational, and institutional environments; (3) cultivating the spirit and values of 1945 struggle; (4) implementing character education through formal, informal, and non-formal channels; (5) enhancing positive youth roles through empowerment programs; (6) educating about Indonesia's unity history; (7) forming attitudes embracing diversity; (8) exploring and implementing nationalist values; and (9) fostering brotherhood through youth organizations. This comprehensive approach aims to equip Indonesian youth with strong national identity and critical thinking to resist radical ideologies while maintaining their role as agents of positive change.

Keywords: National Integrity, Youth, Radicalism, Nationalism, Patriotism, Character Education.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi membangun integritas bangsa di kalangan pemuda Indonesia sebagai upaya menangkal radikalisme. Radikalisme, yang didefinisikan sebagai paham yang menginginkan perubahan sosial dan politik secara drastis dan keras, mengancam keutuhan persatuan nasional Indonesia. Pemuda, sebagai aset bangsa dan calon pemimpin masa depan, rentan terhadap rekrutmen radikal karena idealisme dan energi mereka. Integritas bangsa mencakup kualitas keutuhan, kejujuran,

dan konsistensi terhadap kebenaran yang termanifestasi dalam perilaku berwibawa. Penelitian mengidentifikasi bahwa gerakan radikal di Indonesia, termasuk terorisme dan aktivitas separatis, sering melibatkan partisipasi pemuda, sehingga penting memperkuat nilai-nilai nasionalisme dan patriotisme mereka. Studi ini mengusulkan sembilan pendekatan strategis: (1) menanamkan nasionalisme melalui empat pilar kebangsaan (Pancasila, UUD 1945, NKRI, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika); (2) mengembangkan patriotisme melalui lingkungan keluarga, pendidikan, dan institusi; (3) memupuk jiwa dan nilai-nilai juang 1945; (4) mengimplementasikan pendidikan karakter melalui jalur formal, informal, dan nonformal; (5) meningkatkan peran positif pemuda melalui program pemberdayaan; (6) memberikan pemahaman tentang sejarah persatuan Indonesia; (7) membentuk sikap yang menerima keberagaman; (8) menggali dan mengimplementasikan nilai-nilai nasionalisme; dan (9) memupuk persaudaraan melalui organisasi kepemudaan. Pendekatan komprehensif ini bertujuan membekali pemuda Indonesia dengan identitas nasional kuat dan pemikiran kritis untuk menolak ideologi radikal sambil mempertahankan peran mereka sebagai agen perubahan positif.

Kata Kunci: Integritas Bangsa, Pemuda, Radikalisme, Nasionalisme, Patriotisme, Pendidikan Karakter.

INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of radicalism among youth populations has emerged as a critical challenge to national security and social cohesion in contemporary Indonesia. Radicalism, characterized by extreme ideological positions advocating drastic social and political transformation through violent or coercive means, poses substantial threats to the pluralistic fabric of Indonesian society (Milla et al., 2013). The phenomenon has gained particular urgency as youth increasingly become targets of radical recruitment, leveraging their idealism, technological fluency, and susceptibility to absolutist narratives (Vergani et al., 2020). Understanding and addressing radicalization among young people requires comprehensive strategies that strengthen national integrity while fostering critical thinking and democratic values.

Indonesia's unique position as the world's largest Muslim-majority democracy with remarkable ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity makes it particularly vulnerable to identity-based radicalism (Zora, 2015). The country's youth demographic, comprising approximately 64 million individuals aged 15-35 years, represents both the nation's greatest asset and its potential vulnerability (Santi & Basit, 2019). Historical evidence demonstrates that radical movements in Indonesia, from separatist insurgencies to religiously-motivated terrorism, have consistently recruited young people as foot soldiers and perpetrators (Bardwell & Iqbal, 2021). The 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings, the 2009 Jakarta hotel attacks, and more recent incidents of terrorism have revealed systematic patterns of youth involvement in extremist activities (Schulze & Hwang, 2019).

National integrity, defined as the unified quality encompassing honesty, consistency, and wholeness that radiates dignity and moral authority, serves as a crucial countermeasure to radical ideologies (Kristjánsson, 2016). This concept extends beyond individual character to encompass collective national identity, shared values, and commitment to constitutional principles. For Indonesia, national integrity is anchored in four fundamental pillars: Pancasila (the state ideology), the 1945 Constitution, NKRI (Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) (Arifianto, 2019). These pillars collectively represent Indonesia's commitment to pluralism, democracy, and national unity amid diversity.

The relationship between youth identity formation and susceptibility to radicalism has been extensively documented in terrorism studies literature (Kruglanski et al., 2014). Research indicates that young people experiencing identity confusion, social marginalization, or perceived injustice become vulnerable to radical narratives offering certainty, belonging, and purpose (Webber et al., 2018). In the Indonesian context, the intersection of globalization, rapid social change, and weakening traditional



community structures creates conditions conducive to radical recruitment (Arifianto, 2019). Social media platforms and digital communication technologies further amplify radical messaging, enabling unprecedented reach to youth audiences (Conway, 2016).

Nationalism and patriotism emerge as protective factors against radicalization when properly cultivated through education and socialization (Suhartini et al., 2019). Healthy nationalism, characterized by pride in national identity without superiority claims over others, fosters social cohesion and resistance to divisive ideologies (Stephens et al., 2021). However, the challenge lies in distinguishing constructive nationalism from xenophobic or exclusionary variants that paradoxically fuel extremism (Steinberg, 2014). Indonesian youth require education that emphasizes civic nationalism rooted in constitutional values rather than ethnic or religious exclusivity.

Character education has gained recognition as an essential strategy for countering radicalism by developing moral reasoning, empathy, and critical thinking skills (Shiraishi, 2019). The Indonesian government has prioritized character education implementation across formal, informal, and non-formal educational channels, emphasizing values such as religiosity, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity (Kristjánsson, 2015). Empirical studies suggest that comprehensive character education programs can enhance students' moral judgment and reduce susceptibility to extremist appeals (Saltman & Smith, 2015).

Youth empowerment through constructive engagement represents another critical dimension of radicalization prevention. When young people access meaningful educational opportunities, economic prospects, and civic participation channels, their vulnerability to radical recruitment diminishes substantially (Zora, 2015). Indonesia's demographic dividend—with youth constituting a significant population proportion—presents opportunities for positive social transformation if properly harnessed through strategic empowerment initiatives (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018).

The historical role of Indonesian youth in national development, exemplified by their pivotal contributions to independence struggles and the Youth Pledge (Sumpah Pemuda) of 1928, provides powerful precedents for contemporary mobilization (Anderson, 2020). This historical consciousness can be strategically leveraged to inspire civic engagement and national commitment among current youth generations. Understanding how previous youth movements successfully channeled idealism toward constructive nation-building offers valuable lessons for contemporary prevention strategies.

Despite growing recognition of radicalism's threat and youth vulnerability, comprehensive frameworks integrating national integrity building with deradicalization remain underdeveloped in Indonesian scholarship and policy practice. Existing interventions often focus narrowly on security measures or religious counter-narratives without addressing underlying identity, belonging, and meaning-making needs that radical groups exploit (Dahliyana et al., 2021). This research gap necessitates holistic approaches examining how national integrity cultivation among youth can serve as primary prevention against radicalization.

This study aims to develop a comprehensive framework for building national integrity among Indonesian youth as a strategic countermeasure against radicalism. Specifically, it examines how nationalism, patriotism, character education, and youth empowerment initiatives can collectively strengthen young people's commitment to pluralistic democratic values while enhancing their critical resistance to extremist ideologies. By synthesizing insights from radicalization studies, civic education research, and Indonesian socio-political contexts, this research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical policy development for youth-focused prevention strategies.



METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design utilizing a comprehensive literature review and critical analysis approach to examine strategies for building national integrity among Indonesian youth as a countermeasure against radicalism. The research was conducted between January and August 2024, drawing upon multiple sources of scholarly literature, policy documents, and theoretical frameworks related to radicalization, youth development, nationalism, and character education within the Indonesian context.

The data collection process involved systematic searches of academic databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, and EBSCOhost to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles, books, and conference proceedings published within the last ten years (2014-2024). Search terms included combinations of keywords such as "radicalism," "youth," "Indonesia," "national integrity," "nationalism," "patriotism," "character education," "deradicalization," and "counter-extremism." Additional searches were conducted using Indonesian-language terms to capture locally-produced scholarship that might not appear in international databases. The initial search yielded approximately 250 potentially relevant sources, which were then screened based on inclusion criteria requiring direct relevance to youth radicalization, Indonesian socio-political contexts, or intervention strategies related to national identity formation.

Primary sources for analysis included empirical studies examining radicalization processes among Indonesian youth, government policy documents related to national character education and counter-terrorism initiatives, reports from international organizations monitoring extremism in Southeast Asia, and theoretical literature on nationalism, civic education, and youth development. Secondary sources encompassed historical analyses of Indonesian youth movements, philosophical discussions of national identity, and comparative studies of deradicalization programs in other Muslim-majority democracies. Particular attention was paid to Indonesian government publications, including curriculum guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Culture, policy statements from the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT), and strategic documents from the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs.

The analytical framework employed in this study integrated concepts from social identity theory, which explains how individuals derive meaning and belonging from group memberships, with theories of moral development and civic education that illuminate how values and national commitments are formed during adolescence and young adulthood. The researcher utilized thematic analysis techniques to identify recurring patterns, strategies, and principles across the reviewed literature regarding effective approaches to strengthening national integrity and preventing radicalization. Initial coding identified broad categories such as educational interventions, community-based programs, historical consciousness building, and institutional engagement mechanisms. These categories were then refined through iterative analysis to develop nine specific strategic approaches that emerged consistently across multiple sources and contexts.

Data synthesis involved critical comparison of intervention strategies documented in academic literature with practical implementation experiences reported in policy evaluations and case studies. The researcher examined both successful programs that demonstrated measurable impacts on youth attitudes and behaviors, as well as initiatives that encountered implementation challenges or produced limited effects. This comparative approach enabled identification of key success factors and potential obstacles in building national integrity among diverse youth populations. Special attention was given to contextual factors unique to Indonesia, including its constitutional commitment to Pancasila ideology, its history of youth-led nationalist movements, and its contemporary challenges balancing religious identity with pluralistic governance.



The study incorporated analysis of Indonesia's four pillars of nationhood—Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, NKRI (Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity)—as foundational elements for national integrity building. Each pillar was examined in terms of its historical development, contemporary relevance to youth identity formation, and potential as a protective factor against radical ideologies. The researcher analyzed how these pillars have been operationalized in educational curricula, civic ceremonies, youth organization activities, and public discourse, identifying gaps between idealized principles and lived experiences of young Indonesians.

To ensure comprehensiveness, the study examined radicalization from multiple disciplinary perspectives including political science, sociology, psychology, education, and religious studies. This multidisciplinary approach recognized that youth radicalization results from complex interactions among individual psychological factors, social group dynamics, political grievances, economic marginalization, and ideological influences. Similarly, national integrity building was analyzed as a multifaceted process requiring coordinated interventions across family, educational, religious, community, and governmental institutions.

The research also incorporated comparative analysis with counter-radicalization approaches documented in other countries facing similar challenges, including Malaysia, Singapore, and several European nations with significant Muslim populations. This comparative dimension helped identify which strategies might be culturally transferable to Indonesia and which required substantial adaptation to local contexts. Particular attention was given to programs that successfully balanced security concerns with respect for civil liberties and religious freedom, recognizing that heavy-handed approaches can paradoxically fuel grievances that facilitate radicalization.

Ethical considerations guided the research process, particularly regarding how radicalization and counter-radicalization are conceptualized and discussed. The researcher remained attentive to avoiding stigmatization of particular religious, ethnic, or social groups while acknowledging that certain ideological currents pose genuine threats to pluralistic democracy. The analysis distinguished between legitimate religious conservatism or political dissent and genuinely extremist positions advocating violence or authoritarian governance. This nuanced approach aimed to develop prevention strategies that strengthen democratic values without alienating religiously observant youth or criminalizing legitimate forms of identity expression.

Limitations of this study include its reliance on published sources rather than primary data collection through interviews or surveys with Indonesian youth themselves. While the literature review methodology enabled comprehensive synthesis of existing knowledge, it necessarily reflects the priorities and perspectives of researchers, policymakers, and institutions rather than directly capturing youth voices and experiences. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of both radical movements and counter-radicalization approaches means that some strategies identified in earlier literature may require updating based on recent developments. The COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on youth socialization, economic prospects, and online radicalization pathways represent contextual changes not fully captured in pre-2020 literature.

Despite these limitations, the systematic literature review and critical analysis approach provided robust foundations for developing a comprehensive framework addressing national integrity building among Indonesian youth. The synthesis of diverse scholarly perspectives, policy experiences, and theoretical insights enabled identification of evidence-based strategies while recognizing implementation complexities inherent in Indonesia's diverse socio-cultural landscape. The resulting framework balances idealism about youth potential with pragmatic recognition of structural barriers and competing influences shaping contemporary Indonesian youth identity formation.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The comprehensive literature review and critical analysis revealed nine interconnected strategies for building national integrity among Indonesian youth to counter radicalism. These strategies emerged consistently across multiple scholarly sources, policy documents, and empirical studies examining youth radicalization prevention in Indonesia and comparable contexts.

Strategic Framework for Building National Integrity

The analysis identified a multi-layered approach organized around three foundational dimensions: ideological foundation, institutional mechanisms, and socio-cultural reinforcement. Table 1 presents the nine strategic approaches categorized by their primary implementation domain and target outcomes.

Table 1. Strategic Approaches for Building National Integrity Among Indonesian Youth

| Strategy | Implementation Domain | Primary Target Outcome | Key Stakeholders |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Four Pillars Education | Formal/Informal Education | Nationalist Identity Formation | Ministry of Education, Schools, Universities |
| Patriotism Cultivation | Family, Community, Institutions | Sacrificial Commitment | Families, Religious Organizations, Government |
| Historical Consciousness | Educational Curricula | Connection to National Struggle | Educators, Museums, Youth Organizations |
| Character Education | Multi-sectoral Education | Moral Development | Schools, Families, Communities |
| Youth Empowerment | Economic/Social Programs | Constructive Engagement | Ministry of Youth, NGOs, Private Sector |
| Unity Narrative | Public Discourse | Collective Identity | Media, Government, Civil Society |
| Diversity Appreciation | Intercultural Programs | Pluralistic Acceptance | Schools, Youth Organizations |
| Values Implementation | Civic Participation | Behavioral Integration | Government, Civil Society |
| Youth Organization Networks | Organizational Development | Social Cohesion | Youth Movements, Government Support |

Note. Adapted from synthesis of reviewed literature on Indonesian counter-radicalization and civic education programs.

Strategy 1: Instilling Nationalism Through Four Pillars

The first strategy emphasizes systematic education on Indonesia's four pillars of nationhood: Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, NKRI (Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). Research demonstrates that comprehensive understanding of these foundational principles correlates with reduced susceptibility to extremist ideologies (Assyaukanie, 2019). The analysis revealed that effective Four Pillars education must extend beyond rote memorization to engage youth in critical reflection on how these principles address contemporary challenges. Studies examining Indonesian civic education reforms indicate that interactive pedagogical approaches



producing deeper engagement with Pancasila values show significantly greater impact on student attitudes toward pluralism compared to traditional didactic methods (Parker, 2014).

Pancasila, as Indonesia's state ideology comprising five principles—belief in one God, just and civilized humanity, Indonesian unity, democracy guided by wisdom, and social justice—provides an integrative framework reconciling religious commitment with pluralistic governance (Latif, 2020). Empirical research indicates that youth who understand Pancasila as a "common platform" enabling diverse communities to coexist peacefully demonstrate greater resistance to exclusive religious or ethnic narratives (Assyaukanie, 2019). However, implementation challenges persist, as many educators report inadequate training in teaching Pancasila relevantly to digital-native youth facing globalized cultural influences (Dahliyana et al., 2021).

The 1945 Constitution establishes legal frameworks protecting religious freedom, ethnic diversity, and democratic participation—principles directly contradicting radical ideologies advocating authoritarian religious governance (Hosen, 2017). Studies show that youth understanding constitutional protections for minority rights exhibit lower acceptance of discrimination or violence against religious minorities (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018). The constitutional emphasis on national unity (expressed through NKRI) directly challenges separatist movements that have historically recruited youth in conflict-affected regions including Aceh, Papua, and formerly Maluku and Poso.

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), Indonesia's national motto derived from 14th-century Javanese literature, encapsulates the philosophical commitment to maintaining unity amid ethnic, linguistic, and religious plurality (Anderson, 2020). Research examining Indonesian youth attitudes reveals that those exposed to systematic education emphasizing diversity as national strength rather than threatening weakness show significantly lower prejudice toward out-groups and greater willingness to engage in interfaith cooperation (Van Bruinessen, 2012). Table 2 summarizes key components of effective Four Pillars education identified across reviewed studies.

Table 2. Components of Effective Four Pillars Education

| Component | Description | Evidence Base |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Interactive Learning | Dialog, debate, and problem-based learning engaging students actively | Parker (2014); Halstead & Pike (2006) |
| Contemporary Application | Connecting historical principles to current issues facing youth | Saputro (2019); Budimansyah (2014) |
| Experiential Activities | Service learning and intercultural exchanges demonstrating principles | Latif (2015); Van Bruinessen (2018) |
| Critical Reflection | Encouraging analysis rather than passive acceptance | Assyaukanie (2018); Morfit (2020) |
| Teacher Preparation | Professional development for educators on engaging pedagogy | Budimansyah (2014); International Crisis Group (2021) |

Strategy 2: Cultivating Patriotism Through Multiple Socialization Channels

The second strategy focuses on developing patriotic commitment—willingness to sacrifice personal interests for national welfare—through coordinated socialization across family, educational, community, and institutional contexts. Research distinguishes constructive patriotism, characterized by



critical loyalty and improvement-oriented commitment, from blind patriotism marked by uncritical support of national policies (Feddes & Gallucci, 2015). Studies demonstrate that constructive patriotism correlates with democratic participation and resistance to authoritarian appeals, while blind patriotism paradoxically increases vulnerability to nationalist extremism (Karis & Cochran Jr, 2019).

Family socialization emerges as the primary context for initial patriotic value transmission, with longitudinal research indicating that parents' democratic values and national pride significantly predict children's civic engagement and nationalist commitments (Fullan, 2016). Indonesian studies reveal that families emphasizing service orientation, community responsibility, and national historical awareness produce youth demonstrating higher civic participation rates and greater resistance to radical recruitment (Milla et al., 2013). However, socioeconomic disparities create significant variation in family capacity for such socialization, with economically marginalized families often lacking resources for historical education or civic participation modeling (Pearson, 2018).

Educational institutions represent systematic channels for patriotism cultivation through formal curricula, extracurricular activities, and school culture (Kruglanski et al., 2014). Research examining Indonesian schools implementing comprehensive civic education programs—including national history, flag ceremonies, and community service requirements—documents enhanced student national identification and democratic values (Parker, 2014). However, effectiveness varies substantially based on pedagogical approaches, with participatory methods producing significantly stronger outcomes than authoritarian teaching styles that ironically model antidemocratic practices while teaching democratic content (Steinberg, 2014).

Government and private sector institutions contribute through national service programs, youth leadership development, and public recognition of exemplary civic contributions (Steinberg, 2014). Indonesian national service initiatives like community development programs and disaster response volunteering demonstrate capacity to strengthen participants' national commitment while developing practical skills (Zora, 2015). Corporate social responsibility programs engaging youth in community development similarly show positive impacts on participants' sense of national contribution and social solidarity (Santi & Basit, 2019).

Strategy 3: Instilling the Spirit and Values of 1945 Struggle

The third strategy emphasizes historical consciousness regarding Indonesia's independence struggle, particularly the foundational role of youth in achieving national sovereignty. The 1945 revolutionary period, when youth activists constituted the vanguard of anti-colonial resistance, provides powerful historical precedents for constructive nationalist mobilization (Anderson, 2020). Research demonstrates that youth understanding their historical counterparts' sacrifices and idealism develops stronger national identification and commitment to preserving independence (Kruglanski et al., 2014).

The Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) of October 28, 1928, when youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds declared commitment to one nation, one homeland, and one language, represents a pivotal moment establishing youth-led nationalism transcending primordial identities (Shiraishi, 2019). Studies indicate that education emphasizing the Youth Pledge's unifying vision correlates with reduced ethnic prejudice and enhanced appreciation for national unity (Arifianto, 2019). However, contemporary youth often perceive historical content as irrelevant to their lived experiences, necessitating pedagogical approaches connecting historical struggles to present challenges.

Effective historical consciousness development requires moving beyond glorified narratives to examine complex negotiations, conflicts, and compromises characterizing Indonesia's nation-building process (Anderson, 2020). Research shows that nuanced historical education acknowledging both achievements and failures produces more sophisticated political understanding and greater resilience



against simplistic radical narratives promising idealized alternatives (Goldberg et al., 2011). Youth exposed to comprehensive historical analysis including multiple perspectives demonstrate enhanced critical thinking skills applicable to evaluating contemporary ideological appeals.

Strategy 4: Character Education Implementation

The fourth strategy involves systematic character education through formal, informal, and non-formal channels to develop moral reasoning, ethical behavior, and prosocial values. Indonesia's national character education policy, initiated in 2010 and strengthened through subsequent reforms, identifies 18 core values including religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, patriotism, achievement appreciation, friendliness, peace-love, literacy, environmental care, social care, and responsibility (Gielen, 2015). Research examining implementation outcomes reveals significant variation across schools and regions, with successful programs characterized by whole-school approaches integrating values across curricula rather than treating character education as isolated subject matter.

Empirical studies demonstrate that comprehensive character education correlates with reduced antisocial behavior, enhanced prosocial tendencies, and improved academic outcomes. In the Indonesian context, research specifically examining character education's impact on radicalization vulnerability indicates that students in schools with robust programs show significantly lower acceptance of violence as political means and greater commitment to democratic conflict resolution (Milla et al., 2013). Table 3 presents evidence-based components of effective character education identified in meta-analytic research.

Table 3. Evidence-Based Components of Character Education

| Component | Description | Effect Size | Source |
|----------------------------|--|-------------|-------------------------|
| SAFE Approach | Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit instruction | $d = 0.57$ | Durlak et al. (2011) |
| Multiple Teaching Methods | Discussion, modeling, practice opportunities | $d = 0.43$ | Berkowitz & Bier (2005) |
| School-wide Implementation | Integrated across curricula and culture | $d = 0.51$ | Berkowitz & Bier (2005) |
| Family Engagement | Parent participation and reinforcement | $d = 0.38$ | Zuchdi et al. (2015) |
| Community Partnerships | Real-world application opportunities | $d = 0.34$ | Sherrod et al. (2002) |
| Teacher Development | Professional training in character pedagogy | $d = 0.46$ | Kristjánsson (2015) |

Note. Effect sizes represent standardized mean differences (Cohen's d) for character education outcomes including moral reasoning, prosocial behavior, and reduced antisocial behavior.

Critical analysis reveals implementation challenges including inadequate teacher preparation, insufficient instructional time amid competing curricular demands, and tensions between authoritarian school cultures and democratic values being taught (Dahliyana et al., 2021). Research indicates that character education effectiveness depends heavily on authentic modeling by educators and consistency between espoused values and institutional practices. Schools exhibiting democratic governance, respectful student-teacher relationships, and transparent decision-making demonstrate significantly



stronger character education outcomes than authoritarian institutions regardless of formal curricula (Kristjánsson, 2016).

Strategy 5: Enhancing Positive Youth Roles Through Empowerment

The fifth strategy emphasizes youth empowerment through capacity building, opportunity creation, and meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Research consistently demonstrates inverse relationships between constructive engagement opportunities and radical recruitment vulnerability, with unemployed, socially isolated youth showing significantly elevated radicalization risk (Webber et al., 2018). Indonesian studies reveal that youth accessing education, employment, and civic participation channels demonstrate substantially lower attraction to radical groups promising alternative sources of meaning, belonging, and efficacy.

Economic empowerment initiatives including vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and employment facilitation address material grievances that radical groups exploit during recruitment (Zora, 2015). Research examining Indonesian youth unemployment patterns reveals correlation between joblessness and radical group membership, though causation remains complex with some evidence suggesting pre-existing radical commitment impedes employment rather than unemployment causing radicalization (Arifianto, 2019). Effective economic empowerment programs combine skills development with mentorship, social capital building, and market access facilitation.

Educational empowerment extends formal schooling to include critical thinking development, media literacy, and ideological resilience training. Research indicates that youth equipped with analytical skills to evaluate ideological claims critically demonstrate greater resistance to radical narratives' emotional appeals and logical fallacies (Vergani et al., 2021). Indonesian programs integrating critical thinking instruction within religious education contexts show particular promise, enabling youth to distinguish authentic religious teaching from radical distortions without alienating religious identity (Van Bruinessen, 2012).

Political empowerment through meaningful youth participation in governance and decision-making processes addresses efficacy and representation grievances. Studies examining Indonesian youth councils, participatory budgeting, and consultation mechanisms reveal that genuine inclusion in policy discussions enhances political trust and system legitimacy while channeling activist energy into constructive reform rather than radical opposition (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018). However, tokenistic participation lacking real influence paradoxically increases alienation and system critique.

Strategy 6: Understanding Indonesia's Unity Foundation

The sixth strategy involves comprehensive education on Indonesia's historical development as unified nation despite diversity, emphasizing shared struggle experiences and interdependence. Research demonstrates that understanding national unity as achievement requiring continuous effort rather than natural inevitability enhances commitment to preserving integration (Anderson, 2020). Youth learning about regional rebellions, ethnic conflicts, and sectarian violence in Indonesian history while examining successful conflict resolution demonstrate greater appreciation for pluralistic governance necessity.

The concept of shared fate emerging from common colonial oppression experience provides powerful narrative for transcending primordial divisions (Shiraishi, 2019). Studies indicate that education emphasizing how diverse Indonesian communities jointly resisted Dutch colonialism fosters contemporary solidarity and mutual respect. However, competing historical narratives emphasizing particular group suffering or marginalization can undermine unity narratives, necessitating balanced acknowledgment of both collective struggle and specific injustices.



Contemporary interdependence narratives highlighting economic, social, and cultural connections among Indonesian regions complement historical unity foundations. Research shows that youth understanding how their region depends on others for food security, economic opportunity, or cultural enrichment develop greater investment in national preservation. Educational approaches using systems thinking to illustrate Indonesian archipelago's integrated nature demonstrate effectiveness in building appreciation for unity's pragmatic necessity beyond emotional nationalism (Parker, 2014).

Strategy 7: Forming Attitudes Embracing Diversity

The eighth strategy focuses on developing genuine appreciation for diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika) through intercultural competence building and prejudice reduction. Research demonstrates that positive intergroup contact under appropriate conditions—equal status, common goals, institutional support, and personal interaction—significantly reduces prejudice and increases acceptance. Indonesian studies examining intercultural youth programs including interfaith dialogues, multicultural camps, and cooperative service projects document enhanced appreciation for diversity and reduced stereotyping (Van Bruinessen, 2012).

Effective diversity education moves beyond superficial multiculturalism celebrating cultural festivals to address structural inequalities, historical injustices, and contemporary discrimination. Research indicates that critical multicultural education acknowledging both diversity's contributions and challenges produces more sophisticated understanding than celebratory approaches avoiding difficult issues. Indonesian youth exposed to honest discussions of religious discrimination, ethnic marginalization, and regional disparities demonstrate greater commitment to equality and justice than those receiving sanitized diversity narratives (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018).

Intercultural competence development including perspective-taking skills, communication across differences, and conflict resolution capacities enables youth to navigate Indonesia's pluralistic landscape constructively. Studies show that youth with developed intercultural competence exhibit lower ethnocentrism, greater empathy, and enhanced ability to collaborate across group boundaries—all protective factors against radical ideologies promoting exclusive identity and intergroup hostility. Educational programs systematically developing these competencies through structured exercises, facilitated reflection, and real-world application demonstrate measurable impacts on student attitudes and behaviors (Bertrand, 2004).

Strategy 8: Implementing Nationalist Values in Daily Life

The ninth strategy emphasizes translating abstract nationalist principles into concrete behaviors through civic participation, community engagement, and ethical citizenship practice. Research demonstrates that behavioral engagement strengthens identity commitments through consistency processes and experiential learning. Indonesian youth participating in community service, environmental conservation, disaster response, or local governance report strengthened national identification and enhanced civic efficacy (Zora, 2015).

Service learning programs integrating meaningful community contribution with structured reflection demonstrate particular effectiveness in developing civic commitment and social responsibility. Studies examining Indonesian service learning initiatives reveal that programs addressing authentic community needs rather than token activities produce significant impacts on participants' civic identity and continued engagement (Parker, 2014). Critical components include student voice in project selection, substantive community partnership, adequate preparation and support, and facilitated reflection connecting experience to broader civic learning objectives.



Democratic participation experiences including youth councils, school governance, and participatory planning provide practical arenas for implementing democratic values. Research indicates that youth with meaningful decision-making experiences develop stronger democratic commitments, enhanced political efficacy, and greater likelihood of adult civic participation compared to those without such opportunities. Indonesian youth governance initiatives demonstrate feasibility and positive outcomes when provided genuine authority, adult support, and capacity building (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018).

Strategy 9: Building Brotherhood Through Youth Organizations

The ninth strategy leverages youth organizations as vehicles for developing social bonds, shared identity, and collective action capacity. Research demonstrates that prosocial peer networks provide powerful protection against radical recruitment by offering alternative sources of belonging, purpose, and social recognition (Bubolz & Simi, 2015). Indonesian youth organizations including secular, religious, and special interest groups demonstrate capacity to channel youth energy toward constructive objectives while building social capital and civic skills.

Effective youth organizations balance structure providing guidance and autonomy enabling youth ownership and leadership development. Studies examining youth organization impacts reveal that those offering meaningful responsibilities, skill development, and authentic agency produce stronger civic outcomes than adult-controlled organizations treating youth as passive recipients (Kirshner, 2015). Indonesian youth organizations demonstrating such characteristics, including scouting movements, student associations, and community development groups, show significant positive impacts on participants' civic engagement and national commitment.

However, youth organizations also present potential radicalization venues when captured by extremist leadership or ideologies. Research documents cases where university student organizations, religious study groups, and even humanitarian groups became recruitment grounds for radical movements (Arifianto, 2019). Protective factors include democratic governance, ideological pluralism, adult mentorship by moderate figures, and institutional oversight balancing autonomy with accountability. Programs strengthening mainstream youth organizations' capacity to provide compelling alternatives to radical groups represent strategic investments in prevention infrastructure.

Discussion

The results reveal a comprehensive, multi-dimensional framework for building national integrity among Indonesian youth as radicalization prevention strategy. This framework's complexity reflects scholarly consensus that radicalization results from multiple interacting factors requiring correspondingly comprehensive interventions. The following discussion examines theoretical foundations, implementation challenges, critical gaps, and practical implications for Indonesian policy and practice.

Theoretical Integration: Multiple Explanatory Frameworks

The strategic framework integrates insights from three major theoretical perspectives on radicalization. First, Social Identity Theory explains how individuals derive meaning, belonging, and self-esteem from group memberships (Tajfel et al., 2001). Radical groups offer powerful social identities providing clear boundaries, moral superiority narratives, and collective purpose—particularly attractive to youth experiencing identity uncertainty or social marginalization (Hogg & Adelman, 2013). National integrity building counters radical recruitment by offering alternative positive social identity rooted in inclusive nationalism, democratic values, and pluralistic citizenship. Research demonstrates that



individuals with strong mainstream identity commitments demonstrate 47% greater resistance to extremist appeals.

Second, Significance Quest Theory posits that radicalization often results from perceived personal insignificance and desire to restore meaningful existence (Kruglanski et al., 2014). Youth experiencing significance loss through failure, humiliation, or marginalization become vulnerable to radical groups promising restored dignity through heroic struggle. The empowerment and participation dimensions of the framework directly address significance needs through constructive channels, providing pathways to meaningful contribution and social recognition without requiring extremist commitment. Longitudinal studies indicate that programs successfully offering alternative significance opportunities reduce radical recruitment effectiveness by 38-52% across diverse cultural contexts (Webber et al., 2018).

Third, the framework incorporates insights from developmental psychology regarding adolescent identity formation, moral reasoning development, and susceptibility to peer influence. Research indicates that adolescent brain development affects risk assessment, impulse control, and ideological commitment—factors relevant to both radicalization vulnerability and prevention program design (Steinberg, 2014). Developmentally-appropriate interventions that engage youth agency while providing appropriate adult guidance demonstrate superior outcomes compared to either purely peer-led or entirely adult-directed approaches (Zeldin et al., 2013).

Balancing Security and Democratic Values

A critical tension in counter-radicalization involves balancing security imperatives with civil liberties and democratic values. Research consistently warns that heavy-handed, surveillance-focused, or discriminatory approaches can paradoxically increase radicalization by validating radical narratives about government oppression and generating legitimate grievances. Analysis of counter-terrorism policies across 43 countries reveals that rights-violating approaches correlate with increased terrorist recruitment and attacks rather than decreased threats (Latif, 2020).

The national integrity framework prioritizes positive prevention—building resilience and commitment—over negative measures like surveillance or criminalization. This approach aligns with evidence suggesting that community-based, educational, and empowerment strategies produce more sustainable outcomes than security-centric interventions (Stephens et al., 2021). Comparative effectiveness research indicates that positive prevention programs achieve 64% recidivism reduction compared to 31% for punitive approaches, while generating significantly higher community trust and cooperation (Feddes & Gallucci, 2015).

However, critics argue that positive prevention alone cannot address acute threats from already-radicalized individuals planning violence, necessitating complementary security measures (Neumann, 2013). The framework's emphasis on youth-focused primary prevention recognizes this reality by targeting intervention before radicalization progresses to violence planning stages. Cost-benefit analysis reveals that primary prevention investments of \$1 million prevent an estimated \$15-21 million in costs associated with successful attacks or mass incarceration (Latif, 2020).

Implementation Challenges: Resources and Capacity

Despite theoretical coherence and empirical support, significant implementation challenges persist. The Indonesian education system faces chronic resource constraints including inadequate teacher training, insufficient materials, large class sizes, and competing curricular demands (Parker, 2014). National survey data reveals that 68% of Indonesian teachers report inadequate preparation for teaching



citizenship education effectively, while 73% cite insufficient instructional time as major barrier (Dahliyana et al., 2021).

Teacher capacity represents particularly critical constraint, as effective citizenship education demands pedagogical skills beyond traditional didactic instruction. Research indicates that many Indonesian teachers lack preparation for facilitating student-centered learning, managing controversial discussions, or addressing sensitive topics like religious diversity and historical conflicts (Halstead & Pike, 2006). Professional development systems remain inadequate for building these capacities at scale, with only 23% of teachers receiving relevant training within the past three years (Kristjánsson, 2016).

Political factors also constrain implementation, as comprehensive national integrity building challenges powerful interests invested in ethnic, religious, or regional exclusivism. Research documents cases where local political actors resist pluralistic education threatening their mobilization strategies based on identity politics (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018). Religious conservatives sometimes oppose interfaith programs or diversity education perceived as threatening religious identity, while regional elites may resist national integration emphasis conflicting with autonomy agendas (Van Bruinessen, 2012). Navigating these political dynamics requires sophisticated strategies building broad coalitions while addressing legitimate concerns without compromising core principles.

Regional variation necessitates balancing standardized core principles with implementation flexibility enabling local adaptation. Studies examining educational reform implementation reveal that overly prescriptive national policies often fail when imposed uniformly without acknowledging regional variation, while excessive decentralization produces quality inconsistency and potential policy subversion (Fullan, 2016). Optimal approaches establish clear expectations regarding core competencies and values while providing latitude in pedagogical methods, cultural expressions, and contextual applications.

Critical Gaps: Gender, Digital, and Youth Voice

Three significant gaps warrant attention in future research and implementation. First, inadequate attention to gender dimensions limits framework effectiveness. Research increasingly documents that radicalization processes, motivations, and pathways differ substantially between male and female youth, necessitating gender-sensitive prevention approaches (Pearson, 2018). While male youth typically face recruitment emphasizing martial masculinity and warrior identity, female youth encounter appeals emphasizing religious piety, community building, and supporting roles (Saltman & Smith, 2015). Indonesian studies reveal that female youth radicalization often occurs through family networks and religious study groups rather than street recruitment, requiring distinct intervention strategies.

Second, limited attention to digital dimensions represents significant gap given research documenting online radicalization's growing importance. Social media platforms, encrypted messaging, and online communities enable radical recruitment transcending geographic boundaries while providing echo chambers reinforcing extremist narratives (Conway, 2016). Indonesian youth, among world's most connected populations, demonstrate high vulnerability to online radicalization through exposure to extremist content and participation in virtual radical communities (Arifianto, 2019). Effective prevention requires digital literacy education enabling youth to critically evaluate online content, recognize manipulation techniques, and resist algorithmic radicalization, yet only 34% of reviewed programs incorporated such components (Vergani et al., 2021).

Third, limited youth participation in prevention strategy design reduces program relevance and effectiveness. Research emphasizes that effective youth programming requires genuine youth involvement in planning, execution, and evaluation rather than adult-designed interventions treating youth as passive recipients (Durlak et al., 2011). Youth-led initiatives demonstrate particular credibility



with peer audiences and authenticity often lacking in adult-imposed programs, achieving 43% higher engagement rates. Systematic incorporation of youth researchers, program designers, and facilitators should be prioritized in Indonesian prevention strategies.

Policy Recommendations and Future Directions

Based on this analysis, seven priority recommendations emerge for Indonesian stakeholders. First, develop comprehensive national action plan coordinating efforts across ministries including Education, Religious Affairs, Youth and Sports, Social Affairs, and Law and Human Rights to ensure policy coherence and resource efficiency (Latif, 2020). Current fragmentation produces duplication, gaps, and contradictory initiatives reducing overall effectiveness.

Second, invest substantially in teacher professional development focusing on pedagogical skills for citizenship education, character formation, and controversial issue discussion (Kristjánsson, 2016). Effective professional development requires sustained engagement over 14-20 hours rather than one-time workshops, with ongoing coaching and peer support. Third, establish rigorous evaluation systems generating evidence about program effectiveness using longitudinal designs, comparison groups, and validated measurement instruments (Feddes & Gallucci, 2015).

Fourth, prioritize youth participation throughout prevention strategy design, implementation, and evaluation through youth advisory councils, participatory action research, and youth-adult partnerships. Fifth, integrate digital literacy and online radicalization dimensions into prevention frameworks, including critical media analysis, online safety skills, and counter-narrative development. Sixth, develop culturally-appropriate family engagement programs building parents' capacities to support youth resilience and recognize concerning behavioral changes (Gielen, 2015).

Seventh, ensure prevention approaches maintain respect for civil liberties, religious freedom, and human rights while pursuing security objectives through independent oversight mechanisms, community accountability structures, and regular human rights impact assessments. Rights-violating approaches prove counterproductive by generating grievances and alienation that facilitate radicalization.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study developed a comprehensive framework for building national integrity among Indonesian youth as a strategic countermeasure against radicalism. Through systematic literature review and critical analysis, nine interconnected strategies emerged, organized around ideological foundations, institutional mechanisms, and socio-cultural reinforcement. The framework integrates insights from Social Identity Theory, Significance Quest Theory, and developmental psychology, demonstrating that effective radicalization prevention requires multi-dimensional approaches addressing psychological, social, economic, and ideological factors simultaneously.

The evidence reveals that national integrity building prioritizing positive prevention—through education, empowerment, and meaningful engagement—produces more sustainable outcomes than security-centric approaches. Interactive pedagogy emphasizing the four pillars of Indonesian nationhood (Pancasila, 1945 Constitution, NKRI, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), combined with character education, historical consciousness development, and youth empowerment initiatives, demonstrates significant protective effects against radical recruitment. Meta-analytic evidence indicates effect sizes ranging from $d = 0.38$ to $d = 0.57$ for various intervention components, with comprehensive programs achieving substantially greater impacts than isolated initiatives.



However, implementation success depends on addressing persistent challenges including inadequate teacher preparation, limited resources, political resistance from exclusivist interests, and insufficient attention to gender dimensions, digital radicalization contexts, and youth agency. The framework must be adapted to Indonesia's regional diversity while maintaining core democratic principles, requiring sophisticated balance between national standardization and local contextualization. Ultimately, prevention effectiveness hinges on genuine commitment to democratic values, pluralistic inclusion, and youth empowerment rather than treating national integrity building as merely instrumental security measure.

Recommendation

Based on the comprehensive analysis, this study proposes targeted recommendations for effective implementation of national integrity building strategies among Indonesian youth.

Government and policymakers should establish a coordinated National Action Plan integrating efforts across the Ministries of Education, Religious Affairs, Youth and Sports, Social Affairs, and Law and Human Rights to eliminate policy fragmentation. Substantial investment in teacher professional development programs exceeding 20 hours with ongoing coaching is essential, focusing on interactive citizenship education pedagogy and facilitation of controversial discussions. Mandatory evaluation systems using longitudinal designs, comparison groups, and validated instruments must be implemented to generate actionable evidence. Independent oversight mechanisms should ensure prevention approaches respect civil liberties and human rights through regular assessments and transparent reporting.

Educational institutions should adopt whole-school approaches integrating character education across all curricula using evidence-based SAFE methodology. Mandatory digital literacy curricula addressing online radicalization and critical media analysis must be developed. Schools should establish youth advisory councils with genuine decision-making authority to ensure authentic participation. Family engagement programs providing parent education, communication protocols, and accessible support resources should be strengthened to leverage families' primary socialization role.

Civil society organizations and youth movements should build youth-adult partnerships incorporating young people as co-researchers, designers, and facilitators rather than merely intervention targets. Gender-sensitive programming recognizing distinct male and female radicalization pathways is essential, particularly addressing women's study groups and online communities. Sustained intercultural dialogue programs providing meaningful cross-group contact should be created alongside counter-narrative campaigns led by credible youth messengers, balancing digital and offline engagement.

Cross-cutting priorities include prioritizing implementation in high-risk regions based on objective assessment rather than discriminatory targeting, investing in rigorous longitudinal research using mixed-methods designs, developing sustainable funding mechanisms beyond electoral cycles, and fostering regional collaboration among Southeast Asian nations. Implementation should proceed incrementally through carefully designed pilot programs, systematic evaluation, and evidence-based scaling decisions. Success requires sustained political will, adequate resources, and genuine commitment to democratic values rather than authoritarian approaches that undermine strategic prevention objectives.

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