

Reconstructing Democratic Inclusive Education Through National Culture and Humanistic Values: A Critical Interpretive Synthesis from Indonesia

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Abstract

Inclusive education in Indonesia faces persistent tension between global normative commitments and systemic implementation gaps, compounded by efforts to align international inclusion frameworks with the constitutional ethos of Pancasila and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, Indonesia's foundational principles of unity in diversity. Disability-centered models have largely failed to accommodate Indonesia's democratic and cultural specificities, leaving a conceptual void in policy and pedagogical practice. This study reconstructs inclusive education as a democratic, cultural, and humanistic project through Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS). This methodology generates interpretive and theory-building outputs from qualitative and mixed-methods evidence, and was applied to 111 studies published between 2014 and 2026. The synthesis yielded a conceptual model termed *culturally grounded democratic humanism*, integrating four constructs: inclusivity, democratic education, national culture and local wisdom, and humanistic character. Three core propositions are advanced. First, national cultural frameworks, Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, *gotong royong* (communal cooperation), and local wisdom function not as curricular ornaments but as an ethical grammar that structures institutional governance, social relations, and learning design. Second, humanistic character constitutes the internal telos of inclusive education, operationalized through five capacities: relational dignity, critical empathy, cooperative solidarity, dialogical courage, and ethical responsibility. Third, the model bridges critical inclusive theory, Indonesian constitutional values, and humanistic pedagogy into a coherent architecture, avoiding both abstract universalism and cultural parochialism. The framework offers a culturally grounded alternative to disability-based paradigms and a testable conceptual architecture for inclusive education policy, school governance, and pedagogical practice across Indonesian educational levels and comparable democratic-pluralist societies.

Keywords: democratic inclusive education; Pancasila; *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*; local wisdom; humanistic character.

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Introduction

Inclusive education in Indonesia faces a tension between normative commitments and implementation capacity. Only 1.48% of higher education institutions have Disability Service Units, far below the 4.7% in the United States and 60% in Singapore.¹ A similar gap is evident at the elementary level: a survey of 108 inclusive elementary schools recorded high scores in the student dimension (63%) but low scores in infrastructure (23%) and funding (36%), with significant disparities across regions.² Evaluations in South Sulawesi and East Java found that teacher training was rated as adequate by 72–75% of respondents in major cities but only 48–55% in outlying areas.³ Conversely, a meta-analysis of 30 studies showed a significant effect of learning media based on local wisdom on character development ($r = 1.237$; $z = 9.700$; $p < 0.001$).⁴

This situation places national education under three concurrent demands. The global inclusive agenda binds Indonesia through SDG 4 and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the Merdeka Curriculum mainstreams the Pancasila Student Profile as a framework for character development;⁵ and the literature positions *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* not merely as a social reality that needs to be accommodated, but as the constitutive foundation of national identity.⁶ Therefore, inclusive education in Indonesia cannot be viewed solely as an access program; it is simultaneously a democratic, cultural, and humanistic project. Structural issues remain entrenched at the implementation level: inadequate teacher training, uneven parental involvement, resource disparities, inclusive practices that rely on individual initiative, and special-assistance teachers (GPK) who

¹ S. K. W. Amnesti et al., “Higher Education Policy for Students with Disabilities: Ensuring Equality and Inclusive Education in Indonesia, Singapore, and the United States,” *Journal of Human Rights, Culture, and Legal System* 3, no. 3 (2023): 412–40.

² N. A. B. Utami, “Exploring Physical Education Teachers’ Perspectives on Inclusive Education in Bandung, Indonesia,” *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 2025.

³ N Fauziah et al., “Evaluating Inclusive Education Initiatives in Indonesia: From Policy to Practice,” *Educational Process: International Journal* 16 (2025): e2025232.

⁴ F. A. Yusuf, “Meta-Analysis: The Influence of Local Wisdom-Based Learning Media on Students’ Character in Indonesia,” *International Journal of Educational Methodology* 9, no. 1 (2023): 237–48.

⁵ A Abdulkarim et al., “Development of a ‘Unity in Diversity’-Based Pancasila Education Textbook for Indonesian Universities,” *International Journal of Instruction* 13, no. 1 (2020): 371–86.

⁶ F K Fitriyah et al., “Analysis of Character Values in the Indonesian National Motto ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’ through an Emancipatory Hermeneutical Study,” *Pegem Education and Teaching Journal* 12, no. 1 (2022): 1–9; F D Harjanti et al., “Implementing the Pancasila Student Profile through the Merdeka Curriculum,” *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 2025.

have yet to receive formal recognition.⁷ A study of teachers' perceptions revealed a combination of positive attitudes toward inclusion and conceptual ambiguity regarding its meaning.⁸

Based on the literature review above, four gaps in the literature on inclusion in Indonesia have been identified: the field remains dominated by disability studies, while the democratic dimensions of inclusion recognition, representation, and participation have not been adequately developed (RQ1). Studies on Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and local wisdom are empirically rich but have not yet been mobilized as the constitutive foundation of inclusive theory (RQ2). A humanistic character orientation has not yet been operationalized as an internal goal of inclusive education (RQ3). Furthermore, no model integrates these three dimensions into a reconstructive framework for the Indonesian context (RQ4).

This study does not limit itself to an implementational diagnosis but rather reconstructs a conceptual architecture that guides practice. Unlike studies on local wisdom that treat culture as teaching material or character enrichment, this study positions Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and local wisdom as an ethical *framework* governing institutional governance, social relations, and instructional design. It also differs from Anglo-European democratic education, which is based on liberal-individualistic assumptions,⁹ by constructing a version rooted in Indonesia's communal orientation. The primary innovation is the formulation of a *culturally grounded democratic humanism* model, an integrative framework that, based on the author's systematic review, has not yet been explicitly articulated in the literature on inclusive education. Similar efforts have been made in other contexts, particularly through the integration of Ubuntu with social justice theory in South Africa;¹⁰ however, this model distinctively integrates critical inclusive theory, the constitutional ethos of *Pancasila–Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and

⁷ Harjanti et al., "Implementing the Pancasila Student Profile"; A. N. Kawakip, A. Murfi, and T. Taufik, "Policy Analysis of Inclusive Education in Madrasahs in East Java, Indonesia," *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies*, 2025.

⁸ Sowiyah and R. Perdana, "Inclusive Education in Indonesia: Teachers' Perceptions," *WSEAS Transactions on Environment and Development* 18 (2022): 27–36.

⁹ F. Aquarone, "Student Experiences of Democratic Education and the Implications for Social Justice," *Theory and Research in Education* 19, no. 1 (2021): 40–64.

¹⁰ O. Mutanga, "Perceptions and Experiences of Teachers in Zimbabwe on Inclusive Education and Teacher Training: The Value of the Unhu/Ubuntu Philosophy," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 28, no. 10 (2024): 2032–51; L. Seeko, "Democracy and Inclusive Education Policy in Post-1994 South African Schools," *Educational Research for Social Change* 12, no. 2 (2023): 114–29.

pedagogical humanism into a single framework rooted in Indonesia's pluralistic-democratic context and operationalizable across educational levels.

Four questions guide this study: how is democratic inclusive education conceptualized and what are its philosophical boundaries (RQ1); to what extent can the values of Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and local wisdom serve as a constitutive foundation rather than a mere supplement (RQ2); what shapes the humanistic character orientation in the Indonesian context (RQ3); and how can these four principles be integrated into a coherent and operational model (RQ4).

Three theoretical traditions form the basis of this study while mapping the paradigmatic tensions addressed by the model. The *first* tradition, critical theory of inclusive education, employs Nancy Fraser's framework of social justice redistribution, recognition, and representation to demonstrate that inclusion can devolve into tokenism without meaningful democratic participation,¹¹ and that the rhetoric of inclusion can mask new forms of exclusion if power relations in schools are not scrutinized.¹² The *second* tradition, humanistic-communal philosophy of education, positions humans as relational subjects who grow through community: the philosophy of Ubuntu resonates directly with *gotong royong*.¹³ In the Indonesian Islamic intellectual tradition, moral humanism, tolerance, and openness serve as the orientation for inclusive character education.¹⁴ The *third* tradition, character education based on national culture and local wisdom, positions local wisdom as a pillar of multicultural national development and demonstrates how the Samin, Betawi, and Sundanese traditions serve as sources of vibrant character formation, with Syamsi strategically linking local wisdom, character education, and inclusive education in elementary schools.¹⁵

Each tradition has both strengths and limitations. The critical-inclusive tradition sharply exposes exclusion, but its liberal-individualistic assumptions are not in harmony

¹¹ Aquarone, "Student Experiences of Democratic Education."

¹² J. P. Portelli and P. Koneeny, "Inclusive Education: Beyond Popular Discourses," *International Journal of Emotional Education* 10, no. 1 (2018): 133–44.

¹³ Mutanga, "Perceptions and Experiences of Teachers in Zimbabwe."

¹⁴ L. Safitri, F. M. Manshur, and H. Thoyyar, "Nurcholish Madjid on Indonesian Islamic Education: A Hermeneutical Study," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 22, no. 2 (2022): 244–59; A. H. Usman, "Humanism in Islamic Education: Indonesian References," *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 13, no. 1 (2017): 95–113; D. Puspitarini et al., "Humanistic Pesantren," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 31, no. 2 (2023).

¹⁵ I Syamsi, "Local Wisdom-Based Character Education for Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Elementary Schools," *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences* 16, no. 6 (2021): 3329–42.

with Indonesia's communal orientation. The humanistic-communal tradition offers a relational foundation that closely aligns with gotong royong, yet it is rarely systematically linked to critical-inclusive theory. The tradition of local wisdom is empirically robust and culturally authentic, yet it is often treated as a source of particularistic values rather than a theoretical foundation. This tension is not a technical implementation issue but a philosophical one: what does inclusive education mean in a pluralistic-democratic society? It is these three traditions that are integrated in this study.

Research Methodology

This study employs a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) design¹⁶ integrated with *Critical Interpretive Synthesis* (CIS).¹⁷ The SLR ensures transparency and traceability in the selection process; CIS enables the interpretation, configuration, and reconstruction of diverse literary traditions into new conceptual constructs. This combination aligns with the study's configurative orientation of constructing a theoretical framework, rather than testing causal hypotheses or calculating aggregate effect sizes.¹⁸ This design was chosen because the corpus includes quantitative, qualitative, and *mixed-methods* studies; conceptual reviews; systematic reviews; book chapters; and policy documents relevant to the four main constructs. The review does not merely select and summarize findings but also assesses conceptual assumptions, theoretical limitations, and the potential for integration across the literature.

The review was conducted in four phases of protocol development: identification, deduplication, and screening based on PRISMA 2020; data extraction and quality assessment; and thematic-interpretive synthesis and conceptual reconstruction, with the protocol developed before the search in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and additional methodological references.¹⁹ Three databases were used: Scopus (international multidisciplinary), ERIC (education-specific), and Google Scholar via

¹⁶ M. J. Page et al., "The PRISMA 2020 Statement," *BMJ* 372 (2021): n71.

¹⁷ M Dixon-Woods et al., "Conducting a Critical Interpretive Synthesis of the Literature on Access to Healthcare by Vulnerable Groups," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 6 (2006): 35.

¹⁸ D Gough, J Thomas, and S Oliver, "Clarifying Differences between Review Designs and Methods," *Systematic Reviews* 1 (2012): 28; J Thomas and A Harden, "Methods for the Thematic Synthesis of Qualitative Research in Systematic Reviews," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 8 (2008): 45.

¹⁹ D Tranfield, D Denyer, and P Smart, "Toward a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge," *British Journal of Management* 14, no. 3 (2003): 207–22; H Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology," *Journal of Business Research* 104 (2019): 333–39; J Paul and A R Criado, "The Art of Writing a Literature Review," *International Business Review* 29, no. 4 (2020): 101717; A Booth et al., *Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review*, 3rd ed. (Sage, 2022).

Publish or Perish v8 (for Southeast Asian and Indonesian literature that is not fully indexed); this combination followed recommendations for cross-regional educational research.²⁰ Backward and forward snowballing were conducted via reference lists and citation tracking. Searches were conducted from October 12, 2025, to April 15, 2026, and updated via PoP on May 31, 2026.

Search strings were constructed from four main constructs and refined through pilot searches. The final Scopus string used full Boolean syntax; the ERIC search used simple Boolean with the ERIC thesaurus; and the Google Scholar search via PoP used three separate queries per construct because PoP does not support complex Boolean operations equivalent to those in Scopus (Table 1).

Table 1.
Search Strings by Database

Database	Search String
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY: (“inclusive education” OR “inclusive school” OR “inclusion in education”) AND (“democratic education” OR “democratic value” OR “citizenship education” OR “civic education” OR “democratic participation”) AND (“character education” OR “humanistic education” OR “humane pedagogy” OR “moral education” OR “values education” OR “national identity” OR “national culture” OR “local wisdom” OR “indigenous knowledge” OR “Pancasila” OR “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2027 AND (LIMIT-TO(DOCTYPE, “ar”) OR LIMIT-TO(DOCTYPE, “re”) OR LIMIT-TO(DOCTYPE, “ch”)) AND (LIMIT-TO(LANGUAGE, “English”).
ERIC	(Descriptors: “Inclusion” OR “Inclusive Schools” OR “Mainstreaming”) AND (Descriptors: “Democratic Values” OR “Citizenship Education” OR “Civics”) AND (Descriptors: “Values Education” OR “Moral Values” OR “Character Education” OR “Cultural Awareness” OR “Indigenous Knowledge”); Publication Date: 2014–2026; Publication Type: Journal Articles, Reports, Book Chapters; Language: English.
Google Scholar via PoP v8	Query 1 (Inclusion-Democracy): “inclusive education” “democratic education” Indonesia. Query 2 (Character-Humanistic): “character education” “humanistic” “inclusive” Indonesia. Query 3 (Culture-Local Wisdom): “local wisdom” OR “Pancasila” OR “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” “inclusive education”. All from 2014–2026, max 200 results per query, merged and internally deduplicated before cross-database merging.

The 2014–2026 range was selected because 2014 marked the beginning of the implementation of broader, more inclusive policies following the evaluation of the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 70/2009, and it also captures

²⁰ M. Gusenbauer and N. R. Haddaway, “Which Academic Search Systems Are Suitable for Systematic Reviews or Meta-Analyses?,” *Research Synthesis Methods* 11, no. 2 (2020): 181–217; W. M. Bramer et al., “Optimal Database Combinations for Literature Searches in Systematic Reviews,” *Systematic Reviews* 6, no. 1 (2017): 245.

developments in the Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile in 2022 and beyond. Theoretical works published before 2014 were still included if identified through snowball sampling. Inclusion and exclusion criteria encompass contextual dimensions (all levels of education within a pluralistic-democratic society, with a balanced emphasis on Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and the Global South), concepts (inclusive, democratic, humanistic, nationally-rooted, locally-informed education, or community-based pedagogy), types of contributions (empirical, conceptual, theoretical, reviews, book chapters, dissertations, and policy documents), year, language (English, or Indonesian with adequate English metadata), and source quality (indexed and verifiable). Editorials, short opinion pieces, news articles, blogs, conference abstracts without full text, technical accessibility studies without pedagogical discussion, and predatory journals were excluded.

The identification phase yielded 1,345 database records (Scopus $n = 698$; ERIC $n = 143$; Google Scholar via PoP after internal deduplication $n = 504$) plus 63 snowballing records (backward = 41; forward = 22), for a total of 1,408 records. After cross-database normalization and deduplication using Mendeley (exact DOI matching and title similarity $\geq 90\%$), 217 duplicates were removed, leaving 1,191 records for title-abstract screening. During this screening, 874 records were excluded (612 irrelevant; 158 non-academic; 104 did not meet language criteria), leaving 317 records for full-text assessment. Of these, 12 were inaccessible (8 due to paywalls; 4 due to broken links), leaving 305 full texts for assessment. A total of 194 were excluded at this stage (121 did not address at least two main constructs; 47 had methodological weaknesses based on the MMAT; 26 were duplicates), leaving 111 studies for the final synthesis (Table 2).

Figure 1.
PRISMA 2020 Flowchart for the Literature Selection Process

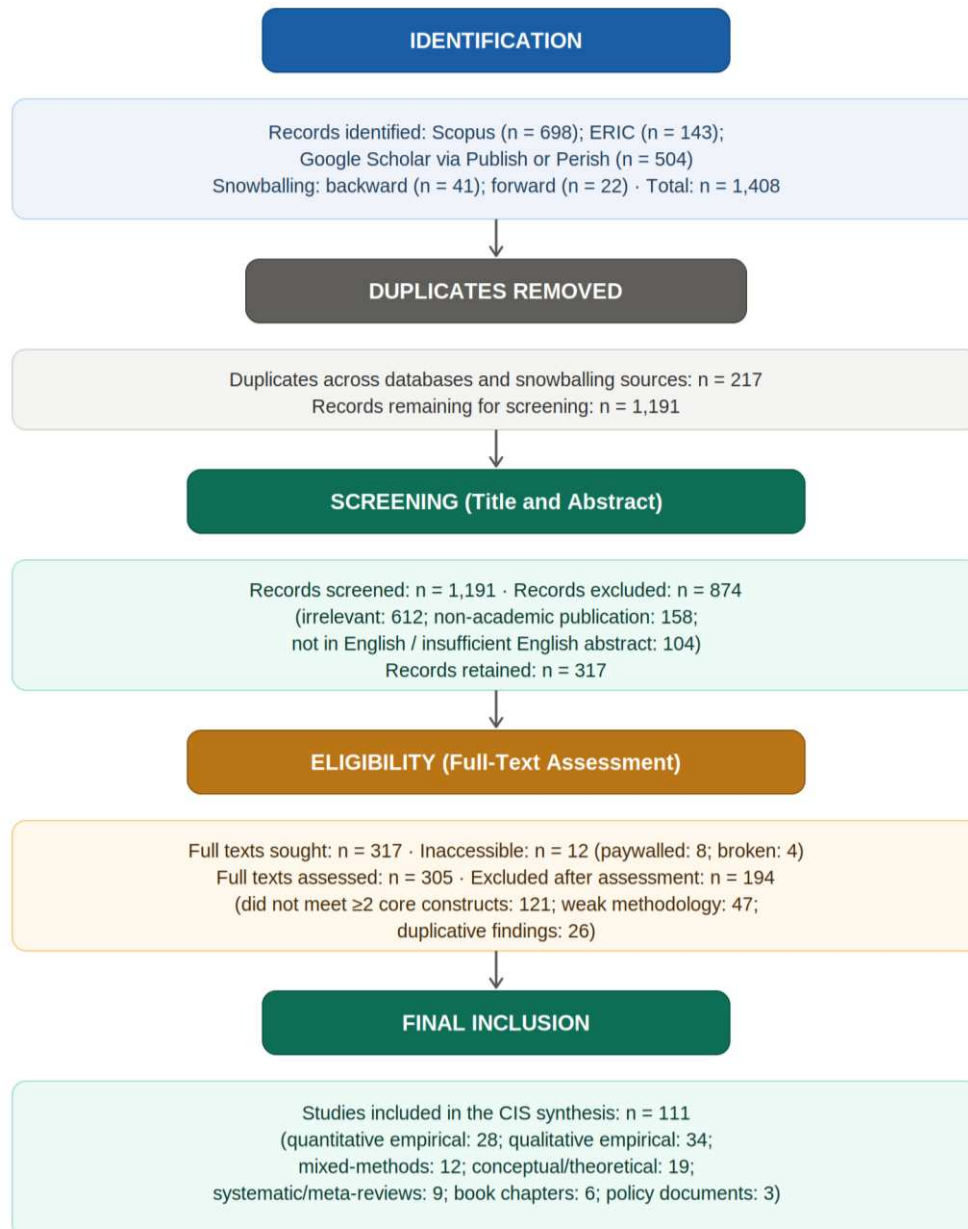


Table 2. Summary of the PRISMA 2020 Flowchart

Stage	Number	Description
Identification: Scopus	698	Initial search October 12, 2025; updated May 31, 2026.
Identification: ERIC	143	Simple Boolean search using the ERIC thesaurus.
Identification: Google Scholar via PoP	504	Three separate queries were internally deduplicated.
Snowballing (backward 41; forward 22)	63	Tracking of bibliographies and citations.
Total identifications	1,408	Before combined deduplication.
Duplicates removed	217	Mendeley: Exact DOI and title similarity $\geq 90\%$.

Stage	Number	Description
Filtered records (titles and abstracts)	1,191	Two independent reviewers.
Excluded during screening	874	Irrelevant (612); non-academic (158); language (104).
Full-text articles assessed	305	After 12 were inaccessible (8 behind a paywall; 4 broken links).
Excluded after full text review	194	Inadequate constructs (121); poor quality (47); duplicates (26).
Final inclusion in the CIS synthesis	111	Distribution in Table 4.

Screening was conducted independently by two *reviewers* using three decision categories (*include, exclude, uncertain*); discrepancies were resolved through structured discussion and, when necessary, re-examination of the full text. Inter-rater agreement was measured using Cohen’s kappa: for title-abstract screening, $\kappa = 0.84$ (95% CI: 0.80–0.88; agreement 92.3%; *almost perfect*), and for full-text assessment, $\kappa = 0.79$ (95% CI: 0.73–0.85; agreement 89.8%; *substantial*).²¹ Disagreement primarily arose in distinguishing adequate conceptual studies from extensive opinions lacking a theoretical foundation.

The data extraction matrix was developed *a priori*, pilot-tested on 10 randomly selected articles. It included author/year, source, region, level of education, design, sample, theoretical framework, treatment of the four constructs, findings, and limitations. Two independent coders extracted the data and then reconciled their results. Quality assessment used the 2018 version of the MMAT for empirical studies.²² and *the* adapted MacInnis–Jaakkola rigor *checklist* for conceptual articles (clarity of contribution, integration of theory, internal coherence, *positioning*).²³ Studies were classified as high ($\geq 80\%$), moderate (60–79%), and low ($< 60\%$): 62 (55.9%) were high, 38 (34.2%) were moderate, and 11 (9.9%) were low. Consistent with the CIS logic, low-quality studies were not automatically excluded but were assigned a lower interpretive weight; claims based solely on low-quality studies were included only if they converged with at least two high- or moderate-quality studies; otherwise, they were marked as indicative.

The synthesis was conducted in three stages: (1) line-by-line coding of the 111 studies using an inductive framework organized around four constructs; (2) identification

²¹ J. R. Landis and G. G. Koch, “The Measurement of Observer Agreement for Categorical Data,” *Biometrics* 33, no. 1 (1977): 159–74.

²² Q N Hong et al., “Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), Version 2018” (Canadian Intellectual Property Office, 2018).

²³ D. J. MacInnis, “A Framework for Conceptual Contributions in Marketing,” *Journal of Marketing* 75, no. 4 (2011): 136–54; E. Jaakkola, “Designing Conceptual Articles: Four Approaches,” *AMS Review* 10 (2020): 18–26.

of six descriptive themes of inclusion as accommodation; inclusion as recognition and representation; democratic participation as a pedagogical practice; Pancasila and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as an integrative ethos; local wisdom as a source of character development; and humanism as a relational ontology; and (3) the formulation of analytical themes and conceptual reconstruction, resulting in a framework of *culturally grounded democratic humanism*. Validity was strengthened through four procedures: credibility (screening, extraction, and independent coding by two reviewers); transferability (retention of contextual information); dependability (audit trail of search strings and eligibility decisions); and confirmability (reflective memos regarding the researcher’s position as an Indonesian education scholar committed to Pancasila, inclusive pedagogy, and humanistic education).²⁴ The study used only publicly available secondary literature and therefore did not require formal ethical approval.

Three methodological limitations must be acknowledged: the restriction to English-language sources potentially excludes some Indonesian or regional-language publications; Google Scholar via PoP does not support complex Boolean operators equivalent to those in Scopus, which was compensated for by using three separate queries per construct (maximum of 200 results); and the study’s reconstructive ambition involves an interpretive dimension that was safeguarded through audit trails and reflexivity.

Results

This section presents descriptive findings and thematic configurations from 111 studies; interpretations of meaning and implications are presented in the Discussion. The corpus is heterogeneous in terms of methodology, geography, and educational level, which reinforces the use of CIS, since the focus is not on a single effect but on the structure of meaning that explains how the four constructs are interrelated (Table 3).

Table 3.
Characteristics of the Corpus of 111 Studies

Dimension	Category	Number (n = 111)
Year of publication	2014–2017 / 2018–2021 / 2022–2024 / 2025–2026	18 / 39 / 42 / 12
Region	Indonesia	48 (43.2%)
	Other Southeast Asia	9 (8.1%)
	Other Global South	18 (16.2%)
	Europe	21 (18.9%)
	North America/Australia/New Zealand	12 (10.8%)
	Cross-national/comparative	3 (2.7%)

²⁴ Y. Lincoln and E. G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985).

Level	Early Childhood Education / Elementary School / Junior High–High School / Madrasah–Islamic Boarding School / Higher Education / Cross-level	5 / 34 / 21 / 12 / 17 / 22
Design	Quantitative / Qualitative / Mixed / Conceptual / Review / Book Chapter / Policy-Dissertation	28 / 34 / 12 / 19 / 9 / 6 / 3
Dominant Construct	Inclusivity	57 (51.4%)
	Democracy/Citizenship	19 (17.1%)
	National culture/local wisdom	23 (20.7%)
	Humanistic character	12 (10.8%)

The corpus reveals four initial patterns. *First*, the international literature on inclusion remains strongly shaped by discourses on rights, disability, access, and accommodation (51.4% position inclusivity as the dominant construct). *Second*, the literature on democratic education emphasizes participation, student voice, and social justice, but does not always link these to everyday inclusion practices. *Third*, the Indonesian literature on Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and local wisdom is empirically rich (20.7%) but is often positioned as a source of values or character-building material rather than a theoretical foundation. *Fourth*, humanistic literature is strongly oriented toward dignity, empathy, and moral development (10.8%) but has not yet been operationalized as a goal of democratic inclusive education.

RQ1 Results: Conceptualization of Democratic Inclusive Education. The synthesis indicates that democratic inclusive education goes beyond a technical definition of services for students with special needs; it encompasses the right to be recognized, heard, involved, and to influence the structure of learning.²⁵ Three dimensions recur as its core: redistribution (the fair distribution of resources, support, time, and opportunities), recognition (the acceptance of identity, abilities, religion, language, culture, gender, and physical conditions as legitimate parts of the school community), and representation (the involvement of students, teachers, parents, and the community in formulating rules and priorities). The synthesis also identified a significant limitation: many studies, including Indonesian research on teachers’ perceptions, school readiness, and policy implementation, still frame inclusion within the context of disability or policy

²⁵ Aquarone, “Student Experiences”; L. A. Bell, “Theoretical Foundations for Social Justice Education,” in *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* (Routledge, 2016), 3–26; J. Feu, “Democracy and Education,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 36, no. 6 (2017): 647–61; A. Sanahuja, O. Moliner, and L. Moliner, “Inclusive and Democratic Practices in Primary School Classrooms,” *Educational Research* 62, no. 1 (2020): 111–27; T. Bartlett, “Inclusive Civic Education and School Democracy through Participatory Budgeting,” *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 19, no. 3 (2024): 362–80.

compliance, so the core issue is not merely the availability of facilities or training but structural readiness and disparities in implementation across regions.²⁶

RQ2 Findings: National Culture and Local Wisdom as a Constitutive Foundation. Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, gotong royong, and local wisdom have the theoretical capacity to serve as a constitutive foundation for inclusion. In Indonesian literature, these values are not merely normative themes but social practices that shape how communities understand togetherness, difference, responsibility, and harmony; Pancasila and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* function as a framework for plural citizenship,²⁷ and local wisdom as pillars of multicultural nation-building.²⁸ Studies of the Samin, Betawi, Sunda, Javanese Keraton, and Menyama Braya traditions demonstrate that local culture operates through narratives, symbols, rituals, art, and community experiences.²⁹ Syamsi's contribution stands out for directly linking local wisdom, character education, and inclusion in elementary schools. The dominant weakness of the corpus: most literature on local wisdom still treats culture as teaching material or as a means of character enrichment, rather than as a guiding principle for institutional design, classroom management, teacher-student relationships, and community participation; thus, culture risks becoming a symbolic ornament that does not shape the structure of inclusion.

RQ3 Results: Humanistic Character Orientation. Humanistic character is not a list of moral values taught in isolation, but rather a pedagogical orientation that views students as dignified, relational human beings who grow through ethical interactions. Ubuntu reinforces the idea that humans become fully human through relationships with their community, a framework aligned with gotong royong, as both reject extreme individualism and view educational success as a relational achievement.³⁰ Humanistic pedagogy and prosocial character education strengthen social participation, a sense of

²⁶ Sowiyah and Perdana, "Inclusive Education in Indonesia"; M. Efendi et al., "Inclusive Education for Students with Special Needs at Indonesian Public Schools," *International Journal of Instruction* 15, no. 2 (2022): 967–80; Fauziyah et al., "Evaluating Inclusive Education Initiatives."

²⁷ Abdulkarim et al., "Development of a 'Unity in Diversity'-Based Pancasila Education Textbook"; Fitriyah et al., "Analysis of Character Values."

²⁸ Suwito Eko et al., "Local Wisdom: Pillar Development."

²⁹ Hidayati et al., "Exploring the Implementation"; Suswandari, "Incorporating Beliefs"; Rosala and Budiman, "Dance Learning Based on Local Wisdom"; Sedyanta Santosa, Handoko Santoso, and Ichsan, "Integrating Values from Early 19th-Century Javanese Court Literature into Multicultural Character Education," *Educational Process: International Journal*, 2025; Syamsi, "Character Education Based on Local Wisdom."

³⁰ Mutanga, "Perceptions and Experiences of Teachers in Zimbabwe."

belonging, and the development of character strengths in inclusive classrooms.³¹ In the context of Indonesian Islam, a thought that emphasizes morality, freedom, tolerance, and respect for pluralism strengthens humanistic foundations through Islamic education, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), school management, and Neo-Humanistic education.³²

RQ4 Results: Integrative Synthesis. The four constructs cannot be treated as standalone components. Inclusive education provides an orientation toward rights and access; democracy provides the principles of participation and representation; national culture provides local legitimacy and the ethics of community; and humanistic character provides the goal of human formation. The model emerging from the CIS synthesis is formulated as a “culturally grounded democratic humanism” framework that views inclusive education as a democratic project rooted in national culture and directed toward the formation of humanistic character. Figure 2 visualizes the model’s architecture as four concentric layers with reciprocal relationships: the outer layer serves as the context and filter for the inner layers, while the two-way arrows indicate dialectical interactions rather than a unidirectional hierarchy. The normative-democratic layer filters cultural elements entering the constitutive foundation; the cultural-constitutive layer contextualizes pedagogical practices; and the pedagogical-inclusive layer is directed toward a humanistic-character telos that strengthens the capacity for democratic participation through reflective feedback. The mapping of results according to the research questions is summarized in Table 4.

Figure 2.
Elements of the *Culturally Grounded Democratic Humanism* Model

³¹ N E Krivas, “Integrating Humane Pedagogy and Whole-School Sustainability” (Saybrook University, 2022); N Leach, “Impactful Learning Environments,” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 62, no. 3 (2022): 377–96; R White, “School-Wide Mediated Prosocial Development,” *Multicultural Education Review* 8, no. 4 (2016): 213–29; K Vuorinen, “A Character Strength Intervention in 11 Inclusive Finnish Classrooms,” *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 19, no. 1 (2019): 45–57.

³² Safitri, Manshur, and Thooyar, “Nurcholish Madjid”; Usman, “Humanism in Islamic Education”; Puspitarini et al., “Humanistic Pesantren”; A Rais, “Humanistic Education Management Based on the Principle of ‘Kesangtimuran,’” *Pegem Education and Teaching Journal* 12, no. 4 (2022): 280–87; N K S K Wardhani, “Cultivating Elementary School Students’ Characters through Neo-Humanistic Education,” *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 43, no. 2 (2022): 323–28.

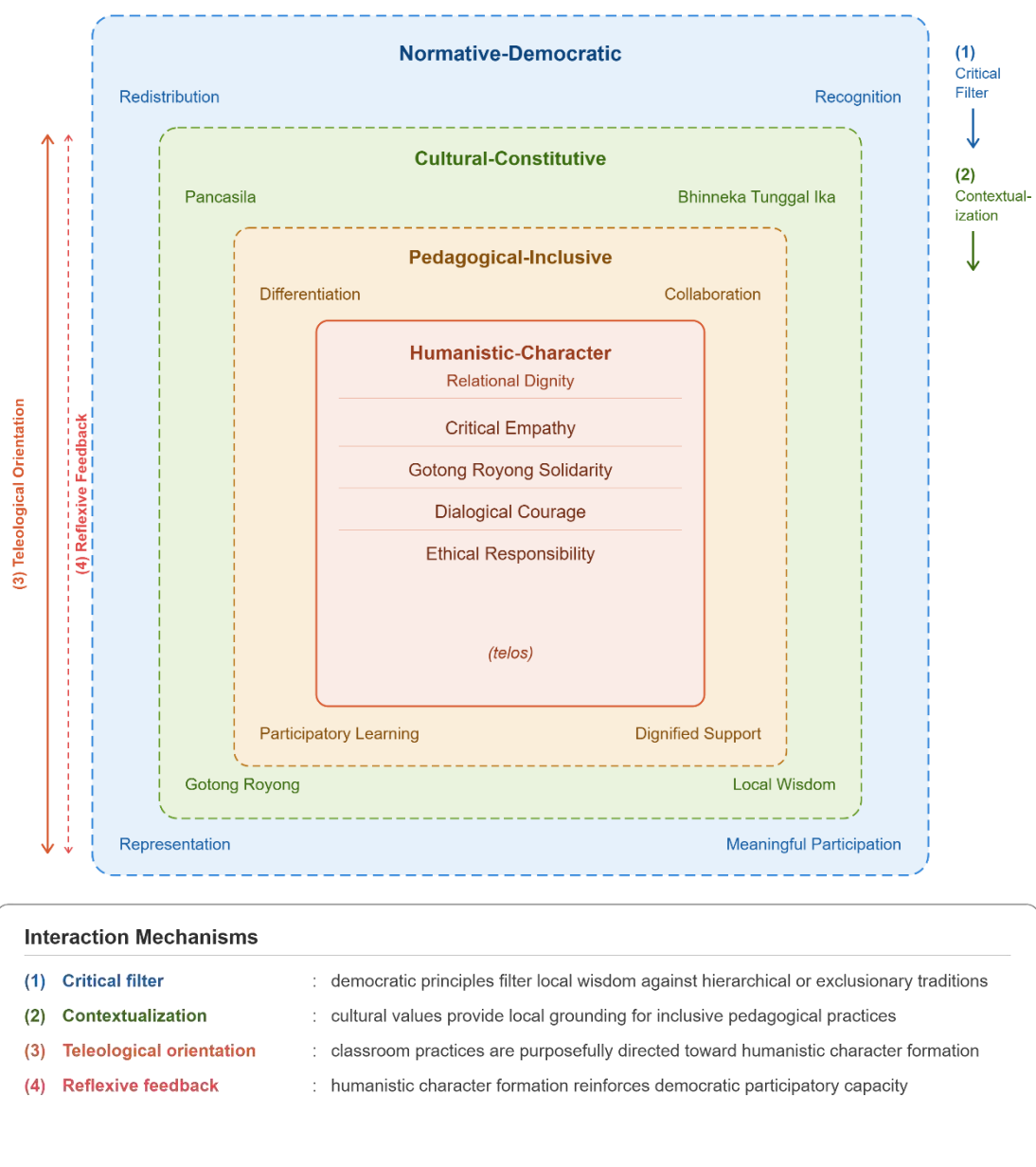


Table 4. Mapping of Synthesis Results According to Research Questions

RQ	Main Analytical Themes	Synthetic Meaning
RQ1	Inclusion is redistribution, recognition, representation, and democratic participation.	Democratic inclusive education is not about placement or accommodation, but rather a school structure that ensures participatory parity.
RQ2	Pancasila, <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> , gotong royong, and local wisdom serve as constitutive values.	National culture serves as an ethical grammar for grounding inclusion, not merely as a curricular ornament.
RQ3	Humanistic character encompasses relationality, dignity, empathy, solidarity, and moral responsibility.	The goal of inclusion is not merely access to learning, but the formation of individuals capable of living together justly.

RQ	Main Analytical Themes	Synthetic Meaning
RQ4	The integration of democracy, inclusivity, national culture, and pedagogical humanism.	A model of <i>culturally grounded democratic humanism</i> : an inclusive framework that is globally valid while rooted in Indonesian culture.

To enhance transparency between the propositions and the corpus, Table 5 presents an evidence map linking the five synthetic propositions to key supporting studies and evidence categories.

Table 5.
Evidence Map of Synthetic Propositions and Supporting Studies

No.	Synthetic Propositions	Key Supporting Studies	Evidence
P1	Democratic inclusive education ensures participatory parity through access, recognition, representation, and the redistribution of support.	Aquarone (2021); Bell (2016); Feu (2017); Sanahuja et al. (2020); Bartlett (2024); Portelli & Koneeny (2018); Seeko (2023); Curieses (2017); Mansimova (2025).	Strong: 7 high; Moderate: 2.
P2	National culture and local wisdom can serve as the constitutive foundation of inclusion when they shape school structures, relationships, and practices.	Abdulkarim et al. (2020); Fitriyah et al. (2022); Suwito Eko et al. (2020); Hidayati et al. (2020); Suswandari (2017); Rosala & Budiman (2020); Syamsi (2021); Sedyanta Santosa et al. (2025); Hendratno et al. (2025).	Strong: 8 high; Moderate: 3.
P3	Humanistic character is an internal goal of inclusion because meaningful inclusion must foster relational dignity, empathy, solidarity, and ethical responsibility.	Mutanga (2024); White (2016); Vuorinen (2019); Leach (2022); Krivas (2022); Safitri et al. (2022); Usman (2017); Puspitarini (2023); Rais (2022); Wardhani (2022); Giannakakis (2020).	Strong: 8 high; Moderate: 3.
P4	Indonesia's inclusion model requires integrating global rights norms with local values to avoid falling into abstract universalism or cultural parochialism.	Amnesti et al. (2023); Nuryadi (2020); Japar (2023); Efendi et al. (2022); Fauziyah et al. (2025); Harjanti et al. (2025); Kawakip et al. (2025); Utami (2025).	Strong: 6 high; Moderate: 4.
P5	<i>Culturally grounded democratic humanism</i> unites democracy, inclusivity, national culture, and pedagogical humanism within a single conceptual framework.	Convergence of P1–P4 with the anchor studies by Mutanga (2024), Aquarone (2021), Syamsi (2021), Fitriyah et al. (2022), and Suwito Eko et al. (2020).	Strengths: cross-thematic convergence, 5 anchor studies.

Based on the characteristics of the corpus and the four sets of findings, this study yields five synthetic propositions. P1: Democratic inclusive education ensures participatory parity through access, recognition, representation, and the redistribution of support. P2: National culture and local wisdom can serve as a constitutive foundation

when used to shape school structures, relationships, and practices, rather than merely enriching curriculum content. P3: Humanistic character is an intrinsic goal of inclusion because meaningful inclusion must foster relational dignity, empathy, solidarity, and ethical responsibility. P4: The Indonesian model of inclusion requires integrating global rights norms with local values to avoid falling into either abstract universalism or cultural parochialism. P5: *Culturally grounded democratic humanism* offers a reconstructive framework that ties these four dimensions together into a coherent conceptual architecture.

Discussion

The Results section presents thematic findings from 111 studies; it interprets their meaning in dialogue with theory, the Indonesian context, and opposing positions, and links each interpretation to the research questions that guide it. The main finding is a shift in how inclusion is understood: from accommodation policies toward an educational architecture that ensures participatory parity, is rooted in national culture, and is directed toward the formation of humanistic character. The discussion is organized in the order of RQ1–RQ4, preceded by an interpretation of the corpus’s characteristics and the strength of the evidence underpinning all claims of the model.

The nature of the corpus as a finding, not a backdrop

The corpus distribution should be interpreted as a finding in its own right. The dominance of inclusivity as the primary construct (51.4%) over humanistic characteristics (10.8%) suggests that the literature continues to frame inclusion as a matter of access and accommodation. In contrast, the dimension of the purpose for which inclusion is pursued is rarely articulated. The dominance of Indonesian studies (43.2%) underscores their contextual relevance, but the skewed distribution across educational levels (elementary school: 34 studies; early childhood education: only 5 studies) indicates an uneven evidence base. This pattern is not merely a quantitative map: the construct that should serve as the *telos* is, in fact, the least developed; thus, integrating it into the framework of inclusion is a contribution demanded by the state of the literature itself, not merely a theoretical choice of the author.

Heterogeneity and Calibration of Evidence Strength

The corpus is heterogeneous methodologically, geographically, and by educational level. Within the logic of critical interpretive synthesis, heterogeneity is not a threat to

validity but a prerequisite. What is sought is a structure of meaning that explains the interconnectedness of constructs, not a single effect size.³³ Consequently, the strength of a model's claims depends on cross-tradition convergence, not on statistical weight. Quality assessment reinforces this calibration: of 111 studies, 62 were categorized as high, 38 as moderate, and 11 as low.³⁴ Claims based solely on low-quality studies are treated as indicative; therefore, propositions supported by many high-quality studies (P1–P3) are stated with higher confidence than integrative claims (P5), which are configurative in nature and await validation. This distinction in the degree of confidence is important to prevent the model from being interpreted as a validated finding.

RQ1 Inclusion as a Democratic Project and Its Philosophical Limits

RQ1 asks how democratic inclusive education is conceptualized and where its philosophical boundaries lie. Critical literature agrees that inclusion must be understood beyond administrative placement;³⁵ The question is what hinders its internalization in Indonesia. The synthesis identifies the main barriers as paradigmatic, not merely managerial: when regulations and quality indicators position inclusion as a service for specific groups, institutional logic asks how different students adapt to the system. Democratic reconstruction reverses this question: how should the school system be transformed so that all students can participate with dignity?³⁶

Within Fraser's framework of justice, participatory parity demands the simultaneous redistribution, recognition, and representation.³⁷ Its application to an evaluation in South Sulawesi and East Java, which found that teachers' preparedness was rated as adequate by 72–75% of respondents in major cities but only 48–55% in outlying areas, yields a testable theoretical extension. This disparity is commonly interpreted as a problem of training distribution. The synthesis interprets it differently: it may simultaneously reflect a deficit in recognition and representation, as teachers in outlying areas are less recognized as professional agents with a voice in the design of contextual inclusion practices. Thus, Fraser's framework, typically applied to students, is here extended to teachers as subjects of parity: teachers'

³³ Dixon-Woods et al., "Conducting a Critical Interpretive Synthesis."

³⁴ Hong et al., "Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), Version 2018."

³⁵ Julie Allan, "The Sociology of Disability and the Struggle for Inclusive Education," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 31, no. 5 (2010): 603–19.

³⁶ Navin Kikabhai, "How Educational Systems Respond to Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice," *The British Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 4 (2022): 685–98.

³⁷ Aquarone, "Student Experiences of Democratic Education."

recognition and representation become structural prerequisites for parity in student participation. This claim is falsifiable if strengthening teachers' recognition and representation is not linked to more contextual inclusion practices; in that case, this extension is invalidated. Without distributive justice, inclusion degenerates into *ability profiling*, and policies that fail to transform structures merely produce an illusion of presence.³⁸

The philosophical limitation of this concept lies in its own prerequisites. Democratic inclusive education presupposes a community willing to grant participatory *standing* to all its members; in contexts with high authority asymmetry, such as the *kiai-santri* relationship within the *sanad* structure, for example, the concept's scope narrows and requires an additional framework. The second limitation is practical in nature and is the target of critiques regarding implementation effectiveness, which frame democratic participation as an obstacle to efficiency given resource constraints.³⁹ This critique is valid in the short term: participatory forums are indeed time-consuming. However, the synthesis shows that efficiency achieved without participation results in policies that fail to take root because the school community does not own them.⁴⁰ The trade-off is not between democracy and effectiveness, but rather between short-term efficiency and medium-term sustainability; the model treats participatory structures as institutional investments rather than burdens.

RQ2 National culture as a constitutive foundation

RQ2 asks to what extent Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and local wisdom can serve as a constitutive foundation, rather than merely a complement. A constitutive position addresses two opposing risks. Abstract universalism disregards social structures, moral language, and local historical experiences; conversely, cultural parochialism uses local wisdom to justify illusory harmony, hierarchy, or exclusion cloaked in tradition. This study does not absolutize local culture but rather places it in a critical dialogue with the principles of democracy, rights, and dignity: Pancasila provides a horizon of social justice, and humanity; *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* provides the principle of unity in diversity;

³⁸ Mel Ainscow, "Promoting Inclusion and Equity in Education," *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy* 6, no. 1 (2020): 7–16.

³⁹ K Mansimova, "The Role of the Teacher in the Inclusive Education System," *Scientific Work* 19, no. 11 (2025): 105–10; Efendi et al., "Inclusive Education for Students with Special Needs."

⁴⁰ Sanahuja, Moliner, and Moliner, "Inclusive and Democratic Practices."

gotong royong provides a mechanism for solidarity; and local wisdom offers concrete practices, as seen in the interconnection between local wisdom, character education, and inclusion in elementary schools.⁴¹

*The term “ethical grammar” does not refer to linguistic grammar but is adapted from Pleasants’ interpretation of Wittgenstein, which posits grammar as the implicit rules governing the use of concepts within a way of life.*⁴² In this model, ethical grammar is a set of moral principles and customs, such as mutual aid, deliberation, mutual respect, and consideration, that govern how a community understands obligations, rights, differences, and togetherness. Its distinction from Bourdieu’s “habitus” is substantive, not merely terminological. Habitus is a descriptive-sociological concept: a disposition that is both produced by and reproduces social structures.⁴³ Ethical grammar is prescriptive-constitutive: it sets boundaries regarding what is appropriate, just, and humane in educational relationships. This is where its theoretical contribution lies, rather than merely borrowing from Bourdieu; the model rejects the sufficiency of habitus for normative purposes and shifts the function of culture from content (what is taught) to structure (how educational relationships are organized). This shift can be tested: if cultural integration that stops at the level of content yields inclusion outcomes equivalent to those of structural integration, then this constitutive claim is not supported.

Precisely because it is prescriptive, the constitutive position is vulnerable to postcolonial and feminist critiques that worry that local wisdom perpetuates traditional hierarchies, gender bias, and ableism.⁴⁴ These critiques deserve to be fully taken to heart: not all local practices are automatically inclusive. The model responds not by defending tradition, but by positioning a normative-democratic layer as a critical filter; local wisdom is worthy of serving as a foundation only to the extent that it reinforces recognition, participation, and dignity for all students, and is rejected when it perpetuates exclusion. It is this filter that makes constitutive claims falsifiable at the level of practice: a tradition

⁴¹ Syamsi, “Character Education Based on Local Wisdom.”

⁴² Nigel Pleasants, “Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Basic Moral Certainty,” *Inquiry* 51, no. 3 (2008): 241–67.

⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*, vol. 4 (Sage, 1990).

⁴⁴ P. Curieses, “For an Inclusive School: The Gender Frontiers,” *Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia Social* 6, no. 2 (2017): 63–79; Portelli and Koneeny, “Inclusive Education: Beyond Popular Discourses.”

that fails the recognition-participation-dignity test is removed from the foundation rather than rationalized as local wisdom.

RQ3 Humanistic character as the telos of inclusive education

RQ3 asks what shapes the orientation of humanistic character in the Indonesian context. The humanistic character in this model is not abstract humanism but rather relational humanism, which places individual dignity within the context of social responsibility. Without this orientation, the achievements of inclusion can easily become hollow: access without humanism results in physical presence without a sense of belonging; differentiation without humanism turns into labeling; tolerance without humanism stops at a mere attitude of letting things be. This telos consists of five mutually supportive capacities: relational dignity, critical empathy, cooperative solidarity, dialogical courage, and ethical responsibility, which together make the quality of relationships in the classroom, rather than merely the number of inclusive schools, the measure of success.

Its ontological foundation resonates with the philosophy of Ubuntu, which affirms that humans become human through their relationships with the community, aligning with *gotong royong* because both reject extreme individualism.⁴⁵ The tradition of *care ethics* places relationships at the center of education with a different emphasis;⁴⁶ This difference is not a contradiction but rather a complementarity. *Care ethics* provides a micro-relational foundation that enriches the operationalization of critical empathy and relational dignity. The contribution at this level is not to discover a new relationality, but rather to configure it as the internal telos of inclusion, rather than as an additional value beyond the goal of access.

This communal-relational approach can be challenged from two directions. Secular-liberal humanism is skeptical that a relational orientation obscures individual autonomy.⁴⁷ The response: relational humanism here is not unlimited communitarianism; it places individual dignity at the core, with relationships serving as the means by which individuals become whole rather than absorbed, and the principle of just and civilized

⁴⁵ Mutanga, "Perceptions and Experiences of Teachers in Zimbabwe."

⁴⁶ Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (University of California Press, 2013).

⁴⁷ V. Giannakakis, "Neoliberalism and Culture in Higher Education," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 39, no. 4 (2020): 365–82.

humanity acts as a safeguard against the absorption of individuals into the community. From another perspective, competency-based character education argues that relational humanism is too abstract to be measured.⁴⁸ This criticism is valid and constitutes a separate measurement agenda; however, without a clear telos-oriented focus, character assessment instruments risk becoming mere behavioral *checklists* detached from relational context. It is this tension between a rich telos and the need for definitive measures that leads to the limitations and research agenda discussed below.

RQ4 Integrative model architecture

RQ4 asks how the four principles are integrated into a coherent and operational model. The answer is not the sum of the four constructs, but rather their arrangement as four mutually conditioning layers. Inclusive education provides an orientation toward rights and access; democracy provides the principles of participation and representation; national culture provides local legitimacy and an ethic of togetherness; and humanistic character provides the goal of human development. The relationships between the layers are dialectical, not unidirectional and hierarchical: the normative-democratic layer filters cultural elements entering the constitutive foundation; the cultural-constitutive layer contextualizes pedagogical practices; and the pedagogical-inclusive layer is directed toward a humanistic telos that, through reflective feedback, reinforces the capacity for democratic participation. It is this configuration that distinguishes the model from a mere list of values: each layer performs a function that cannot be replaced by another layer, so that removing one of them, for example, access without a humanistic telos, can be predicted to result in a sense of presence without a sense of belonging. Such targeted predictions make the model's architecture testable through *design-based research*, rather than merely being declared coherent.

Conceptual Contributions

While the previous section explained the model's content, this section outlines what it changes in the theoretical landscape. The contributions can be mapped across three layers. First, the model reconstructs inclusion as a democratic project rather than a compensatory policy, thereby shifting the focus from "who needs to be accommodated" to "what structures need to be changed so that every subject can participate." Second, it

⁴⁸ Thomas Lickona, "Smart and Good High Schools," 2005; Marvin W. Berkowitz and Melinda C. Bier, "What Works in Character Education," *Journal of Research in Character Education* (2007).

mobilizes Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, gotong royong, and local wisdom as theory-forming principles, a constitutive ethical grammar rather than rhetorical add-ons. Third, it overcomes the fragmentation that has long separated inclusive education, democratic citizenship, character education, and humanistic pedagogy, a fragmentation evident when inclusion is discussed as access, democracy as civic practice, culture as local values, and character as a list of moral principles, by uniting all four within a single framework for analyzing policy, school practices, and instructional design. This contribution claim is configurative in nature: its novelty lies in the configuration itself, not in the discovery of a single previously unknown construct.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Practical implications follow directly from this constitutive position. Improving inclusive education requires more than simply expanding the number of schools; policies must ensure that schools possess democratic and humanistic capacities. Strengthening infrastructure, funding, and teacher training must be accompanied by participatory governance that involves students, parents, teachers, the community, and local governments. The urban-rural divide underscores that equality cannot be achieved through one-size-fits-all policies; context-sensitive resource allocation is required. Teacher training should not be limited to techniques for identifying special needs. Still, it should also encompass classroom democracy, dialogic pedagogy, differentiated instruction, anti-stigma ethics, bias reflection, and the utilization of local wisdom as a design principle. Table 6 summarizes the implications of the cross-level model.

Table 6.
Implications of the Model for Policy, Schools, and Pedagogy

Level	Direction of Implications	Operational Examples
National/regional policy	Shift the focus of inclusion from administrative compliance to participatory parity.	Aligning regulations, affirmative funding, recognition of GPK, and quality indicators that encompass participation, a sense of belonging, and anti-stigma.
School Governance	Transforming schools into moral-democratic communities.	Forums for student and parent voices, inclusive culture audits, and dialogic-restorative conflict resolution mechanisms.
Teacher development	Shaping teachers as democratic-cultural agents.	Training in differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), dialogic pedagogy, bias reflection, anti-stigma education, and the integration of local wisdom as a design principle.

Curriculum and Learning	Integrating constitutive values as the framework for learning experiences.	Developing the Pancasila Student Profile project (P-5), citizenship education, and character through participatory projects that involve real diversity.
Assessment and Evaluation	Measuring success through the quality of relationships and participation, not just access.	Indicators include a sense of safety and belonging, participation by vulnerable students, peer collaboration, and a reduction in labeling practices.

Limitations

The study's limitations encompass interrelated methodological and substantive dimensions. On the methodological side, the restriction to English-language sources may exclude Indonesian- or regional-language publications; Boolean limitations in Google Scholar via PoP were mitigated by running separate queries per construct; and the study's reconstructive ambition entails an interpretive dimension that is safeguarded through audit trails and reflexivity. On the substantive side, cross-level transferability is limited: most evidence comes from elementary school (34 studies) and middle school (21 studies), while early childhood education (PAUD) accounts for only five studies; thus, claims regarding a model for PAUD are tentative. Participation among 3–6-year-olds takes the form of participation through play and visual expression rather than deliberative forums. The higher education context (17 studies), with the autonomy of adult students and research pressures, demands a different operationalization. The feasibility of *gotong royong* in highly mobile urban contexts remains uncertain; large urban schools may require structured peer support networks rather than spontaneous, kinship-based solidarity. The *madrasah-pesantren* context (12 studies), with its dynamics of religious authority, *sanad* structures, and *kiai-santri* relationships, requires an additional analytical framework, a limitation previously noted as a philosophical boundary of the concept in the discussion of RQ1. Finally, the reconstructive nature of the studies means that the model is a theoretical framework that has not yet been empirically validated.

Future Research Agenda

The agenda for further research flows directly from these limitations and from the identified gaps in the corpus. The priority is empirical validation: developing and testing instruments to measure participatory parity, a sense of belonging, and the five humanistic character capacities, so that the criticism regarding the measurability of competency-based character education can be directly addressed. Second, testing the model through cross-level *design-based research*, with a special focus on early childhood education

(PAUD) and higher education, where the evidence base is thin. Third, contextual studies in madrasahs and pesantren to determine the extent to which ethical grammar and participatory parity can be operationalized within religious authority structures, ideally through research partnerships. Fourth, a *feasibility* study of mutual aid solidarity in large-scale urban schools. Since the telos construct of humanistic character is the least developed in the corpus, research that strengthens its operationalization offers the greatest marginal value for the model's maturation.

Conclusion

This study reconstructs inclusive education in Indonesia as an integrated democratic-cultural-humanistic project through the model of *culturally grounded democratic humanism*. Four contributions can be identified. First, conceptually, the model positions inclusion as participatory parity, not merely accommodation or administrative placement, to ensure redistribution, recognition, and representation. Second, culturally, the model elevates Pancasila, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, gotong royong, and local wisdom from sources of particular values to a constitutive ethical grammar that shapes institutional governance, social relations, and learning design. Third, from a humanistic perspective, the model establishes relational humanistic character as an internal telos with five operational capacities: relational dignity, critical empathy, cooperative solidarity, dialogical courage, and ethical responsibility. Fourth, from an integrative perspective, the model addresses the fragmentation between critical inclusive theory, Indonesia's constitutional ethos, and pedagogical humanism within a single coherent framework. Inclusive education in Indonesia will not be fully realized merely by expanding the number of schools or adding regulations; it requires a paradigmatic reconstruction that positions democracy as the internal principle of inclusion, culture as the foundation shaping the structure, and relational humanism as the ultimate goal. Empirical validation of the model across educational levels, contexts, and cultures is an urgent agenda for further research.

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