Reframing Language Policy and Multilingual Education in the Indonesian Context

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study explores the reframing of language policies and multilingual education in Indonesia, focusing on how language proficiency and multilingual education programs affect students' academic performance. The aim was to identify the challenges and opportunities of integrating local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and global languages like English into the educational system.

Subjects and Methods: Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combined quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from students, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers across Indonesia.

Results: The findings revealed that proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia was positively correlated with academic success, yet bilingualism, particularly in local languages, also enhanced cognitive flexibility and improved academic outcomes. The study highlighted significant regional disparities, with urban schools demonstrating better implementation of multilingual education programs compared to rural areas. Teachers and students expressed positive views on multilingual education, but the implementation of policies was often inconsistent and lacked clear guidance. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on multilingual education by providing empirical data on the impact of language policies in Indonesia.

Conclusions: The findings suggest that more inclusive and flexible language policies are needed to address the diverse linguistic needs of students, particularly in rural areas. Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term effects of multilingual education on students' socio-economic outcomes and its role in fostering national unity.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of language policy and multilingual education in Indonesia has been a subject of substantial interest for scholars, policymakers, and educational practitioners (Mitchell et al., 2022; Walker et al., 2019). Indonesia, a vast archipelagic nation with over 700 languages spoken, stands at the crossroads of balancing the linguistic diversity inherent within its borders with the demands of national unity and social cohesion. Language is integral to communication, identity, and educational achievement, and in a country as diverse as Indonesia, language policies play a central role in shaping the educational landscape.

Given the increasing demand for multilingual education in a globalized world, Indonesia's language policies continue to evolve, influencing both the teaching and learning processes in various educational settings (Zein, 2019; Abduh et al., 2022). This development has become more pressing as the educational system grapples with the challenges of incorporating local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and global languages such as English into a cohesive framework that supports

both national unity and international competitiveness (Huszka et al., 2024; Brata & Sahyunu, 2024).

Recent literature highlights that Indonesia's multilingualism is both a strength and a challenge in the context of education. The 2003 National Education System Law mandates the use of Bahasa Indonesia as the medium of instruction in schools, but it also allows for the integration of local languages in certain contexts. However, the application of this policy often results in challenges, including unequal access to educational resources, linguistic inequality, and tensions between language maintenance and the need for global literacy.

Moreover, multilingual education strategies are still underdeveloped in many regions, and there is limited empirical research on their effectiveness in improving educational outcomes (Kirss et al., 2021; Duarte et al., 2023; Cummins, 2021). Consequently, this has led to calls for more research and reevaluation of language policies, with an emphasis on how these policies can better reflect the complex linguistic realities of Indonesia's diverse population. Furthermore, there is a need to understand how multilingual education policies can be structured to foster inclusivity and reduce educational disparities across different linguistic communities (Mokikwa & Mokhele-Ramulumo, 2024; Kirss et al., 2021; Esfahani, 2023; Leu Bonanno, 2023).

The central issue in language policy and multilingual education in Indonesia lies in addressing the tension between maintaining local languages and ensuring proficiency in the national and global lingua franca. Language policies often reflect political and socio-cultural priorities, and in Indonesia, these priorities are shaped by its historical context and its aspirations to position itself as a competitive player on the international stage (Susanto et al., 2024; Devi, 2023). On one hand, Bahasa Indonesia plays a critical role in promoting national unity and social integration. On the other hand, local languages remain crucial for cultural identity, social cohesion, and local community development.

Meanwhile, the growing global importance of English as a medium of instruction, commerce, and technology adds another layer of complexity. This interaction between local, national, and global languages necessitates a more comprehensive understanding of how multilingual education can be restructured to support both the preservation of local languages and the development of competencies in the national and global languages. Several studies have offered insight into the challenges surrounding multilingual education in Indonesia. Previous research has pointed to the gap between language policies and the realities of classroom practices, particularly in regions with high linguistic diversity. Studies have shown that while Bahasa Indonesia is promoted as the language of instruction, local languages often serve as the primary mode of communication in many rural areas.

These studies argue that the use of local languages in education could potentially improve student engagement and comprehension, but there is also the risk of marginalizing students who lack proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia or English. In addition, global multilingualism, particularly English language proficiency, is increasingly seen as a key determinant of access to higher education and career opportunities, creating further pressure on the educational system to balance these competing linguistic demands. This tension suggests that a more nuanced approach to multilingual education is necessary one that not only considers linguistic diversity but also the broader educational and social goals of Indonesia.

Muniroh et al. (2022) said that, building on the foundational work of previous research, this study proposes specific solutions to address the challenges of multilingual education in Indonesia. First, the integration of local languages into the curriculum is seen as a potential means of fostering inclusivity and improving educational outcomes for students from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Researchers have shown that when students are allowed to learn in their native language, they demonstrate better cognitive development, higher engagement, and improved academic performance. Moreover, multilingual education frameworks that respect and value local languages can promote greater cultural awareness and social equity.

The challenge, however, lies in designing policies and programs that can implement this effectively across Indonesia's varied linguistic landscape, particularly in urban areas where Bahasa Indonesia is predominant, and in rural areas where local languages are spoken. Second,

developing bilingual or even multilingual curricula, especially at the primary and secondary education levels, could help bridge the gap between local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and global languages like English. Studies indicate that early exposure to multiple languages in a structured educational setting enhances language acquisition and cognitive flexibility.

Despite these promising strategies, there is a significant gap in the current research on multilingual education in Indonesia, particularly regarding the implementation of these strategies in practice. While there is a growing body of literature on language acquisition and bilingual education, studies focusing on the integration of multilingual policies into the Indonesian educational context remain limited. Much of the existing research focuses on theoretical frameworks or isolated case studies, without comprehensive evaluations of the real-world impacts of multilingual education programs across different regions of Indonesia.

Furthermore, there is a lack of research exploring the intersectionality of language policies with socio-economic factors, particularly in rural areas where access to quality education is often limited. This gap in the literature highlights the need for a comprehensive study that explores both the potential and limitations of multilingual education policies in Indonesia, considering not only linguistic factors but also social, political, and economic dimensions. The primary objective of this study is to investigate how Indonesia's language policy can be reframed to better support multilingual education in both urban and rural areas, and to analyze the implications of such policies for educational outcomes (Widodo, 2016). The study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical data on the effectiveness of multilingual education programs in the Indonesian context.

Furthermore, this research will address the gaps identified in previous studies by examining the practical implementation of multilingual policies, evaluating the experiences of students and teachers, and assessing the broader socio-economic implications of multilingual education. By synthesizing the theoretical and empirical perspectives, this study seeks to provide actionable insights that can inform the development of more inclusive and effective language policies in Indonesia. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach to the subject, integrating language policy analysis with a focus on real-world educational practices, and its emphasis on the socio-economic context of multilingual education in Indonesia.

The scope of this study will be limited to primary and secondary education levels, focusing on both urban and rural regions to capture a broad spectrum of linguistic diversity. The research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with teachers, students, and policymakers, with quantitative data from surveys and academic performance records. The findings of this study will provide valuable guidance for policymakers seeking to refine Indonesia's approach to multilingual education, ensuring that language policies not only address linguistic diversity but also promote equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their linguistic background.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to explore the reframing of language policies and multilingual education in the Indonesian context. The research design integrates both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of multilingual education policies, their implementation, and their effects on educational outcomes. By combining these methods, the study allows for the triangulation of data, which enhances the reliability and validity of the findings. The aim is to address the research questions focused on the challenges of balancing local, national, and global languages in Indonesia's educational system. The research design, data collection methods, sampling strategies, and analytical techniques are all carefully structured to meet the overarching objectives of the study.

Sequential Explanatory Research Design

The research adopts a sequential explanatory design, wherein quantitative data is first collected, followed by qualitative data to provide deeper insights into the quantitative findings. This design is appropriate for exploring the relationship between language policy and educational outcomes

because it allows for both broad generalizations and in-depth case studies. By initially gathering quantitative data through surveys, the study can quantify the extent of multilingual education policy implementation and its effect on student performance. Following this, qualitative interviews are conducted to explore the reasons behind the observed trends, offering a richer understanding of the issues.

Sampling Techniques and Research Participants

Sampling in this study is a combination of stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. Stratified random sampling is used to ensure that the sample is representative of the linguistic, geographical, and socio-economic diversity across Indonesia. The target population includes primary and secondary school students, teachers, and policymakers from both urban and rural regions. Schools are categorized based on location (urban vs. rural) and the linguistic composition of their student body. This stratification guarantees that the sample covers a wide range of linguistic and socio-economic contexts. In the first phase of data collection, a sample of 1,000 students and 100 teachers from 10 provinces is surveyed. These provinces are selected to reflect a broad spectrum of linguistic diversity and socio-economic conditions, including areas such as Bali, Papua, and Kalimantan, as well as more urbanized regions like Jakarta and Surabaya. The second phase involves purposive sampling, selecting 20 schools for detailed case studies. These schools were chosen based on their student body diversity, the implementation of multilingual education policies, and the willingness of participants to engage in the study.

Quantitative Data Collection

The primary quantitative data is collected through a structured questionnaire administered to both students and teachers. The questionnaire contains closed-ended and Likert-scale items to assess key variables such as language proficiency, perceptions of language policy, and the impact of multilingual education on academic performance. It also investigates the availability and effectiveness of multilingual education programs. Before administering the full survey, a pilot study was conducted in three schools to test the reliability and validity of the instrument. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and content validity was established through expert review.

Qualitative Data Collection

For qualitative data collection, semi-structured interviews are conducted with 20 teachers, 10 school administrators, and 10 policymakers. These interviews aim to understand the challenges of implementing multilingual education policies, the barriers to effective policy implementation, and the perceptions of teachers, school administrators, and policymakers regarding the effectiveness of the current language policies. Interviews with teachers and school administrators provide insights into the practical challenges of bilingual or multilingual teaching, while interviews with policymakers focus on the broader formulation and implementation of language policies in Indonesia's educational system. The interviews are recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis for this study combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data is analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as mean scores, frequencies, and percentages, are used to summarize the data and provide an overview of students' and teachers' perceptions of language policy and multilingual education programs. Regression analysis is employed to examine the relationship between students' language proficiency and their academic performance. This statistical method helps determine if there is a significant correlation between proficiency in multiple languages and academic outcomes. For the qualitative data, a thematic analysis approach is used. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the interview data. After transcribing the interviews, the data is manually coded, and the codes are grouped into themes that address the research questions. These themes are refined through an iterative process of reviewing the data to ensure they accurately reflect participants' experiences and perspectives.

Data Triangulation

To enhance the validity of the findings, a triangulation strategy is employed. Triangulation involves comparing the results from the quantitative survey with qualitative interview data to identify converging or diverging trends. By comparing these data sources, the study strengthens the robustness and reliability of the findings, ensuring that the results are well-supported by multiple data types.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are crucial in the design and conduct of this study. The research adheres to principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. All participants are fully informed of the study's objectives and their right to withdraw at any time without any repercussions. Written consent is obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the surveys or interviews. To protect participants' privacy, all data is anonymized, and no personally identifiable information is included in any reports or publications. The study complies with the ethical guidelines established by relevant institutional review boards to ensure the integrity and protection of participants.

Methodological Limitations

Despite the strengths of this methodology, certain limitations must be acknowledged. One limitation is the reliance on self-reported data in the surveys, which may introduce bias, as participants might overestimate or underestimate their language proficiency or the effectiveness of multilingual education programs. Additionally, while the study includes a diverse range of provinces, the selection of only 10 provinces may limit the generalizability of the findings to all regions of Indonesia, particularly those with fewer resources or less linguistic diversity. Nonetheless, by selecting provinces that reflect Indonesia's linguistic and socio-economic diversity, the study aims to provide valuable insights into multilingual education in both urban and rural contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study on the reframing of language policies and multilingual education in Indonesia. The data collected through both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews provides insights into the implementation, challenges, and outcomes of multilingual education programs in the context of Indonesia's diverse linguistic and educational landscape. The analysis highlights the complex interplay between local, national, and global languages and the effects of these multilingual policies on students' academic performance and engagement.

Quantitative Results: Language Proficiency and Educational Outcomes

Table 1: Language Proficiency and Academic Performance

Proficiency Level	% of Students	Average Grade Above 80%	Average Grade Below 80%
Proficient in Bahasa Indonesia	72%	72%	28%
Limited proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia	28%	45%	55%
Proficient in Local Language	60%	65%	35%
Bilingual (Local + Bahasa Indonesia)	50%	80%	20%
Bilingual (Local + Bahasa Indonesia + English)	40%	85%	15%

The survey data reveals that students' language proficiency plays a significant role in their academic outcomes. In general, students who reported higher proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia performed better academically, which aligns with existing literature suggesting that proficiency in the national language is critical for academic success (Guglielmi, 2008; Handrianto et al., 2025). The results show that 72% of students who considered themselves proficient in Bahasa Indonesia had average grades above 80%, while only 45% of students with limited proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia achieved similar results. This indicates that students' ability to use Bahasa

Indonesia effectively impacts their academic performance, as the majority of instructional materials and assessments are conducted in the national language.

Interestingly, the study also found a positive correlation between bilingualism and academic performance. Students who reported proficiency in both their local languages and Bahasa Indonesia had better academic outcomes compared to those who were monolingual in either language. These results support the findings of previous studies (Bialystok, 2011) that suggest bilingualism can enhance cognitive flexibility and academic achievement, particularly in multilingual environments. Additionally, students who spoke more than two languages, including English, reported the highest academic performance, reinforcing the idea that multilingual education offers cognitive benefits (Cummins, 2000).

However, the study also identified significant regional disparities in language proficiency. Students from urban areas, particularly in Jakarta and Surabaya, demonstrated higher proficiency in both Bahasa Indonesia and English compared to their counterparts in rural regions. In contrast, students from rural areas, such as those in Papua and Kalimantan, were more likely to be monolingual in their local languages. While local language proficiency is vital for maintaining cultural identity and facilitating community-based learning, it was found that students in these regions struggled with academic content delivered in Bahasa Indonesia, leading to lower academic performance. These findings are consistent with the research of Fishman (2001), which highlights the challenges of language shift in rural areas, where local languages often compete with national and global languages in educational settings.

Perceptions of Language Policy and Multilingual Education Programs

Table 2: Perceptions of Language Policy and Multilingual Education Programs

Perception	Teachers (%)	Students (%)
Positive impact of local language integration	65%	60%
Multilingual education policies effectively implemented	48%	-
Curriculum is too rigid	-	35%
Learning in bilingual classrooms is beneficial	-	60%

The survey also captured students' and teachers' perceptions of language policies and the implementation of multilingual education programs. A majority of teachers (65%) indicated that the integration of local languages in the curriculum had a positive impact on student engagement and comprehension. This finding corroborates earlier studies that have suggested the inclusion of local languages in education can improve student understanding and increase motivation (Lasagabaster, 2017). Teachers expressed that-students performed better in subjects like science and mathematics when local languages were used alongside Bahasa Indonesia, as it allowed for better comprehension of complex concepts. However, only 48% of teachers reported that multilingual education policies were effectively implemented in their schools, pointing to a gap between policy and practice.

Students' views on the multilingual education programs were mixed. While 60% of students in bilingual or multilingual classrooms expressed a positive opinion about learning in both their local language and Bahasa Indonesia, a significant portion of students (35%) in predominantly Bahasa Indonesia schools felt that the curriculum was too rigid and failed to address their linguistic diversity. This division underscores the need for more flexible language policies that consider the linguistic backgrounds of all students, particularly those in areas with significant local language communities. These findings support earlier research by Auerbach (1993), who argued that language policies that prioritize national languages over local languages can marginalize students and hinder their educational outcomes.

Regional Disparities and Challenges in Policy Implementation

Table 3. Regional Differences in Teacher Training and Language Policy Implementation

Region	Percentage of Teachers Receiving Training in Multilingual Education	Percentage of Schools Integrating Local Languages
Urban Areas	75%	70%

Rural Areas	40%	30%

One of the most notable findings of this study is the disparity in the implementation of multilingual education policies across different regions of Indonesia. In urban schools, where resources are more readily available, there is a greater degree of integration between local languages and Bahasa Indonesia, and some schools even offer English language programs. In contrast, rural schools face significant challenges in implementing multilingual education programs due to a lack of resources, inadequate teacher training, and limited support from local government bodies. The survey found that only 30% of schools in rural areas incorporated local languages into their teaching practices, compared to 70% of urban schools. This stark difference highlights the unequal access to quality multilingual education across Indonesia and the need for more equitable resource distribution. The findings are consistent with earlier research by May (2014), which noted that disparities in educational resources often exacerbate inequalities in multilingual education settings.

Another significant challenge identified in the study is the lack of teacher preparedness to implement multilingual education. While 75% of teachers in urban areas reported receiving some form of training in bilingual or multilingual teaching methods, only 40% of teachers in rural areas had similar training. Teachers in rural schools also reported feeling less confident in teaching in multiple languages, particularly in subjects like science and mathematics, where the use of technical terminology in both local languages and Bahasa Indonesia posed additional challenges. This gap in teacher training further complicates the successful implementation of multilingual education policies and highlights the importance of professional development programs for teachers, particularly in rural areas.

Insights from Interviews

The qualitative data gathered from interviews with teachers, school administrators, and policymakers provides deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities of multilingual education in Indonesia. Teachers expressed the view that while multilingual education policies were well-intentioned, they often failed to account for the realities of classroom instruction. One teacher in a rural school noted,

> *"It's difficult to teach mathematics in Bahasa Indonesia when students don't fully understand the language. Sometimes, using the local language helps, but we are not allowed to teach in it as much as we'd like."*

This sentiment was echoed by other teachers, who argued that while local languages facilitated better understanding, there was a strong emphasis on Bahasa Indonesia and English, especially in subjects considered critical for national development, such as science and technology.

School administrators pointed to the lack of a coherent framework for integrating local languages into the curriculum. One administrator mentioned,

> *"We have policies in place, but there is no clear guide on how to balance Bahasa Indonesia with local languages, and the resources are not sufficient to provide proper training for teachers."*

This lack of a clear framework for implementation underscores the need for a more structured approach to multilingual education, one that is adaptable to the diverse linguistic needs of students across Indonesia.

Policymakers, on the other hand, acknowledged the challenges of implementing multilingual education policies across such a diverse country. One policymaker stated,

> *"Indonesia's language diversity is both a challenge and an asset. We want to promote national unity through Bahasa Indonesia, but we also recognize the importance of preserving local languages. However, the resources and infrastructure required to make multilingual education effective are not yet in place."*

This recognition of the challenge is critical, as it underscores the need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to multilingual education that includes support for teachers, students, and schools in both urban and rural areas.

Discussion

This section discusses the empirical findings on the reframing of language policy and the implementation of multilingual education in Indonesia based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. The analysis reveals that language proficiency, regional context, institutional capacity, and policy coherence interact in shaping educational outcomes. Rather than functioning as a uniform national system, multilingual education in Indonesia operates through layered social, political, and geographical dynamics that influence both learning processes and student achievement.

Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement

The findings demonstrate a strong association between students' linguistic competence and their academic performance (García-Vázquez et al., 1997). Students with higher proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia tend to achieve better academic results, reflecting the central role of the national language as the primary medium of instruction and assessment. Students with limited command of Bahasa Indonesia experience greater difficulty in meeting academic standards, indicating that unequal linguistic access directly translates into unequal educational opportunities. At the same time, bilingual and multilingual students consistently show superior academic outcomes compared to monolingual learners. Students who master both a local language and Bahasa Indonesia outperform those who rely on a single language, while those who also possess English proficiency achieve the highest performance levels. This pattern suggests that multilingualism contributes positively to cognitive flexibility, learning strategies, and academic resilience. In this sense, multilingual education does not merely preserve linguistic diversity but also strengthens students' academic capital in an increasingly globalized educational environment.

Urban Rural Gaps in Multilingual Capacity

A clear spatial divide emerges in the distribution of language proficiency and educational outcomes. Urban students display stronger proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia and English, providing them with greater access to national and global knowledge systems. In contrast, students in rural regions remain predominantly oriented toward local languages, which are central to cultural identity but less aligned with the dominant language of instruction (Farr & Song, 2011). This mismatch places rural students at a structural disadvantage when academic content is delivered primarily in Bahasa Indonesia. While local languages support early comprehension and identity formation, the limited transition support toward the national language weakens students' long-term academic competitiveness. These findings indicate that regional inequality in language access serves as a hidden dimension of educational inequality, reinforcing broader socio-economic disparities between urban and rural areas.

Teachers' and Students' Perspectives on Multilingual Policy

Teachers largely recognize the pedagogical value of local language integration in the classroom. Many report that students comprehend abstract concepts more effectively when local languages are used alongside Bahasa Indonesia, particularly in cognitively demanding subjects. This confirms that multilingual instruction enhances inclusivity and conceptual understanding, especially in linguistically diverse classrooms. However, the perception of policy effectiveness remains divided. Less than half of the teachers view the implementation of multilingual education as successful, signaling a persistent gap between policy intention and classroom reality. From the students' perspective, bilingual learning environments are generally regarded as beneficial, yet a significant proportion still perceive the curriculum as excessively rigid. This suggests that while multilingual education is valued at the experiential level, institutional flexibility has not fully adapted to Indonesia's linguistic complexity.

Uneven Implementation and Structural Constraints

The study reveals sharp contrasts in the implementation of multilingual policies between urban and rural schools (Altinyelken et al., 2014). Urban schools benefit from better infrastructure, curriculum flexibility, and institutional support, enabling more consistent integration of local and national

languages. Rural schools, however, face structural limitations that restrict their capacity to operationalize multilingual education effectively. One major barrier lies in teacher preparedness. Training in bilingual and multilingual pedagogy is significantly lower in rural areas, resulting in reduced confidence and instructional effectiveness. Teachers in these settings struggle to navigate technical content across multiple languages, particularly in subjects that rely on standardized terminology. This asymmetry in professional capacity reinforces uneven educational outcomes and highlights the critical role of sustained teacher development in multilingual education reform.

Institutional and Policy-Level Tensions

Insights from interviews reveal that multilingual education is shaped by competing institutional priorities. Teachers experience tension between pedagogical needs and regulatory constraints, particularly when local language use is pedagogically effective but institutionally restricted. School administrators identify the absence of a coherent operational framework for balancing national and local languages, which limits consistent implementation across schools. At the policy level, multilingualism is recognized as both a national resource and a governance challenge. Policymakers attempt to reconcile national unity, global competitiveness, and cultural preservation, yet institutional capacity has not fully caught up with this ambition. This results in a governance gap where the ideological support for multilingualism is stronger than the practical systems designed to sustain it.

Implications for the Reframing of Language Policy

Taken together, the findings indicate that multilingual education in Indonesia is not merely an instructional strategy but a structural policy project that intersects with inequality, identity, and institutional capacity. Language policy cannot be separated from broader questions of educational justice, regional development, and teacher professionalism. The reframing of language policy therefore requires a shift from symbolic recognition of linguistic diversity toward systematic investment in curriculum design, teacher training, and regional equity. Multilingual education shows strong potential to enhance both learning outcomes and cultural inclusion. However, without structural alignment between national policies and local realities, this potential remains unevenly distributed. The success of multilingual education in Indonesia ultimately depends on the state's ability to translate linguistic diversity into an integrated educational asset rather than allowing it to persist as a source of hidden inequality.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the challenges and opportunities associated with multilingual education in Indonesia, focusing on the implementation of language policies and their impact on academic performance. The findings highlight that proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia is critical for academic success, yet bilingualism, particularly in local languages, also offers cognitive benefits and improved educational outcomes. The results showed significant disparities between urban and rural areas in terms of language proficiency, access to multilingual education programs, and teacher preparedness. While urban schools demonstrated greater integration of local languages and global languages like English, rural schools faced challenges due to limited resources, teacher training, and infrastructure. Furthermore, the study found that multilingual education policies were perceived positively by teachers and students, yet the implementation of these policies often lacked coherence and consistency. The implications of these findings are significant for policy formulation, suggesting that more inclusive and flexible language policies are needed to accommodate Indonesia's linguistic diversity. This could involve creating curricula that integrate local languages alongside Bahasa Indonesia and English, especially in rural areas where local languages are more prevalent. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on multilingual education by providing empirical evidence on the practical challenges and benefits of language policy implementation in Indonesia. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term effects of multilingual education on students' social and economic outcomes and explore the role of language in fostering national unity and cultural preservation.

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