

# Internalization of Spiritual Values in a Multicultural Society: A Case Study at Tokyo Indonesian School

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#### Abstract

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**Keywords:** Internalization, spiritual values, multicultural, Tokyo Indonesian School This study aims to analyze the internalization of spiritual values in the Tokyo Indonesian School in the context of the multicultural environment of Japan. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore how spiritual values, especially Islamic teachings, are integrated into education at the Tokyo Indonesian School, which has students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies, which were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The results of the study indicate that the Tokyo Indonesian School implements a holistic approach to the internalization of spiritual values with five main steps: i) religious education that focuses on understanding monotheism as the core of faith, ii) the habit of daily worship such as congregational prayer that strengthens discipline and spiritual awareness, iii) the implementation of the Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) program to deepen worship and religious knowledge, iv) the integration of universal values such as discipline, order, and hard work that are relevant to Japanese culture, and v) strengthening student character through teacher role models and harmonious social interactions. Moreover, Sekolah Indonesia Tokyo also strengthens students' spiritual relationship with Allah through religious activities at the mosque facilities near the school. It teaches Japanese cultural values that are in line with Islamic teachings. The implications of this study indicate that inclusive spiritual value-based education can shape students' character, enrich multicultural interactions, and maintain students' cultural and religious identities abroad.

# INTRODUCTION

The environment is one of the important aspects of human life as a social being. The environment allows the formation of creativity, taste, and will (Artha Sari & Azhari Pasaribu, 2023; M Chairul Basrun Umanailo, 2020). Various influences can form the human character from the environment. Individuals who are in a conducive environment tend to develop into good people.

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Conversely, individuals in negative environments have the potential to absorb bad values (Framanta, 2020; Ningsih et al., 2023; Utami & Jelita, 2021). Ven Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory explains that human development is influenced by four interrelated environmental systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Physical, social, and cultural factors in the environment determine individual attitudes and behavior (Tamar et al., 2021).

Moreover, the physical and social environment and spiritual aspects also have an important influence on shaping human character (Widiyanto & Nurfaizah, 2023; Yuliatun, 2018). Individual spiritual life is usually based on religious beliefs, both in monocultural and multicultural environments. Monocultural environments with cultural and religious similarities provide a sense of unity and minimal conflict (Booneiam, 2018). However, multicultural environments raise challenges in the form of misunderstandings, the need for adaptation, and potential discrimination against minority groups (Hoon, 2017; Noor, 2020). Research by Rahmat et al., (2023) revealed that the internalization of spiritual values in a multicultural educational environment requires a more adaptive and contextual approach because each culture has a different way of interpreting these spiritual values.

Multiculturalism is an issue that continues to grow in various areas of life, especially in the context of globalization (King, 2016). A multicultural environment presents cultural, religious, linguistic, and racial diversity that requires interaction and adaptation between groups (Sipuan et al., 2022; Apriliani & Acep, 2023).

With the increasing mobility of people and ideas across borders, almost no country is completely homogeneous (Mahdayeni et al., 2019). Japan, although often considered ethnically homogeneous, has long been influenced by immigration and cultural interaction with other countries such as China, Korea, and Indonesia (Brody, 2012). The influence of multicultural culture in Japan is increasingly profound, given the increasing immigrant population, especially from Asian countries, including Indonesia (Tambak, 2017).

Foreign nationals in Japan reached 2.99 million in 2023, an increase of 10.7% from the previous year (Sorongan, 2023). Among this group, Muslims, especially from Indonesia, have made significant contributions to Japan's cultural and religious diversity. The Muslim population in Japan increased from 110,000 in 2010 to 230,000 in 2019 (Zaman, 2023). However, as a minority religion, Muslims face challenges in integrating Islamic values into their daily lives in this secular country. Instilling spiritual values through the role models of educators is one effective way to help students internalize religious values in a pluralistic environment (Nirwani Jumala & Abubakar, 2019).

Tokyo Indonesian School, part of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Japan, is one example of an institution that supports education based on spiritual values in a multicultural environment. SIT uses the Indonesian curriculum and follows the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which guarantees the right of every student to receive religious education according to their beliefs. Religious education at SIT includes faith, morals, and *muamalah*, which aims to form individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and do good deeds.

Education in a multicultural environment, Tokyo Indonesian School adopts John Dewey's holistic education theory which emphasizes character formation through direct experience (Wasitohadi, 2014). The process of internalizing spiritual values is carried out through theoretical and practical learning, such as extracurricular activities that support the understanding and Internalization of Spiritual Values in a Multicultural Society: A Case Study at Tokyo Indonesian School

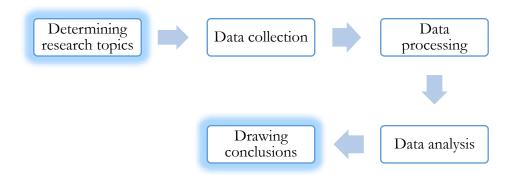
appreciation of universal values. Values such as honesty, justice, and responsibility are taught to shape the religious identity of students while at the same time fostering their ability to interact harmoniously in a multicultural society. This is in line with the findings of research by Arifudin et al., (2023), which emphasizes the importance of routine activities to instill spiritual values in everyday life.

As a secular country, Japan does not include religious education in the public school curriculum. However, Islamic institutions and communities play an important role in providing religious education to Muslim children. Despite the challenges of negative stereotypes about Islam, Japanese society is slowly becoming more open to cross-cultural and religious understanding. Inclusive educational programs and social activities are important means of building tolerance and interfaith cooperation.

The Tokyo Indonesian School has a great responsibility to ensure that Indonesian Muslim children in Japan do not lose their spiritual identity. Religious education not only serves to instill Islamic values but also to create individuals who are able to become agents of change in a multicultural environment. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze how the Tokyo Indonesian School internalizes spiritual values through an Islamic religious education approach in the midst of Japan's multicultural environment. This study also aims to identify the strategies and steps implemented, as well as explore the potential for collaboration with various parties in building a generation that is characterful, tolerant, and ready to face global challenges.

#### **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022; Auni & Hermanto, 2020; Engkizar et al., 2022; Murniyetti et al., 2016; Poltak & Widjaja, 2024; Sabrina et al., 2020). Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observation to record behavior and natural situations in schools and their surroundings, and documentation studies to collect data from official school documents, learning modules, and school social media. The research steps are as in figure 1 below.



#### Fig 1. Steps of qualitative research

The subjects of the study included the principal, vice principal of curriculum, class teachers, extracurricular teachers, students, parents, and the surrounding community, who were selected by purposive sampling (Lenaini, 2021). The informants selected had met four criteria, namely understanding the problems being studied well, still being active in the field being studied, having time to provide information to researchers, and providing information in accordance with the facts in the field. The researcher acted as the main instrument (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). The supervising lecturer carried out

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validation of the researcher's readiness through the stages of checking the planning, interview grids, and initial supporting data for the study. The researcher also validated the data through triangulation of sources and techniques and checking the results with informants (member check). Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, namely grouping relevant data according to the focus of the research (Engkizar et al., 2023, 2024; Mamik, 2015), data presentation, namely compiling data in a structured narrative format, and drawing conclusions to find patterns and meanings of the phenomena being studied. Data validity is ensured through cross-method verification and strengthening of empirical narratives from multiple perspectives.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on information related to the importance of religious education in the spiritual and character development of students at the Tokyo Indonesian School through a survey in September 2024, 90% of parents chose Tokyo Indonesian School because they wanted their children to get a good religious education, while the other 10% chose Tokyo Indonesian School to ensure that their children remained connected to the Indonesian language and culture during their stay in Japan. As an Indonesian school abroad, Tokyo Indonesian School has a crucial role in maintaining the cultural and religious identity of students, considering that in Japan, religious education facilities are limited.

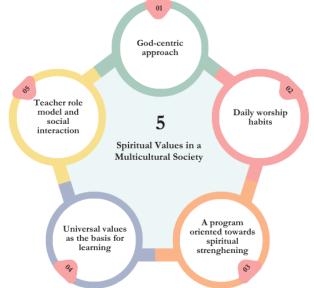


Fig 2. Principle of internalization of values in Tokyo Indonesian School

First, religious education at Tokyo Indonesian School prioritizes an understanding of monotheism as the core of Islamic teachings. Through this understanding, students are not only taught about ritual worship but are also instilled with the awareness that every action they take is part of their devotion to Allah. This includes learning about the concept of sincere intention, namely understanding that all actions, including learning, interacting, and protecting the environment, are done solely to gain Allah's pleasure. The value of monotheism taught at Tokyo Indonesian School gives students the view that life is not only about material achievement but also a deep spiritual relationship with God. The spiritual education implemented at Tokyo Indonesian School aims to help students deal with social pressures and the culture of hard work in Japan by having inner peace and balance in their lives. Based on research findings related to the need for religious education. Several studies that have been conducted have shown that religious culture has an impact on students' spiritual intelligence, such as being more obedient and diligent in worship without being told. Religious culture has an important role and significant influence in shaping spiritual intelligence. This emphasizes the importance of the role of schools in shaping the religious character of students in a secular environment (Kusuma, 2020; Nurjanah, 2021).

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for religion and spirituality is often associated with the highest need in the pyramid, namely self-actualization (Hadori, 2015). Religious education provides students with the opportunity to fulfill their spiritual needs by teaching moral values, ethics, and an understanding of the purpose of life. In the context of Tokyo Indonesian School, religious education helps students, especially those in secular environments such as Japan, to find meaning in life and form a strong self-identity.

Second, the internalization of spiritual values is carried out through the habit of daily worship, such as obligatory prayers carried out together at school. This habit not only instills discipline but also strengthens awareness of personal relationships with Allah (*hablum minallah*) (Nurhayati et al., 2024). or students who are not used to worshiping, Tokyo Indonesian School provides guidance and encouragement so that the practice of worship becomes an inseparable part of their routine. The mosque facilities close to the school are also used for Friday prayers and other worship activities. This mosque creates a conducive atmosphere to strengthen students' relationships with Allah while building togetherness in worship. This process aims to make worship not just a formal obligation but an expression of love and submission to Allah. Behavior that is consistently reinforced will become a permanent habit (Putra & Fathoni, 2022).

Third, Tokyo Indonesian School develops a number of policies and programs designed to strengthen the foundation of students' faith. One of its flagship programs is the Madrasah Diniyah (Madin). This program provides additional religious lessons for two hours per week with religious teachers who are brought in directly from Indonesia. Madin is one of the important elements in the curriculum, which not only teaches the technical aspects of worship, such as prayer and ablution but also instills the principle that Allah is always present in every aspect of students' lives.

This strengthening program teaches the values of monotheism, morals, and worship in a structured manner because effective value education must be integrated into students' daily lives (Dewi et al., 2021), as well as instilling noble morals based on Islamic teachings. The short-term Islamic boarding school program held during school holidays or certain events also aims to deepen students' understanding of religion intensively.

Fourth, in the midst of a very different Japanese culture, Tokyo Indonesian School is committed to instilling universal spiritual values such as discipline, order, and hard work that are relevant to Japan's multicultural society. The Islamic values taught at Tokyo Indonesian School do not ignore Japanese social values. These values are fostered through various activities that directly involve students, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities that support nationalism and spirituality, such as Scouts, angklung, and traditional dance, not only support the formation of national character but also create space for spiritual learning.

Fifth, teachers at Tokyo Indonesian School are not only teachers but also role models in implementing spiritual values. Teachers lead prayers before learning begins, demonstrate discipline, and provide examples of empathy to students so that they can instill values such as responsibility, compassion, and honesty. In addition, teachers use fun and relevant teaching methods, supported by the habits that are applied, such as maintaining the cleanliness of the classroom and environment. Teachers, together with school staff, also ensure that the learning environment supports the formation of student character by displaying visual elements that reflect spiritual and national values in various corners of the school. This is because the example of teachers also plays a key role in the formation of student character, in accordance with the exemplary method (Zahra et al., 2024).

The role of senior students, especially Intra-School Student Organization members, is also significant in guiding their juniors. Providing real examples of applying religious values. In addition, they create a positive atmosphere through activities such as morning greetings at the school gate, interactive games, and cooperation in various programs, which strengthen a sense of togetherness and tolerance among students.

The basic principle of internalizing spiritual values also takes into account the challenges of Japan's multicultural environment. By combining the values of monotheism and local culture, Tokyo Indonesian School creates a relevant approach for students living in different cultures. This is in line with the fact that individual identity is formed through symbols and daily social interactions (Fahri & Qusyairi, 2019). In the process of internalizing spiritual values, Tokyo Indonesian School collaborates with parents and the surrounding community to ensure that spiritual values education continues. Open communication and mutual trust between the school and parents are important foundations for instilling these values at home, complementing what students learn at school. Parents are expected to continue to support and strengthen the values taught at Tokyo Indonesian School so that students can grow into better individuals.

#### CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Tokyo Indonesian School attempts to integrate spiritual values through a holistic learning approach and integration of spiritual values with local Japanese culture that includes comprehensive religious education, worship habituation activities, special programs such as Madrasah Diniyah (Madin), as well as through teacher role models and support from the school community. The spiritual value education implemented not only strengthens students' faith but also shapes their character into religious, tolerant, and adaptive individuals in facing global challenges. This study provides a model that can be replicated in other educational institutions and can contribute to the development of educational strategies that combine religious values with local values, such as order and hard work so that they are relevant to multicultural and global contexts. The novelty of this study lies in the in-depth exploration of the internalization of spiritual values in the Japanese multicultural environment, which has not been widely discussed in previous studies.

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