

# History, Identity, and Multicultural Education: The Role of Endogamous Marriage in the Hadramaut Arab Community of Palembang

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores how historical practices—specifically endogamous marriage traditions within the Arab Hadramaut community in Palembang—offer valuable insights for multicultural education. It focuses on the construction of cultural identity, maintenance of social boundaries, and transmission of ancestral values in minority communities. A qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and literature reviews. The data were analyzed through reduction, presentation, and conclusion-drawing stages. Findings indicate that Arab-Malay cultural interactions in Palembang date back to the 16th–17th centuries. Despite these interactions, intermarriage remains limited due to adherence to the *kaffaah* principle. This principle supports endogamous marriage within the Alawiyyin lineage to preserve religious identity and maintain lineage from the Prophet. This historical continuity illustrates the community's strategy for sustaining cultural values and identity across generations. The persistence of endogamous marriage within a multicultural context highlights the role of historical practices in shaping modern identity and social structures. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how minority communities negotiate cultural preservation within broader societal frameworks. This study provides a historical lens through which to enhance multicultural education. It supports the development of history and citizenship curricula that promote cultural literacy, social cohesion, and appreciation of pluralism.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a multicultural country with ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity that forms a national identity (Adha et al., 2021; Maulidan & Darmawan, 2024). Indonesia is known as a multicultural country with ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity that forms a national identity (Firdaus, 2024). One of the main challenges in implementing multicultural education

is how to integrate understanding of local history and cultural practices of minority communities contextually into the education curriculum. Without understanding the historical context and social dynamics that shape the identities of certain groups, multicultural education will tend to be normative and not grounded in local realities (Futaqi, 2023).

One of the main challenges in implementing multicultural education is how to integrate understanding of local history and cultural practices of minority communities contextually into the education curriculum. Without understanding the historical context and social dynamics that shape the identities of certain groups, multicultural education will tend to be normative and not grounded in local realities (Fatimah, 2018; Royani, 2013). This practice aims to maintain the purity of the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and to maintain religious values and cultural identity from generation to generation (Rahmaniah, 2014). However, endogamy practices also create social boundaries that reinforce group exclusivity and influence patterns of cultural interaction with other local communities. This is where the question arises: how can these exclusive socio-historical practices be critically understood and used as material for reflection in multicultural education?.

Research on multicultural education in Indonesia shows significant progress in strengthening tolerance, inclusivity, and the integration of cultural values into the curriculum. Susilawati et al. (2024), Kuncoro et al. (2024) emphasizes the importance of contextual approaches and religious values in shaping the character of multicultural students. Meanwhile, Rafiqie & Irfan (2024) and Wardani et al. (2024) shows that differentiated learning strategies and the integration of empathy values are effective in building an inclusive learning environment. However, studies that directly link local historical and cultural practices in education are still limited. On the other hand, studies on endogamous marriage in Arab communities, such as Aggraini (2016) in Palembang and Muzakki (2017) in Probolinggo, shows that this practice serves to maintain cultural and religious identity through the principle of kaffaah. Alaydrus (2023) notes the beginning of a shift in the attitudes of the young generation of Alawiyyin in Bekasi towards exogamous marriage. This study fills this gap by highlighting the practice of Arab endogamy in Hadramaut as a critical reflection in contextual and historical multicultural education.

Previous studies on multicultural education in Indonesia have mostly focused on normative aspects, such as the importance of tolerance, recognition of cultural diversity, and interfaith dialogue. However, there has not been much research examining how the historical practices of certain communities, such as endogamy in the Arab Hadramaut community, can be interpreted as a source of learning in multicultural education. This is the gap in the study that this study aims to answer. Understanding the practice of endogamy is not only important from an anthropological perspective, but also opens up space for students and teachers to understand how cultural identities are formed, maintained, and negotiated in a pluralistic society.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of reconstructing multicultural education materials so that they not only rely on general principles but are also connected to local contexts that are rich in historical and cultural dynamics. Historical knowledge of minority communities such as the Arab Hadramaut has high pedagogical value because it can strengthen students' cultural literacy and broaden their understanding of the diversity around them. In addition, teachers as agents of social change need to be equipped with contextual understanding to design inclusive, reflective, and transformative learning.

As a solution plan, this study was conducted by examining the practice of endogamy in the Arab Hadramaut community as a case study that links social history with the strengthening of multicultural education. This approach places history not only as a narrative of the past, but as a source of critical learning about identity, exclusivity, and integration in community life. Thus, the main objective of this study is to historically explore the practice of endogamous marriage in the Arab Hadramaut community in Palembang and to understand the cultural and religious roots that underlie its sustainability until now. In addition, this study aims to analyze how the practice of endogamy forms and maintains the social and cultural identity of the community, especially in maintaining lineage and traditional values amidst the changing times.

Furthermore, this study reflects the educational implications of this practice, especially in developing a curriculum that is responsive to local cultural diversity, increasing teacher capacity in multicultural education, and strengthening students' cultural literacy. Through a contextual and historical approach, this study is expected to contribute to the practice of multicultural education that is more inclusive, critical, and relevant to social realities in Indonesia.

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a phenomenological approach combined with a symbolic interactionism framework to understand how endogamous marriage practices within the Hadramaut community in Palembang are formed, experienced, and function as a form of multicultural education. The phenomenological approach is chosen because the research seeks to explore the *lived educational meanings* embedded in the daily lives of community members, particularly how they understand their cultural and religious identity and its educational significance. Phenomenology allows the researcher to delve into the subjective experiences of community members in making sense of endogamous marriage as a transmission of values that are learned, inherited, and reflected in their social and spiritual life. These experiences reflect the dynamics of identity formation and the collective transmission of cultural meaning beyond the individual level.

The symbolic interactionism model is utilized to analyze how the symbols, values, and traditions embedded in the practice of endogamous marriage function as a form of informal education that constitutes a *curriculum of identity*. This cultural curriculum is passed down through social interactions, family narratives, rituals, and religious symbols. In this context, cultural practices like endogamy are understood not merely as traditions but as pedagogical processes that shape self-perception, social relations, and attitudes toward other groups. This perspective provides a deeper understanding of how multicultural education can be grounded in living, dynamic social practices.

This research is descriptive qualitative within the sociological domain, using a historical approach to trace the development of endogamous marriage practices from a historical perspective and examine their impact on social interaction and multicultural education in Palembang. The focus is on the meaning-making and cultural transmission across generations, and how historical consciousness shapes the community's approach to educating younger members about identity, difference, and inclusivity.

Primary data sources include participatory observation, in-depth interviews with Hadramaut community members, community leaders, and scholars, as well as literature reviews from archives and related references. Data collection techniques involve historical documentation and extensive interviews to gain rich, contextual insights into the dynamics of endogamous marriage and its educational implications. Data analysis follows the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (verification) systematically, aiming to provide a comprehensive portrayal of how history and cultural symbols shape the practice of endogamous marriage and its role in identity education and multiculturalism within a pluralistic society.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. *Historical Narrative of the Hadramaut Arab Community in Palembang and its Educational Significance*

The historical narrative of the Hadramaut Arab community in Palembang is not merely a story of migration and adaptation, but has become an identity architecture that shapes internal social dynamics and intergroup relations. The process of transmitting values through genealogy and endogamy practices has created a "selective collective memory," namely the construction of memories that are selected and inherited to form and maintain the legitimacy of group identity. For the Sayid family, the narrative of being descendants of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is not only spiritually valuable, but

also functions as a social instrument that regulates the structure of marriage, distribution of social status, and reproduction of culture and religiosity in the community.

Endogamy in the Hadramaut community cannot be understood solely as a cultural practice, but rather as a symbolic mechanism to build identity exclusivity. This phenomenon is very relevant if studied using Fredrik Barth's cultural boundary maintenance theory, which emphasizes that cultural boundaries are formed and maintained not only by objective differences, but also by perceptions and social relations that are continuously constructed (Damanik, 2018). In the Sayid community practice, the prohibition for women (Syarifah) to marry non-Sayyid men shows the existence of an exclusive and hierarchical patrilineal structure. As stated by MA, he said: "Since long ago, we have been taught that Syarifah can only marry Sayid..."

This statement reflects a form of internalized cultural control, where inherited norms are considered part of religious teachings, even though they are actually more of a social and historical product that is segregative. The process of strengthening this norm also takes place in the domestic sphere through symbolic practices such as pilgrimages to ancestral graves, preservation of titles such as "Habib" or "Sayid", and restrictions on social interaction with other ethnicities. Mrs. N, said "We are often taken to ancestral graves... it becomes a kind of family lesson."

This expression shows how places and rituals such as graves function as lieux de mémoire (places of memory) as conceived by Nora (2008), namely symbolic spaces where collective identity is constructed and reinforced. Thus, education of values and history in this community takes place informally but very effectively through the mechanism of family cultural pedagogy. However, the younger generation of this community faces significant identity tensions. In a multicultural urban society like Palembang, endogamy norms are beginning to be questioned by young Hadramaut Arabs. A young man, FZ, stated: "We are sometimes confused too... It often makes us feel separated from the environment."

This statement indicates the growth of identity reflectivity, a new awareness that critiques traditional values, and demands a space for negotiation for a more fluid and inclusive identity. Stuart Hall (1996) emphasizes that identity is positional, formed through the relationship between "self" and "other" in a particular time and social space (Pudjitrherwanti, 2019). In this context, the Hadramaut community faces the challenge of balancing the narrative of origin and the social realities of a new generation that is more open to cross-cultural interaction.

In Ralf Dahrendorf's analysis of social conflict theory, the practice of endogamy in the Sayid community can be read as a form of social authority control that maintains the stability of the internal power structure (Ningsih & Samiaji, 2024). These rules not only regulate marriage, but also hinder horizontal social mobility and reinforce hereditary hierarchies. When these norms are violated, social sanctions are often given. FZ, in an interview, said: "If a family breaks them, usually they are no longer considered by most other families. That hurts, because it's like being ostracized."

This phenomenon shows the existence of latent conflict in the community, namely conflict that does not always appear openly, but is present in the form of strong collective social pressure (Kurniawan, 2015). Social structures controlled by symbolic authority—in this case the Sayid-descended elite—become the arena in which authority is inherited and resistance is silenced.

In relation to education, the critical pedagogy approach as developed by Paulo Freire is very relevant. Freire suggests that education should foster conscientization or critical awareness, where learners do not only accept culture as a heritage, but also as a value system that must be questioned, negotiated, and criticized (Pernantah, 2020). Therefore, ideal multicultural education is not only affirmative (recognizing diversity), but also transformative—dismantling structures of injustice and creating reflective space on power relations in society.

Thus, the involvement of the Hadramaut community in the multicultural education curriculum is not just about ethnic representation, but also about building students' cultural agency: equipping them with the ability to understand, respond to, and shape their identities critically and reflectively. Good multicultural education is not enough by presenting traditional dances and costumes in school events,

but must encourage dialogue, dismantling stereotypes, and reflection on the social structures hidden behind cultural symbols. The findings in this study regarding endogamy practices in the Arab Hadramaut community in Palembang provide important implications for the direction of multicultural education policy in Indonesia. The endogamy practices carried out by this community, although considered a form of preserving cultural values and identities, have also contributed to the formation of social boundaries that hinder open intercultural interaction. In this context, multicultural education policies need to shift from a ceremonial and symbolic approach to a more critical and contextual approach. The curriculum should not only introduce cultural diversity descriptively, but also equip students with the ability to analyze social structures, power relations, and cultural choices that may contain exclusivism and discriminatory potential.

Multicultural education also demands an increase in the capacity of teachers as facilitators of social dialogue who are able to raise issues of diversity and integration reflectively and contextually. Teachers must have a deep understanding of local dynamics, such as the history of migration and the identity of the Hadramaut Arab community, and be able to guide students to have open dialogues about cultural practices that may cause tensions between groups. Therefore, multicultural teacher training needs to be a policy priority.

In addition, education policies need to encourage the integration of local narratives into learning materials, such as modules based on the history and culture of the Arab, Chinese, and local Palembang communities. Thus, students not only learn from national textbooks, but also understand the social realities around them more contextually. Multicultural education will also be more effective if accompanied by policies that support direct intercultural activities, such as social projects, community visits, or local research that introduce students to real diversity. Finally, a revision of national policies is also needed so that culture is no longer viewed as a static, harmonious entity, but rather as a dynamic and sometimes conflictual arena. With this critical multicultural approach, education is expected to be able to become a space for reconciliation of values, dialogue between identities, and the formation of a culturally inclusive and democratic society.

The approach to the phenomena of assimilation and endogamy in the Hadramaut Arab community in Palembang can be analyzed through critical multiculturalism theory and social identity theory. According to James A. Banks (2015), Multicultural education is not only about introducing diversity, but also emphasizes the need for reconstruction of social structures to allow all cultural groups to obtain equal justice and recognition. In the context of the Hadramaut community, the practice of endogamy and limiting marriage to fellow Sayids represents a form of exclusivism based on the construction of socio-religious status. This strengthens cultural identity internally, but at the same time creates barriers to interaction that can slow down the process of more comprehensive social integration.

Social identity theory from Henri Tajfel (1981) in Batubara (2020) can also help understand how this community maintains its internal cohesion through genealogically based social categories. The emphasis on patrilineal descent and the prohibition on Sayid women from marrying non-Sayid women are strategies to maintain a distinctive group identity. This strengthens in-group solidarity, but at the same time creates asymmetrical relations with out-groups, as noted by van den Berg (1989) in his study of the Hadramaut community in the archipelago. In Tajfel's view, this dynamic reflects the natural tendency of groups to form identity differences and hierarchies, which if not managed wisely in the education system, can trigger prejudice and social exclusion (Shafrani, 2025).

Previous research by Natalie Mobini-Kesheh (2007) also shows that the Hadrami community in Southeast Asia experienced a selective integration process. In many cases, they assimilated culturally but maintained exclusivity in certain social practices, especially those related to religious identity and lineage status. In the context of Palembang, as also shown in this study, this phenomenon is clearly seen through the uxorial marriage pattern, where Hadrami men marry local women, but still avoid mixing lineages through the female line. Research of Laffan (2011) on Islamic diaspora networks in Southeast Asia also underlines the important role of genealogical identity in maintaining the religious and cultural authority of Hadramaut communities abroad.

In addition, local research by Rahmaniah (2014) noted that the kafaah system implemented in the Sayid community has long functioned as a mechanism of internal social control. In the context of Hadramaut and diaspora communities such as in Palembang, kafaah is not only a marriage norm, but also a symbol of status and socio-religious legitimacy. Although this principle is not based on formal Islamic law, it has been deeply rooted in customs and social practices, thus influencing patterns of social relations between groups. Therefore, multicultural education needs to respond to this reality in a sensitive and critical manner, without justifying exclusivism but also without romanticizing cultural pluralism without structural understanding.

Thus, the integration of critical multiculturalism theory, social identity, and empirical studies on the Hadramaut diaspora shows that educational policies and practices must seek to dismantle the social hierarchies that are still hidden in relations between cultural communities. Education needs to provide space for critical discussion about how identities are formed, maintained, and negotiated in the context of a pluralistic society. Only with such an approach can multicultural education achieve its goals as a means of social liberation and the formation of inclusive citizens.

### **3.2. Genealogy and Social Identity in School Contexts**

Endogamy marriages that are strictly implemented among the Arab Alawiyin in Palembang are a manifestation of the patrilineal kinship system that highly values the purity of bloodlines. This system places the father's line as the main determinant of family identity, so that marriage is only permitted between fellow Arab descendants to maintain the purity of lineage, especially in relation to the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The prohibition of marriage between Arab women and non-Arab men is not merely a social tradition, but is also based on the hereditary will of Fatimah binti Muhammad and the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an that emphasize the specialness and sanctity of the ahlul bayt. This results in the practice of endogamous marriage not only becoming a symbol of genealogical identity, but also as a mechanism for preserving religious and social values that are strongly internalized by the community.

In the realm of education, especially in increasingly multicultural and diverse classes, students from backgrounds like this carry a very strong and exclusive identity. This identity is not only about pride in lineage, but also related to social expectations and obligations that are passed down from generation to generation to maintain the purity of the group. This condition presents a major challenge for teachers and educators in managing the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Students from this group can experience psychological stress when their personal autonomy in choosing a life partner or other values conflict with the norms of their group. Socially, they may also face exclusion if they deviate from strong traditional rules. Therefore, teachers need to be highly sensitive in understanding that students' identities are not just cultural backgrounds, but also elements that greatly determine their social and emotional experiences at school.

Teachers as educational agents must be able to navigate the tension between respect for inherited traditions and the urge to encourage individual freedom. An approach that is too suppressive of student autonomy can trigger resistance and feelings of alienation, while ignoring cultural values can lead to identity conflicts and students' loss of respect for their own traditions. Therefore, it is important for teachers to use an inclusive pedagogical approach, which opens up space for critical and reflective dialogue without judging or discrediting tradition. For example, discussing endogamous marriage as part of multicultural studies or different social values, while instilling values of tolerance and respect for differences. In this way, students not only learn to understand their identities more critically, but also learn to appreciate the diversity of other people's identities.

In addition, strengthening identity education based on genealogical and traditional understanding can also be a means to build self-confidence and positive pride without having to use that identity as a reason to exclude or look down on other groups. Teachers can facilitate this process by providing concrete examples of how traditional values can be harmonized with the principles of inclusivity and plurality in modern society. Such education not only bridges the gap between cultural heritage and the

contextual needs of today, but also becomes an effective means of reducing social and psychological conflicts that arise from the clash between collective identity and individual autonomy.

Thus, endogamous marriage in the Arab society of Palembang is not only a matter of static tradition, but a dynamic social phenomenon with broad implications for the formation of students' identities and social interactions in the educational space. Educators who are aware of this complexity will be better prepared to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment, where tradition is respected without sacrificing students' personal freedom and independence. This approach also encourages healthy and productive intercultural dialogue, as a foundation for a harmonious and civilized plural society.

The findings of this study indicate that the practice of endogamous marriage in the Arab Alawiyyin community in Palembang not only functions as a social mechanism to maintain the purity of lineage but also becomes a strong pillar of collective identity and a value system that regulates social interactions within the community. The patrilineal principle that places the father's lineage as the main determinant of family identity produces an exclusive system that strictly distinguishes between members of the "inner" and "outer" groups based on their lineage. Thus, this system is not just a cultural tradition but also a social device that regulates social legitimacy and individual rights, including in terms of inheritance and social acceptance. In the context of education, this identity rooted in genealogy and strict tradition creates challenges for students when they are in a multicultural and heterogeneous school environment. Children from the Arab Hadramaut community in Palembang often face a duality between the demands of their group to maintain the purity of lineage and the pressure of the school environment that emphasizes inclusivity and respect for differences. This situation can lead to feelings of alienation or identity conflict if not managed properly by educators and the school environment.

Interview findings showing social sanctions in the form of exclusion and loss of inheritance rights for Arab women who marry non-Arabs show how social norms and traditions still play a very strong role in controlling individual behavior. These sanctions are not only formal, but also have deep psychological dimensions, such as guilt and emotional stress that can affect students' mental well-being. This indicates that in education, a sensitive approach to the socio-cultural background and psychological understanding of students is very important to create a supportive and inclusive learning atmosphere.

Practically, educators need to develop cross-cultural competencies that are able to recognize and appreciate the diversity of students' identities, without ignoring the complexity and sensitivity of their traditions. Education must be a space for dialogue that allows students to explore and reflect critically on their identities, while learning to appreciate the identities of others. In this case, teachers act as mediators who balance respect for tradition with strengthening personal autonomy and social openness.

These findings also underline the importance of developing an inclusive curriculum and character education that instills values of tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences. Thus, the practice of endogamous marriage, which is often viewed as a form of exclusivity, can be discussed critically in education without eliminating respect for the underlying traditional values. This approach not only helps reduce the potential for identity conflict, but also prepares students to live in a complex and dynamic plural society.

Furthermore, this study opens up space for further study on how social practices such as endogamous marriage can transform amidst modern social and educational dynamics. Is there room for reinterpretation of tradition to align with the values of equality and inclusivity? What is the role of educational institutions in facilitating this process? These questions are important to bridge the gap between preserving cultural heritage and the demands for social progress.

Thus, this study not only provides a comprehensive picture of the practice of endogamous marriage among Palembang Arabs, but also emphasizes the need for an adaptive and sensitive educational approach to the complexity of students' identities. Education that is able to integrate tradition with universal values will be the main key in creating a harmonious and civilized society.

The findings regarding endogamous marriage practices in the Arab Alawiyyin community in Palembang are in line with the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979) which emphasizes how social groups form a sense of collective identity through their differentiation from other groups (Shafrani, 2025). In this context, endogamous marriage functions as a mechanism to maintain the integrity and purity of the group identity inherited patrilineally, as well as a form of exclusion from outside the group. Previous research by Rahmaniah (2014) also emphasized that the endogamous marriage tradition is not only cultural but also has a strong theological and genealogical basis in maintaining the lineage of descendants who are considered sacred, especially among the community of the Prophet's descendants. This shows that the practice is not just a custom, but an integral part of the construction of religious and social identity that is inherent in the members of the community.

In addition, an educational study by Banks (2010) on multiculturalism and inclusion highlights the challenges faced by students from exclusive cultural backgrounds when entering more heterogeneous educational spaces. Banks argues for the importance of teachers developing cultural awareness and cross-cultural competence to both respect and navigate conflicts between group traditions and demands for individual autonomy. Similar research by Froehlich et al. (2023) also found that the tension between inherited identity and social integration can lead to feelings of alienation and psychological distress in students, especially women from traditional groups who face strict restrictions in choosing a life partner. Therefore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of an inclusive and sensitive educational approach, which not only respects tradition but also opens up space for critical dialogue so that students can develop healthy identities in a pluralistic society.

### **3.3. Implications for Multicultural Education**

In Islam, there is no prohibition against the practice of endogamous marriage, so that the Arab community, especially the Palembang Arab community, feels that they have religious legitimacy to continue this tradition. This practice is interpreted as an effort to maintain the purity of the Prophet Muhammad's lineage (ahlul bayt) and the preservation of religious and cultural identity that has been passed down from generation to generation. Palembang itself is one of the largest centers of the Hadramaut Arab community in Southeast Asia, so maintaining genealogy through endogamy is considered an important and sacred act. The author identifies that in addition to maintaining lineage, Islamic preaching and the preservation of knowledge also play a role in strengthening this practice. By maintaining marriage within the scope of fellow Arabs, Islamic values and scientific traditions are considered easier to maintain and pass on to the next generation.

However, these findings also indicate social and psychological inequality, especially for women who violate this norm by marrying non-Arab men. The sanctions received include not only exclusion from family and community—such as being excluded from family events, being disowned in the family tree, and losing inheritance rights—but also psychological pressures arising from feelings of guilt and alienation. This phenomenon reflects how students from minority groups, such as the Alawiyyin Arab community, begin to internalize social roles dictated by cultural traditions. In this case, young people, especially girls, learn that choosing a life partner is not just a personal matter, but also concerns the honor of the family and the continuity of their collective identity. This forms a strong perception of gender roles and social expectations, which sometimes conflict with values of individual autonomy in a pluralistic society.

The implications of these findings are highly relevant for inclusion in history and social studies curricula, especially in teaching pluralism, cultural heritage, and social boundaries. This practice of strict endogamy can serve as a case study of how a community maintains its values amidst diversity, and how social boundaries are constructed and maintained through customary mechanisms and collective sanctions. Teachers can facilitate discussions that encourage students to understand that such cultural practices not only affect individuals, but also social dynamics and integration between groups in society. Thus, multicultural education not only introduces cultural diversity, but also provides critical space for students to understand how cultural norms influence one's life choices and how

principles of equality, individual rights, and values of justice can be developed in the context of cultural differences.

Specifically, in the context of multicultural education, these findings suggest that cultural values inherited through family and community greatly influence the formation of identity and social roles of minority group learners. Banks and Banks (2010) states that multicultural education does not only aim to introduce cultural diversity, but also to understand how certain social systems can produce inequality, especially in terms of gender and individual rights. Previous research by Alatas (2013) also noted that Arab communities in Indonesia tend to maintain exclusive social structures, especially through marriage norms, to maintain identity and internal social control. Thus, the practice of endogamy in the Arab community of Palembang can be seen as part of an effort to preserve culture as well as a challenge to social inclusivity. History and social studies curricula can raise this issue as a critical reflection on how traditional values interact with principles of equality in a multicultural society.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From a multicultural education perspective, this study highlights the complex cultural interplay between Arab and Malay communities in Palembang, shaped by the arrival of Hadramaut Arabs in the 16th century and their intermarriage with local women. While these interactions reflect social integration and the transmission of religious and cultural values, the continued practice of endogamous marriage among Alawiyyin Arabs—guided by the *kaffaah* principle—reveals a conscious effort to maintain cultural exclusivity. This exclusivity poses challenges to full assimilation and reinforces social boundaries. The study underscores the importance of multicultural education as a tool for promoting inclusivity, cultural literacy, and equitable community life. It offers critical insights into how deeply rooted cultural traditions intersect with students' identity formation and educational experiences, particularly in heritage-rich communities. However, the research is limited by its focus on sociocultural analysis without direct classroom-based observation or engagement with students and educators. Future studies should examine how young Arab-Indonesian students navigate traditional expectations within the pluralistic framework of the national curriculum and explore how teachers are trained to address culturally sensitive issues such as lineage and identity. Comparative regional studies and interdisciplinary approaches—including psychological and economic perspectives—are also recommended to broaden understanding and inform more culturally responsive teaching practices across Indonesia.

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