



ROOTLESS SCHOOLS: EXAMING THE CULTURAL IDENTITY CRISIS AMIDST THE UNIFORM FLOW OF GLOBAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the cultural identity crisis experienced by the younger generation potentially arising from the global educational standardization process, which increasingly emphasizes uniformity of competencies and international indicators. This research was conducted qualitatively using a literature review approach that summarized several scientific literature. Policy reports and relevant research from the past ten years. This analysis was developed from two interrelated perspectives: an educational management perspective and an anthropological perspective. The findings reveal that the conflict between global educational standardization and local cultural conservation is not merely an administrative problem, but one closely related to identity, relationships, and meaning in education. This research proposes that culturally responsive educational management (CRM) can serve as a framework to reconcile global quality standards with local cultural values, language, and knowledge to reconcile global quality standards with local cultural values, language, and knowledge in the daily educational studies or management in Indonesia.

Keyword: *cultural identity; educational management; educational anthropology; homogenization of global*

INTRODUCTION

Education can be understood as a means of transferring values, knowledge, and cultural traditions from one generation to the next. However, in reality, local cultures are currently being eroded by the increasing influx of international education. This phenomenon is due to exposure to global standardization that prioritizes uniform competencies, internationally based curricula, and global measurement systems.

UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank are the bodies that serve as the main references and/or benchmarks in developing the direction of global education policy which currently dominates national policies with the aim of ensuring that national education, science, and culture systems are in line with global standards. However, on the other hand, the increasingly massive process of educational standardization in the current of global educational reform has the potential to encourage homogenization of educational practices and policies, so that we can understand the space for the recognition and transmission of local cultural diversity that has been passed down from generation to generation and forms the identity of a community (Sahlberg, 2016; Santoro & Kennedy, 2016).

For culture, schools are centers for the preservation and incubation of values, serving as spaces for local wisdom and disseminating norms and values. However, schools are currently caught in the global vortex without considering local wisdom, resulting in a cultural identity crisis for the younger generation. This has given rise to a new phenomenon known as globalization and cultural colonization. The imbalance of power (hegemony) causes the dominant culture to displace indigenous cultures, while Indonesia is rich in ethnicities, languages, and cultures, making this problem even more crucial. So, how can schools meet international standards while maintaining and transmitting local cultural values to their students?

This study, using a literature review approach, will examine how the perspectives of educational management and educational anthropology are integrated. The goal is to prove that the conflict between global educational standardization and local cultural preservation is not an administrative issue, but rather a problem closely related to identity, relationships, and meaning in education. This study uses the Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) model as a conceptual framework synthesized from the theories of Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Culturally Responsive Teaching, multicultural education, and the concepts of cultural transmission and cultural identity. This model is designed to address the challenges of schools that must meet international quality standards while maintaining the continuity of local values, languages, and knowledge. It is hoped that this study can contribute as a conceptual framework in the formulation of education management policies and practices in Indonesia, which is currently at the crossroads between global demands and local needs. With this, we hope that education can be designed with a wiser and more culturally just strategy.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review method. This study was chosen because the researcher will identify, evaluate, and semi-synthesize various findings in relevant scientific literature in a comprehensive and structured manner (Snyder, 2019). This approach is considered capable of combining various theoretical or scientific perspectives to dissect the same topic to deepen understanding, minimize interpretation bias, and provide a holistic and comprehensive picture. Therefore, it requires triangulation of perspectives from various disciplines.

The data sources for this study are scientific books published in the last 10 years (2015-2025) that discuss educational management, educational anthropology, globalization, and cultural identity, as well as related national and international journal articles from the last 5 years (2020-2025). The data obtained will be analyzed qualitatively using two complementary perspectives. The conclusions drawn from these two data sets will produce a CRM conceptual framework, which forms the main component of this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Global Education Standardization and Curriculum Homogenization

The influence of globalization has also impacted the direction of education policy in various countries, particularly in Indonesia, where the demands faced are quality standardization, accountability, and international competitiveness. One effort to standardize educational quality is through educational standardization. This is done through international assessment instruments such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and various 21st-century competency frameworks that serve as references for educational



reform in many countries in general. As a result, the curriculum in Indonesia is increasingly directed towards achieving competency indicators that are universal, measurable, and internationally comparable. This instrument measures the reading, mathematics, and science literacy of 15-year-old students in more than 80 countries.

Sahlberg identifies this phenomenon as the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) because it has become a trend of top-down, competency-based educational reform that emphasizes accountability through standardized testing (Sahlberg, 2016). GERM spreads through international relations, policy borrowing, and the diffusion of ideas led by supranational institutions such as the OECD and the World Bank. In Indonesia, this condition is evident in centralized education policies and the need to accommodate diverse multicultural values in schools. This has led to schools prioritizing subjects tested in national and international assessments, while material related to regional languages, local history, traditions, and cultural knowledge is often less accessible. As a result, schools are gradually shifting from institutions that transmit culture to institutions oriented towards global academic indicators. Adopting a global educational framework without considering local social and cultural contexts has the potential to result in educational practices that are less responsive to societal diversity. Therefore, the process of educational globalization needs to be accompanied by adaptation to local cultural contexts so that educational modernization does not eliminate the identity and values of local communities (Sahlberg, 2016; Santoro & Kennedy, 2016). Standardization has positive goals, namely ensuring equal distribution of educational quality, improving the quality of learning, and strengthening accountability in education delivery. This equitable standardization of education also provides opportunities for Indonesian students to be able to present themselves on the international stage by thinking critically and collaboratively, understanding digital literacy, and being able to adapt to rapid social change. However, various studies show that the increasingly strengthening standardization process also has consequences for curriculum homogenization. This curriculum homogenization can refer to the tendency of the education system to apply relatively uniform structures, content, learning methods, and evaluation indicators, thereby limiting the space for diversity in local cultural contexts. Therefore, in this context, it is hoped that the curriculum can be oriented towards achieving competencies that can be measured universally rather than developing the socio-cultural characteristics of the local community.

This condition is reflected in the research results of Anwar and Sukirman (2024), who explained that the integration of local content in the curriculum has a positive influence on students' cultural awareness and identity. However, the study also found that the implementation of local content is often suboptimal because schools are more oriented towards achieving national curriculum targets and academic evaluation indicators. Based on this, local culture is still processed as a supplement, not as an integral part of curriculum management. The same research by Fathurrachman et al. (2025) also emphasized that the integration of local wisdom in the curriculum can increase students' learning engagement, character, and cultural identity. However, in its implementation, the implementation of a culture-based curriculum still faces various obstacles, including limited learning time, the dominance of academic targets, and a lack of teacher capacity in developing locally based materials in education. Instead, the education system manages a balance between achieving quality standards and preserving cultural values.

From an educational management perspective, these findings point to a paradox in the implementation of modern education. Two aspects must be considered: first,

standardization is necessary to ensure quality and increase global competitiveness. Second, an overly strong orientation toward universal indicators has the potential to diminish the function of schools as institutions that transmit values, language, and cultural knowledge to the younger generation. Thus, the problem is not standardization itself, but rather the tendency toward curriculum homogenization that ignores the diversity of local cultural contexts.

Thus, this researcher argues that global educational standardization and local cultural preservation do not have to be positioned as two conflicting goals. Instead, they can be combined through educational management that integrates international quality standards with the cultural characteristics of local communities. These findings provide the basis for discussing how an anthropological perspective links the homogenization of education to the emergence of a cultural identity crisis among the younger generation.

3.2 Cultural Identity Crisis in Anthropology

Cultural identity is formed through social constructs such as language, values, traditions, and collective experiences of a community/society. When the flow of education accelerates the exchange of information across borders, the clash of global and local values can give rise to an identity crisis, namely a condition of ambiguity or conflict in the process of someone interpreting cultural identity. Through anthropology, we can understand how the process of global standardization impacts the cultural identity of students. In multicultural societies, an identity crisis can manifest itself in the tension between one's cultural heritage and the increasingly dominant influence of global culture. The intersection of these two value systems can drive individuals to continually negotiate their cultural identity, while simultaneously facing the challenge of maintaining a stable cultural identity amidst the currents of global cultural homogenization (Mohammed et al., 2025). However, there is also a relevant concept that describes the condition of today's young generation, namely the concept of Deterritorialization, which refers to the process of identity, values, and knowledge no longer being tied to a particular community but rather being integrated into the global space (Appadurai, 1996, Kale & Zlatevska, 2015). In the education sector, deterritorialization occurs when school relations sever the connection between the knowledge taught and the local cultural, social, and ecological context in which students are present.

Research by Fitriyani, Suryadi, and Syam (2015) examines the role of the family in developing Sundanese cultural values amidst the currents of cultural globalization. The research findings indicate that the family plays a crucial role as the initial environment in the process of teaching, internalizing, socializing, and cultivating Sundanese values among the younger generation. These findings demonstrate that the process of cultural inheritance occurs not only through formal education but also through the family environment as the primary space for transmitting values, language, and cultural practices. However, these findings also indicate the need for further study of how the process of cultural inheritance occurs within formal educational institutions, particularly as schools face the demands of curriculum standardization and the currents of educational globalization.

Research by Sari et al. (2018) found that cultural preservation can be achieved through the role of parents, and the formation of ethnic and national identities in Indonesian adolescents. This research demonstrates that the transmission of cultural values, such as language, cultural practices, and the inheritance of traditions, can be directly contributed by families, thereby forming a strong cultural identity. This was also emphasized by



Margaret Mead, who emphasized that enculturation occurs through interactions within families, communities, and educational institutions. Furthermore, if global standardization limits space for local content, this pathway for transmitting cultural values to students has the potential to weaken. This condition encourages the process of cultural deterritorialization, namely the weakening of students' attachment to language, traditions, and regional cultural values, making cultural identity increasingly vulnerable to change. Therefore, schools need to play a complementary role to families in passing on local cultural values to maintain cultural identity. Strengthening local content in the curriculum can strengthen students' cultural identity.

In the same study, Sari et al. (2018) also found that maintaining ethnic language and culture was positively related to the formation of ethnic identity and the psychological well-being of adolescents. This was further supported by another study by Pageh (2025), which showed that improving student character, cultural identity, and moral success was based on the instilling of values of mutual cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, and environmental awareness celebrated in schools.

Literature shows that the cultural identity crisis does not mean the younger generation has completely lost its identity, but rather is experiencing identity hybridization. Students construct new identities through a blend of local and global cultures. However, if educational institutions do not provide adequate space for local culture, the hybridization process will tend to be dominated by global values and local identities will weaken. This can lead to schools becoming rootless schools, meaning they successfully produce globally competent graduates but lack a connection to the language, values, and cultural heritage of their own communities.

The results of this study indicate that the cultural identity crisis cannot be understood solely as a result of globalization, but rather as a weakening of the impact of cultural transmission within the education system. Educational standardization that is not balanced with strategies for preserving local culture has the potential to accelerate the process of deterritorialization and diminish the function of schools as agents of enculturation. Therefore, an educational management approach is needed that is not only oriented towards achieving quality standards but also able to maintain the sustainability of the cultural transmission process. These findings form the basis for the development of Culturally Responsive Education Management (CRM).

3.3 Culturally Responsive Education Management

Existing literature shows that the approach to cultural preservation in education has so far been dominated by two perspectives: Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), which focuses on classroom learning practices, and Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL), which emphasizes school leadership. Geneva Gay (2018) emphasized that learning that accommodates students' experiences, language, and culture can improve engagement and learning outcomes, while Khalifa et al. (2018) showed that culturally responsive school leadership plays a crucial role in building an inclusive educational environment. However, both approaches have not fully addressed the challenges of global education standardization because they still view culture at the level of learning or leadership, rather than as an integral part of the overall school management system.

Hall's (1990) concept of cultural identity, Appadurai's (1996) deterritorialization, and Mead's (1963) enculturation explain that cultural identity is formed through ongoing social processes. When schools become more oriented toward universal competencies and global academic indicators, the space for cultural transmission becomes increasingly

limited, thus accelerating the weakening of students' cultural identities. This finding is reinforced by Indonesian research showing that integrating local wisdom into the curriculum and learning can improve students' cultural identity, character, and learning engagement (Fathurrochman et al., 2025; Rasidi et al., 2025). Thus, the main problem lies not in educational standardization, but rather in the lack of integration of local culture into the school management system.

Based on this, this research proposes Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) as a conceptual framework that integrates the principles of culturally responsive education into school management functions. CRM is not intended as a new theory, but rather as the result of a conceptual synthesis that connects the dimensions of pedagogy, leadership, anthropology and educational management. This framework is built on five main dimensions, namely (1) culturally responsive leadership, (2) culturally responsive curriculum management, (3) culturally responsive school culture, (4) community cultural partnership, and (5) dual outcome evaluation. These five dimensions enable schools to manage the quality of education while systematically strengthening students' cultural identity.

Thus, Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) is the main conceptual contribution of this research in explaining how schools can respond to the challenges of rootless schools in the era of global education standardization. Unlike previous approaches that focused on aspects of learning or leadership separately, CRM views cultural preservation as part of the overall school governance. Through this approach, schools are not only directed to meet global education quality standards but also fulfill a strategic function as institutions that transmit values, language, and cultural knowledge to the younger generation. Thus, educational quality and cultural preservation are positioned as two complementary goals in the Indonesian education system.

Based on the synthesis of the literature, this study develops a conceptual framework of Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) as shown in Figure 1. This framework describes the relationship between global education standardization, curriculum homogenization, cultural identity crisis, and the role of CRM in producing schools that are able to meet international quality standards without losing local cultural roots.

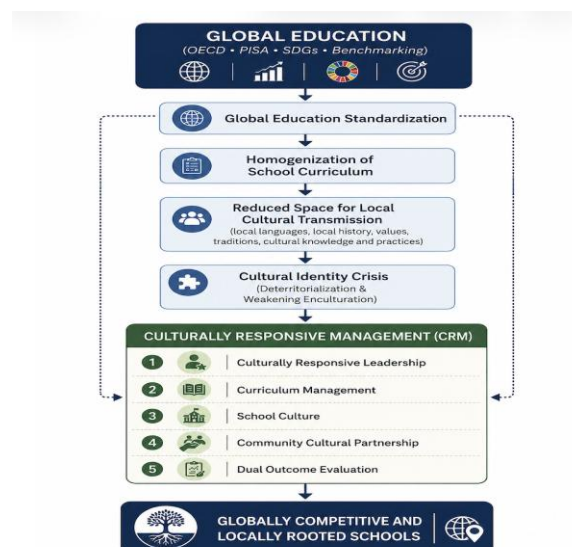


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Culturally Responsive Management (CRM)



Figure 1 shows that global educational standardization encourages curriculum homogenization, which has implications for weakening cultural transmission and the emergence of a cultural identity crisis. CRM is positioned as a management framework that integrates leadership, curriculum, school culture, community partnerships, and evaluation, enabling schools to produce graduates who are globally competitive and possess a strong cultural identity.

3.4 The Role of School Management in Addressing the Cultural Identity Crisis and Its Implications for Education in Indonesia

Existing literature demonstrates that schools play a strategic role in bridging the demands of global educational standardization with the preservation of cultural identity. The cultural identity crisis experienced by students is not solely influenced by globalization, but also by the suboptimal integration of local culture into the entire educational process by schools. Cultural preservation has tended to be implemented through incidental programs, such as local content or arts activities, and has therefore not become a part of comprehensive school policy and governance. Therefore, the primary challenge is not to reduce educational quality standards, but rather to maintain a balance between achieving global competencies and sustaining local culture (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2023).

From an educational management perspective, the principal acts as an agent of change who determines policy direction, organizational culture, and curriculum development. Culturally responsive leadership is not only oriented towards improving academic achievement but also ensures that values, language, history, and local wisdom are part of school life. Research by Khalifa (2018) confirms that culturally responsive school leadership can create a more inclusive learning environment, while research by Fathurrochman et al. (2025) shows that integrating local wisdom into curriculum management contributes to strengthening cultural identity, character, and student learning engagement. Thus, the function of school management is not merely administrative but also an important mechanism in maintaining cultural sustainability.

Another implication of this study's findings is the need for a paradigm shift in school management, from one solely focused on academic indicators to one that balances academic achievement and strengthening cultural identity. Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) can be implemented through the development of a culture-based school vision, the development of a contextual curriculum, the establishment of a school culture that values diversity, partnerships with families and local communities, and an evaluation system that measures academic success as well as the development of students' character and cultural identity. This approach aligns with Indonesian education policy, which emphasizes contextual learning, character building, and the Pancasila Student Profile.

Based on the overall literature synthesis, this study confirms that schools can no longer be viewed solely as institutions producing globally competitive graduates, but also as social institutions responsible for transmitting values, language, and cultural knowledge to the younger generation. Therefore, the implementation of Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) is a practical implication of this research to address the challenge of rootless schools. Through culturally responsive school management, Indonesian education has the opportunity to build an education system that meets international quality standards while strengthening national cultural identity. Thus, educational quality

and cultural preservation are not positioned as two conflicting goals, but as two pillars that must be managed in an integrated manner in Indonesian educational development.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that global education standardization has positively contributed to improving the quality, accountability, and competitiveness of education through the implementation of competency standards, assessment systems, and increasingly measurable performance indicators. However, the literature synthesis also reveals that an overly strong orientation toward uniformity has the potential to encourage curriculum homogenization, thereby limiting the space for the transmission of local values, language, and cultural knowledge. This situation not only impacts pedagogical aspects but also affects the function of schools as social institutions that play a role in intergenerational cultural transmission.

From an anthropological perspective, this phenomenon can be understood through the concept of deterritorialization, namely the weakening of cultural identity's ties to local social and cultural contexts due to the dominance of global currents. The reduced space for enculturation in schools has led to students becoming more familiar with global culture than with their own local culture. Therefore, the cultural identity crisis emerging among the younger generation is not solely a consequence of globalization but is also influenced by the education system's suboptimal function of cultural transmission.

Based on a synthesis of various literatures in the fields of educational management, anthropology, and multicultural education, this study proposes Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) as a conceptual framework to bridge the demands of global educational quality with the preservation of local cultural identity. CRM is understood as an educational management approach that integrates school leadership, curriculum management, organizational culture, partnerships with families and communities, and an evaluation system that is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also on strengthening students' cultural identity. Thus, educational quality and cultural preservation are not positioned as two conflicting goals, but rather as two complementary dimensions in the implementation of education.

The main contribution of this research lies in the development of a conceptual framework for Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) as a result of a literature synthesis that connects educational management and anthropological perspectives to explain the phenomenon of rootless schools. Unlike previous research that focused more on culturally responsive learning or school leadership separately, this study offers a more comprehensive approach at the school management level. This framework provides the perspective that schools can continue to meet global education quality standards without losing their role as agents of transmission of local values, language, and cultural knowledge.

This study has limitations due to its use of a literature review approach, resulting in conceptual findings that have not been empirically tested. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop instruments and implementation models for Culturally Responsive Management (CRM) at various levels of education in Indonesia. Empirical testing of CRM's effectiveness in strengthening students' cultural identity while maintaining educational quality will provide a stronger contribution to the development of educational management theory and practice in the era of globalization.



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