



Local Government Policies and the Implementation of Multiculturalism

Indra Sukirman¹, Riswandi¹

¹Public Administration, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Indra Sukirman

E-mail: indrskmn@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines how local government policies influence the implementation of multiculturalism in Medan City, Indonesia, within a decentralized governance framework. The research aims to identify key governance factors that shape the effectiveness of multicultural policy implementation. A quantitative approach was employed using a cross-sectional survey of 120 respondents, including government officials, educators, community leaders, and civil society representatives. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The findings reveal that leadership commitment is the most significant factor influencing multicultural implementation, followed by institutional coordination, policy clarity, and resource availability. These results indicate that governance capacity plays a central role in translating multicultural principles into practical outcomes. The study introduces the concept of governance-driven multiculturalism, emphasizing that institutional dynamics are critical in shaping policy effectiveness in diverse urban contexts. The implications of this research highlight the need for stronger leadership, improved coordination mechanisms, and clearer policy frameworks to enhance inclusive governance. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a Southeast Asian context and offering a governance-based perspective on multicultural policy implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism has emerged as a defining characteristic of contemporary societies, particularly within urban contexts shaped by migration, historical pluralism, and rapid socio-economic transformation. Cities are no longer merely administrative units; they function as dynamic socio-cultural arenas in which diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural groups interact on a daily basis. Within this setting, multiculturalism is understood not only as an empirical condition but also as a normative political project aimed at recognizing, accommodating, and managing diversity within a shared political and institutional framework (Mansouri & Elias, 2025; Jovanović, 2026). The intensification of globalization and internal migration has further amplified the relevance of multiculturalism, raising critical questions regarding social cohesion, equality, governance, and the role of public institutions in

regulating diversity (Oluwatosin & Rojak, 2023; Fossum et al., 2024). Consequently, multiculturalism is increasingly embedded in public policy, institutional arrangements, and state–society relations rather than remaining solely a cultural or ideological discourse (Anagnostou, 2025; Okereke et al., 2025; Fossum et al., 2024; Qaissi, 2025; Li et al., 2025).

In this context, local governments occupy a strategic position in translating abstract multicultural ideals into concrete governance practices. As the level of government closest to citizens, local authorities are directly responsible for managing diversity in everyday life through public service delivery, spatial planning, education, and community engagement. This proximity places local governments at the forefront of negotiating tensions between cultural recognition, social integration, and administrative efficiency (Awolorinke et al., 2025; Cao & Sun, 2025). Existing scholarship highlights that the success or failure of multiculturalism is often determined not at the national level, but within local governance structures where policies are implemented and experienced (Ricciardelli, 2023; Lavhelani et al., 2024). However, despite this growing recognition, empirical investigations into how local governments operationalize multiculturalism in specific urban contexts remain limited.

Multicultural governance in Indonesia is a particularly important case study. Indonesia, with its national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), explicitly acknowledges cultural diversity as an intrinsic component of its national identity. This notion is enshrined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD 1945), especially through the provision of cultural rights, freedom of religion and social justice. Additionally, policies like Law No. 23 of 2014 on Local Government and Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights prioritize decentralization, inclusivity, and the safeguarding of diversity in governance (Ezati, 2022; Sánchez-Soriano et al., 2024; Saepulmilah et al., 2025; Fatima & Iqbal, 2025). These laws offer a legal basis for local governments to address diversity in a manner that supports social harmony, while acknowledging cultural differences. Moreover, specific sectoral regulations, such as those on education and social affairs, further underline the values of tolerance, equality, and community engagement in governance in diverse societies (Ezati, 2022; Sánchez-Soriano et al., 2024; Saepulmilah et al., 2025; Fatima & Iqbal, 2025).

Despite this robust normative and regulatory framework, Indonesia still grapples with the challenges of diversity management, especially in urban areas with high levels of diversity. Urban areas like Medan are microcosms of Indonesia's multicultural society, with ethnic minorities, including Batak, Malay, Javanese, Minangkabau, and Chinese Indonesians, coexisting with various religious groups. This diversity brings cultural vibrancy and economic vitality to the city, but it also poses challenges, including social polarisation, discrimination, and intergroup tensions (Nababan, 2025; Bazzi, 2025). Existing research on Indonesia's multiculturalism has mostly centred on national-scale issues such as national identity, interreligious relations, and conflict management (Sahfutra & Utomo, 2024). While these works are important, they often neglect local governance as the main site of multiculturalism's practice.

One key concern in the research is the disconnect between normative expressions of multiculturalism and its operationalisation. Although governments often espouse values such as tolerance, diversity and inclusion, these are translated into policy in piecemeal ways (Hellgren & Zapata-Barrero, 2025; Shi & Yang, 2025). This gap is especially apparent at local levels, given institutional capacity, shifting political priorities and different understandings of multiculturalism within different agencies. Multiculturalism is thus often confined to symbolic expressions - such as cultural events and tolerance campaigns - rather than institutionalised through regulatory

and service delivery mechanisms (Deeb-Sossa & Boulware, 2022). Such symbolic initiatives can serve to hide underlying inequalities and hinder the transformative power of multicultural governance.

To overcome these issues, recent research calls for a governance-focused approach to multiculturalism, which prioritises institutional integration, policy coordination and participation strategies. This approach emphasises the need for integration of diversity across policy domains, such as education, health, housing and economic development (Mubarok & Ghony, 2024; Devaki et al., 2025). Moreover, intercultural communication and community engagement are seen as vital mechanisms for promoting inclusion and empowering minority communities in decision-making (Peresada et al., 2022; Rijal, 2023). Such perspectives highlight the importance of local governments transitioning from symbolic to more substantive and institutionalised forms of multiculturalism.

Another important strand of literature emphasizes decentralization as a key mechanism for managing diversity. Local governments are considered better positioned than central authorities to respond to context-specific dynamics due to their proximity to communities and their access to localized knowledge. Comparative studies from both European and Asian contexts demonstrate that effective multicultural governance often emerges from locally tailored policies, such as culturally sensitive public services, inclusive urban planning, and targeted social programs (Mateo-Babiano & Fong, 2024). However, these studies also reveal significant variation in outcomes, suggesting that institutional capacity, political leadership, and socio-cultural context play critical roles in shaping policy effectiveness.

In the Indonesian context, decentralization has expanded local autonomy but has also produced uneven policy implementation across regions. While some local governments actively promote inclusive policies, others prioritize social stability or economic development, often at the expense of cultural recognition. This variation highlights the importance of examining specific cases to understand how multiculturalism is interpreted and implemented within different local governance settings. In Medan City, for instance, diversity has historically functioned as both a source of social enrichment and a potential trigger of conflict, making it a particularly relevant case for analyzing the interaction between policy frameworks and multicultural realities.

A review of existing studies indicates a significant research gap in the analysis of multiculturalism from a policy and governance perspective at the local level. Research on Medan City has largely focused on sociological dimensions, such as identity formation, intergroup relations, and historical coexistence, while paying limited attention to institutional mechanisms and policy implementation processes. There is a lack of systematic examination of how local government policies reflect multicultural principles, how they are operationalized across sectors, and how they shape everyday governance practices. This gap is critical, as policy implementation represents the interface between normative commitments and social outcomes.

Against this background, this study aims to analyze how local government policies shape and implement multiculturalism in Medan City. Specifically, it examines how multicultural principles are articulated within municipal policy frameworks and how they are translated into practical governance mechanisms. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on policy implementation at the local level, bridging the gap between theoretical discussions of multiculturalism and empirical analysis of governance practices. By integrating regulatory analysis with institutional perspectives, this study offers a governance-oriented understanding of multiculturalism that moves beyond symbolic discourse. The study contributes to

the broader literature by providing empirical evidence from a Southeast Asian urban context and by highlighting the role of local governments as key actors in mediating diversity within decentralized governance systems.

METHODS

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to systematically examine how local government policies influence the implementation of multiculturalism in Medan City. A quantitative approach is appropriate for this research as it allows for the measurement of relationships between variables, the identification of patterns across respondents, and the generalization of findings within a defined population. Specifically, this study employs a cross-sectional survey design, in which data are collected at a single point in time to capture perceptions of multicultural policy implementation among relevant stakeholders.

The research model conceptualizes multiculturalism implementation as the dependent variable, influenced by several independent variables, including policy clarity, institutional coordination, resource availability, and leadership commitment. These variables are derived from governance-oriented multiculturalism theory, which emphasizes institutional capacity and policy integration as key determinants of successful diversity management. By operationalizing these constructs into measurable indicators, the study seeks to quantitatively assess the extent to which local policies translate into effective multicultural practices.

Research Location and Context

The study was conducted in Medan City, Indonesia, one of the most culturally diverse urban centers in Southeast Asia. Medan serves as a strategic case due to its complex demographic composition, which includes multiple ethnic groups such as Batak, Malay, Javanese, Minangkabau, and Chinese Indonesians, as well as diverse religious communities. This heterogeneity makes Medan an ideal setting for examining the dynamics of multicultural governance at the local level.

From a governance perspective, Medan operates within Indonesia's decentralized administrative system, where local governments are granted authority to design and implement policies in accordance with national regulations, including Law No. 23 of 2014 on Local Government. This decentralization framework enables local variation in policy implementation, making Medan a relevant case for analyzing how multiculturalism is operationalized within municipal governance structures.

Population and Sampling

The target population of this study consists of stakeholders involved in or affected by multicultural policy implementation in Medan City. This includes local government officials, educators, community leaders, and members of civil society organizations. These groups were selected because they represent key actors in the formulation, implementation, and experience of multicultural policies.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents possess relevant knowledge and experience related to multicultural governance. According to Mosconi et al. (2023), purposive sampling is suitable for studies that require respondents with specific expertise or involvement in the research topic. The final sample consisted of approximately 120 respondents, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis in social science research.

To enhance representativeness, the sample was proportionally distributed across different institutional sectors. Local government officials were drawn from departments such as social affairs, education, and community development, while

community representatives included religious leaders, NGO members, and neighborhood coordinators. This diversity of respondents ensures a comprehensive understanding of multicultural policy implementation from multiple perspectives.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure perceptions of multicultural policy implementation. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale items, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to key variables.

The instrument was developed based on existing literature on multicultural governance and public policy implementation. It includes five main sections: (1) policy clarity, (2) institutional coordination, (3) resource adequacy, (4) leadership commitment, and (5) perceived effectiveness of multicultural practices. Each construct was operationalized into multiple indicators measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Prior to full deployment, the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot test involving 20 respondents to assess clarity, reliability, and validity. Feedback from the pilot test was used to refine question wording and improve measurement accuracy. Data collection was conducted through both online and offline distribution to maximize response rates and ensure accessibility for different respondent groups.

Variables and Measurement

The study employs a structured variable framework to quantify the relationship between governance factors and multiculturalism implementation. The dependent variable is multiculturalism implementation, measured through indicators such as inclusivity in public services, intergroup interaction, and perceived social cohesion.

Independent variables include: 1) Policy Clarity, referring to the extent to which multicultural principles are explicitly articulated in local regulations; 2) Institutional Coordination, capturing the level of collaboration among government agencies; 3) Resource Availability, including financial, human, and organizational capacity; 4) Leadership Commitment, reflecting the degree of political and administrative support for multicultural initiatives.

Each variable is measured using multiple indicators to ensure construct validity. The operationalization of variables is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Indicators	Measurement Scale
Policy Clarity	Policy transparency, regulatory guidance	Likert (1–5)
Institutional Coordination	Inter-agency collaboration, communication	Likert (1–5)
Resource Availability	Budget, staff, program continuity	Likert (1–5)
Leadership Commitment	Policy priority, political support	Likert (1–5)
Multicultural Implementation	Inclusion, participation, social cohesion	Likert (1–5)

Source: Developed by the author based on governance literature

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency

distributions, were used to summarize respondent characteristics and overall trends in the data.

To examine relationships between variables, the study employs multiple linear regression analysis, which allows for the assessment of the influence of independent variables on multiculturalism implementation. Regression analysis is widely used in policy research to identify causal relationships and test theoretical models (Field, 2018). The regression model can be expressed as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where Y represents multiculturalism implementation, and X_1 to X_4 represent the independent variables.

Statistical analysis was performed using software such as SPSS. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, ensuring the reliability of statistical inferences. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of the model.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure methodological rigor, this study applies both validity and reliability testing. Construct validity was assessed through factor analysis, which evaluates whether the measurement items accurately represent the intended variables. Items with factor loadings below 0.50 were excluded to maintain measurement quality.

Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold value of 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency. All variables in this study exceeded this threshold, confirming that the measurement instrument is reliable.

In addition, content validity was ensured through expert review, involving academics and practitioners in public administration and multicultural studies. Their feedback helped refine the questionnaire to ensure alignment with theoretical constructs and research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, focusing on how local government policies influence the implementation of multiculturalism in Medan City. The results are organized into several analytical stages. First, the section describes the characteristics of respondents to provide contextual grounding. Second, it presents descriptive statistics of the main variables to illustrate general trends in perceptions of multicultural governance. Third, it reports the results of validity and reliability testing to ensure the robustness of the measurement instrument. Finally, the section discusses the results of inferential statistical analysis, particularly multiple linear regression, to examine the relationships between governance variables and multiculturalism implementation.

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 120 respondents participated in this study, representing key stakeholders involved in multicultural policy implementation. The distribution of respondents across sectors is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Sector

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	68	56.7
Female	52	43.3
Occupation		

Government Officials	40	33.3
Educators	30	25.0
Community Leaders	28	23.3
Civil Society (NGOs)	22	18.4
Years of Experience		
< 5 years	25	20.8
5–10 years	48	40.0
> 10 years	47	39.2

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The data indicate that respondents are relatively well distributed across sectors, ensuring representation of both policy implementers and community actors. A majority of respondents (79.2%) have more than five years of experience, suggesting a high level of familiarity with governance processes and multicultural dynamics.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the general tendencies of each variable. Table 3 summarizes the mean and standard deviation values.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Policy Clarity	3.62	0.68
Institutional Coordination	3.48	0.72
Resource Availability	3.21	0.75
Leadership Commitment	3.74	0.65
Multicultural Implementation	3.56	0.70

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The results indicate that leadership commitment has the highest mean score (3.74), suggesting that respondents perceive political and administrative support for multicultural initiatives to be relatively strong. Policy clarity (3.62) and multicultural implementation (3.56) also show moderately positive values, indicating that policies are generally understood and partially implemented.

However, institutional coordination (3.48) and resource availability (3.21) receive comparatively lower scores. This suggests that while there is normative support for multiculturalism, practical implementation is constrained by limited coordination mechanisms and insufficient resources. The relatively higher standard deviation in resource availability (0.75) further indicates variability in perceptions across respondents, implying uneven distribution of resources among sectors.

To provide a clearer visual comparison of these findings, Figure 1 is presented below.

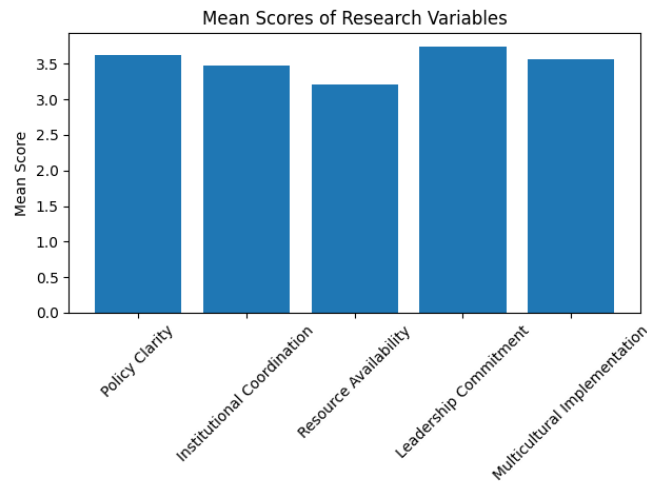


Figure 1. Mean scores of research variables

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Figure 1 visually confirms the distribution of mean values across variables. Leadership commitment stands out as the most dominant factor, indicating strong perceived support from policymakers. Meanwhile, resource availability appears as the weakest dimension, suggesting that implementation challenges are more operational than normative.

Validity and Reliability Testing

Before conducting inferential analysis, the measurement instrument was tested for validity and reliability.

Construct Validity

Construct validity was assessed using factor analysis. All items demonstrated factor loadings above the threshold of 0.50, indicating that they adequately represent their respective constructs. Table 4 presents a summary of factor loadings.

Table 4. Factor Loadings of Variables

Variable	Indicator Code	Factor Loading
Policy Clarity	PC1	0.71
	PC2	0.76
Institutional Coordination	IC1	0.74
	IC2	0.78
Resource Availability	RA1	0.69
	RA2	0.73
Leadership Commitment	LC1	0.80
	LC2	0.77
Multicultural Implementation	MI1	0.75
	MI2	0.79

Source: Processed Data, 2026

All factor loadings exceed 0.50, confirming that the indicators are valid measures of their respective variables.

Reliability Testing

Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, with results presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Policy Clarity	0.81
Institutional Coordination	0.83
Resource Availability	0.78
Leadership Commitment	0.85
Multicultural Implementation	0.82

Source: Processed Data, 2026

All variables have Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the measurement instrument.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Correlation Matrix

Variable	PC	IC	RA	LC	MI
PC	1.00	0.58	0.49	0.62	0.67
IC	0.58	1.00	0.55	0.60	0.69
RA	0.49	0.55	1.00	0.57	0.64
LC	0.62	0.60	0.57	1.00	0.72
MI	0.67	0.69	0.64	0.72	1.00

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The results show positive correlations between all independent variables and multicultural implementation. The strongest correlation is observed between leadership commitment and multicultural implementation ($r = 0.72$), followed by institutional coordination ($r = 0.69$). This suggests that stronger leadership and better coordination are associated with more effective multicultural practices.

To further visualize the strength of these relationships, Figure 2 is presented below.

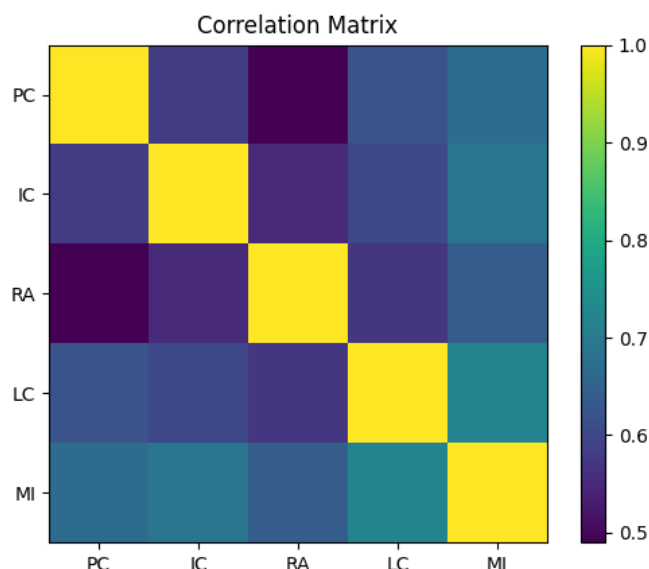


Figure 2. Correlation matrix of research variables

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Figure 2 illustrates that governance variables are moderately to strongly correlated with multicultural implementation. The absence of excessively high correlations

suggests that multicollinearity is not a concern, supporting the robustness of the regression model.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

To test the research model, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Policy Clarity	0.25	3.12	0.002
Institutional Coordination	0.28	3.45	0.001
Resource Availability	0.19	2.67	0.009
Leadership Commitment	0.31	3.98	0.000
Constant	1.12	—	—

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The regression results indicate that all independent variables have a positive and statistically significant effect on multicultural implementation ($p < 0.05$). Among them, leadership commitment has the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.31$), followed by institutional coordination ($\beta = 0.28$), policy clarity ($\beta = 0.25$), and resource availability ($\beta = 0.19$).

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.68$) indicates that 68% of the variation in multicultural implementation can be explained by the four independent variables. This suggests a strong explanatory power of the model.

To provide a clearer conceptual representation of these relationships, Figure 3 is presented below.

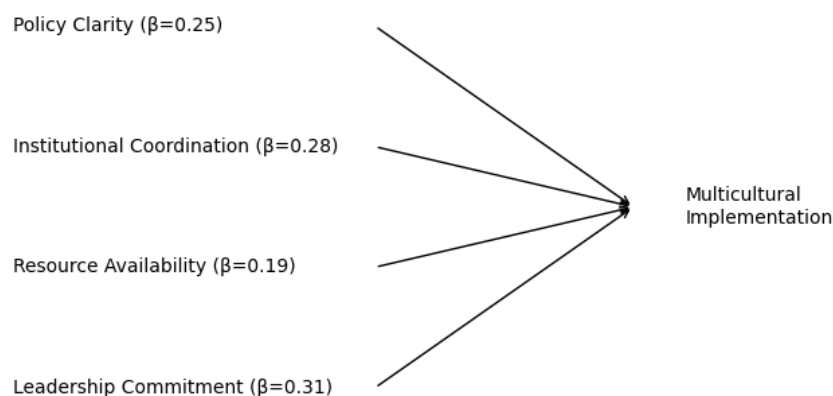


Figure 3. Regression model illustrating the influence of governance variables on multicultural implementation

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Figure 3 highlights that leadership commitment has the strongest effect on multicultural implementation, followed by institutional coordination, policy clarity, and resource availability. This confirms that governance capacity plays a central role in policy effectiveness.

Governance-Driven Multiculturalism: Explaining Policy Implementation in a Decentralized Urban Context

This research offers quantitative empirical evidence on the role of local government policies in the implementation of multiculturalism in Medan City through a governance approach. Instead of restating the findings, this section discusses the

implications of the results in the context of literature, pointing to areas of convergence, disagreement, and the significance for multicultural governance in decentralized and plural societies.

A key contribution of this study is the overwhelming influence of leadership commitment on the implementation of multicultural policies. This finding corroborates previous studies that stress the role of political and administrative leadership in policy. Research by (Altassan, 2025) suggests that leadership is critical in the institutionalization or symbolization of multiculturalism in governance. Likewise, (Haqi, 2023) notes the effectiveness of local policy often depends on the strategic vision of leadership, especially in diverse and complex urban settings. The results of this research are consistent with these views, in that strong leadership commitment facilitates the operationalization of normative ideas (such as tolerance and inclusion) into practice.

But the findings also reveal a complex relationship. Despite strong leadership commitment, its impact is largely focused on social stability rather than on substantive forms of cultural inclusion. This finding echo (Satayanurug, 2025) who suggests that contemporary multicultural governance increasingly leans towards a pragmatic, security-focused model, emphasising social stability over rights claims. In Medan City, leadership seems to play a role in maintaining the status quo of multiculturalism. This insight adds to the literature by revealing that while leadership commitment is crucial, it will not necessarily result in inclusive and emancipatory outcomes without a strong institutional backdrop.

A second finding relates to the importance of institutional coordination, which is the second strongest factor influencing the implementation of multiculturalism. This finding endorse the governance-based view that highlights the need for inter-agency coordination to ensure effective policy implementation (Syuaib, 2023). Existing research has highlighted that fragmented institutional settings can result in policy inconsistencies, especially in the field of multicultural governance (Mansouri & Elias, 2025). This is also observed in Medan City, where the lack of coordination continues to be a key challenge in policy implementation.

The sizeable effect of institutional coordination in this study also suggests that local governments are not completely fragmented; they engage in informal and responsive coordination strategies. This insight adds to the literature by emphasising the impact of informal governance in bridging institutional gaps. Although policy design is known to stress formal coordination arrangements, the Medan case demonstrates that informal coordination and spontaneous collaboration can fill coordination gaps. This adds to the debate on the theory of multicultural governance by highlighting the hybrid nature of institutional coordination arrangements in decentralised governance.

The influence of policy clarity on multicultural implementation further reinforces the importance of regulatory frameworks in shaping governance outcomes. The findings indicate that clearer policies are associated with more effective implementation, consistent with implementation theory, which posits that ambiguity in policy design leads to inconsistent interpretation and execution (Fowler, 2023). This aligns with previous studies suggesting that explicit articulation of diversity principles enhances institutional accountability and reduces variation across sectors (Chen et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, the relatively moderate effect of policy clarity compared to leadership and coordination suggests that formal regulations alone are insufficient to ensure effective multicultural governance. This finding challenge purely legalistic approaches to multiculturalism, which assume that policy codification automatically leads to implementation. Instead, it supports the argument advanced by (Korol & Korol, 2025) that policy effectiveness depends on the interaction between formal

rules and institutional practices. In Medan City, policies provide a normative framework, but their impact is mediated by leadership priorities and coordination mechanisms.

The weakest yet still significant variable, resource availability, provides further insight into the operational constraints of multicultural governance. While resources are essential for sustaining programs, their relatively lower influence suggests that financial and organizational capacity function as enabling rather than determining factors. This finding partially contrasts with studies that emphasize resource constraints as the primary barrier to policy implementation (Chen, 2022). Instead, the results indicate that even with limited resources, effective leadership and coordination can still facilitate multicultural practices.

This divergence highlights an important contribution of the study: in decentralized urban contexts, governance quality may outweigh resource quantity. In other words, how institutions are organized and managed can be more critical than the amount of resources available. This insight adds nuance to existing debates on public policy implementation, particularly in developing countries where resource limitations are common.

More generally, this study adds to the theoretical understanding of governance-oriented multiculturalism. This study places a greater emphasis on institutional factors, rather than traditional identity, recognition, or cultural rights approaches. The study's quantitative evidence of the impact of governance variables links normative theories of multiculturalism (Kymlicka, Parekh) to empirical studies of policy implementation. This is an important contribution, as the majority of work on multiculturalism in Indonesia has been qualitative or sociological in nature.

Beyond its theoretical implications, this research provides several policy recommendations. First, the leadership commitment's impact suggests local governments should focus on political and administrative support for diversity initiatives. This means embedding diversity goals in strategic plans and providing leadership stability. Second, the role of institutional coordination suggests the need for institutional mechanisms to support inter-agency cooperation. The creation of coordination offices or multi-sectoral taskforces could improve policy coordination and integration.

Third, our research on policy clarity suggests local regulations should explicitly state the multicultural principles and guidelines for implementation. This will minimise uncertainty and sectoral inconsistencies. Lastly, while funding is not the decisive factor, sufficient financial resources and capacity-building programs are still critical to support long-term programs.

The report also offers insights in Indonesia's decentralised system. With differences in local governance capacity, central government might need to offer more support to ensure more uniform implementation of multicultural policies. This may involve the establishment of national standards or best practice guidelines for local government, while accommodating local contextual factors.

Notwithstanding its findings, there are limitations to this study. First, the cross-sectional survey design means trends in policy implementation cannot be tracked. Multicultural governance is an evolving process, and future research could use longitudinal designs to study policy development. Second, using perceptions may lead to bias since respondents may not accurately perceive policy outcomes. This could be complemented with qualitative approaches, such as interviews or case studies.

Third, the research is confined to a single urban area, which might restrict its applicability. While Medan City offers an important case study, future studies could

employ comparative approaches to explore patterns and differences among cities in a multicultural setting.

Based on these shortcomings, there are some suggestions for future research. First, comparative research in different places in Indonesia or Southeast Asia would provide more insights into the role of context in policy implementation. Second, future studies could also include community-level views to directly examine the social effects of multicultural policies. Third, more sophisticated quantitative techniques like structural equation modeling (SEM) could be applied to investigate more complex relationships between governance factors.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the governance of multiculturalism in Medan City is largely determined by non-normative policy factors. Leadership commitment is identified as the most significant factor, followed by institution coordination, policy clarity and resource allocation. This suggests that, alongside policy regulations, multicultural governance is also influenced by institutional capacity to coordinate, interpret and implement policy goals.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of governance-focused multiculturalism by connecting normative multicultural theories with empirical policy practices. It underscores the role of institutional factors in achieving multicultural outcomes in a decentralised system. In practice, the results imply that local governments need to enhance leadership commitment, coordination among agencies and policy clarity to promote inclusive governance. But this study is constrained by its cross-sectional nature and the use of perception data, which may not reflect long-term policy outcomes. Longitudinal, mixed methods and comparative studies across jurisdictions should be undertaken to better understand the dynamics of multicultural governance.

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