



The 1st International Conference on HOLISTIC Guidance and Counseling

Edu Consilium : Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Pendidikan Islam

Special Edition, October 2026, pp. 84-99

ISSN: 2548-4311 (Print), ISSN: 2503-3417 (Online)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19105/ec.holistic1.25786>

Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology for Multireligious Harmony among Muslim Minority Junior High School Students

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Abstract

Article History

Received: July 22, 2026

Revised: August 29, 2026

Accepted: October 5, 2026

Keywords:

Local wisdom;
multireligious harmony;
muslim minority;
relational counseling;
tengger

Kata Kunci:

Ekologi konseling;
kearifan lokal;
muslim minoritas;
harmoni multireligius;
tengger

This study develops a culturally grounded counseling ecology from inclusive Islamic education practices in a Muslim-minority junior high school in the Tengger highlands of East Java, Indonesia. It asks how school routines, religious meanings, local cooperation, and conflict response jointly sustain multireligious harmony. The study used a qualitative case study with a phenomenological orientation. Data were generated in December 2024 through in-depth interviews with the principal, an Islamic education teacher who also served as vice-principal for student affairs, one Muslim student, and one Hindu student, supported by observations and school documents. Data were reanalysed through condensation, pattern comparison, and interpretive coding informed by ecological systems theory, multicultural and social justice counseling, and relational-cultural theory. Five mutually reinforcing layers emerged: safeguarded spiritual space, reciprocal moral translation, cooperative encounter, equitable participation, and restorative deliberation. These layers form the Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology (TRCE), a grounded conceptual framework. The framework explains harmony not as the absence of difference, but as an institutional and relational capacity to protect identity, create repeated interdependence, distribute participation fairly, and repair tension through dialogue. The study contributes a counseling-oriented extension to research on inclusive Islamic education and local wisdom. It offers school counselors a grounded conceptual framework for preventive, developmental, and responsive services in religiously diverse schools. Because the evidence comes from one information-rich case and the framework has not been implementation-tested, TRCE requires multi-site, longitudinal, participatory, and implementation studies.

[Penelitian ini mengembangkan ekologi konseling berbasis budaya dari praktik pendidikan Islam inklusif pada sebuah sekolah menengah pertama dengan siswa Muslim sebagai minoritas di dataran tinggi Tengger, Jawa Timur. Penelitian menelaah cara rutinitas sekolah, makna keagamaan, kerja sama lokal, dan respons terhadap konflik secara bersama-sama menjaga harmoni multireligius. Penelitian menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif dengan orientasi fenomenologis. Data diperoleh pada Desember 2024 melalui wawancara mendalam dengan kepala sekolah, guru Pendidikan Agama Islam yang juga menjabat wakil kepala sekolah bidang kesiswaan, seorang siswa Muslim, dan seorang siswa Hindu. Observasi dan dokumen sekolah melengkapi data wawancara. Analisis ulang dilakukan melalui kondensasi, perbandingan pola, dan pengodean interpretatif dengan teori sistem ekologis, konseling

multikultural dan keadilan sosial, serta teori relasional-kultural. Penelitian menemukan lima lapis yang saling menguatkan, yaitu ruang spiritual yang terlindungi, penerjemahan moral timbal balik, perjumpaan kooperatif, partisipasi yang setara, dan musyawarah restoratif. Kelima lapis tersebut membentuk *Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology* (TRCE) sebagai kerangka konseptual berbasis kasus. Kerangka ini menjelaskan harmoni bukan sebagai ketiadaan perbedaan, tetapi sebagai kapasitas institusional dan relasional untuk melindungi identitas, membangun kesalingtergantungan, membagikan partisipasi secara adil, dan memulihkan ketegangan melalui dialog. Kerangka ini memberi dasar kontekstual bagi layanan preventif, perkembangan, dan responsif pada sekolah yang majemuk secara agama, tetapi masih memerlukan uji implementasi dan validasi lintas lokasi].

How to Cite: Nadhif, M., Hakim, L., Buchori, M.S., Zamroni, M. 2026. Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology for Multireligious Harmony among Muslim Minority Junior High School Students. *Edu Consilium: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Pendidikan Islam*, Special Edition, October 2026, Vol 1, pp. 84-99. DOI: 10.19105/ec.holistic1.25786



Edu Consilium : Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Pendidikan Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Madura, Indonesia
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Journal Homepage: <https://ejournal.uinmadura.ac.id/index.php/educons>

Introduction

Religious diversity is a recurring feature of Indonesian schooling, including settings in which one religious group is numerically or institutionally minor. Studies of Muslim-minority education in Indonesia show that students and schools must negotiate religious learning, institutional recognition, and everyday social relations across differences (Hasugian et al., 2023; Pane & Sangrila, 2024; Salmiati et al., 2023). These studies do not imply that exclusion is inevitable. Rather, they identify conditions that require empirical examination, such as unequal recognition, limited accommodation, pressure to conform, or uncertainty about conflict response. These conditions are directly relevant to guidance and counseling because belonging, identity safety, peer relations, help-seeking, and access to developmental opportunities are counseling concerns, not only curricular or religious-education concerns (Ratts et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2022). In a religiously diverse school, counseling therefore extends beyond responding to individual problems after they appear. It also examines how relationships, routines, participation structures, and institutional supports either reduce or reproduce developmental risk. This broader concern is also consistent with multicultural and civic-education perspectives that link diversity, recognition, and democratic participation in educational settings (Banks, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

This issue becomes especially salient for Muslim students who live and learn as a numerical minority. Indonesian studies of Muslim-minority education document the challenge of sustaining religious learning while participating fully in socially diverse environments (Hasugian et al., 2023; Pane et al., 2024; Pane & Sangrila, 2024; Salmiati et al., 2023). A minority setting therefore reverses assumptions that often remain implicit in Muslim-majority educational contexts. Religious education must strengthen conviction without encouraging social withdrawal; school leadership must protect religious rights without turning difference into spectacle; and guidance personnel must support intergroup relationships without erasing theological boundaries. These are counseling questions because they concern adjustment, belonging, agency, peer connection, conflict competence, and access to support across the student's everyday ecology. Related scholarship on minority Muslim education and inclusive Islamic education likewise emphasizes the need to sustain religious identity while maintaining constructive participation in plural environments (Arifin, 2019; Manshuruddin, 2022; Purnomo & Solikhah, 2021; Wahyudi, 2020; Yusuf, 2014).

SMP Negeri 1 Tosari offers an analytically valuable case. The school is located in the Tengger highlands of Pasuruan, East Java, within a community in which Hindu traditions are highly visible and Muslim students form a minority at school. This article is a secondary interpretive analysis of the complete qualitative dataset originally generated for the first author's dissertation on inclusive

Islamic education in the same school. That earlier analysis identified a stable pattern of harmonious relations supported by separate worship facilities, open religious teaching, weekly gotong royong, nondiscriminatory extracurricular participation, and deliberative conflict management. Those findings established the educational significance of inclusion, but they did not explain how these practices function together as developmental supports within guidance and counseling. The present reanalysis therefore changes the analytical question, not the empirical site: it asks what relational mechanisms connect those practices to identity safety, belonging, agency, intergroup competence, and repair.

The distinction is important. An educational model may identify programs, values, actors, and institutional arrangements, whereas a counseling framework must clarify the mechanisms through which those arrangements shape students' developmental experience. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory directs attention to reciprocal relations between the developing person and nested environments (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Relational-cultural theory explains growth through connections marked by mutual empathy, authenticity, and empowerment (Jordan, 2017). The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies require counselors to connect self-awareness and cultural knowledge with action at interpersonal, institutional, community, and policy levels (Ratts et al., 2016). Read together, these perspectives show why multireligious harmony is a counseling problem: students' identities, relationships, help-seeking, participation, and responses to conflict are produced within environments that counselors are expected to assess, coordinate, and advocate within, not merely observe.

Recent research confirms the value of local culture in sustaining interreligious relations. Pajariantanto et al., (2022) showed that kinship, togetherness, and culturally embedded resilience supported religious moderation in plural families and communities. Agung, Nasih, et al., (2024); Agung, Suradarma, et al., (2024) found that local wisdom functioned as cultural capital for interfaith communication in East Java. Keban et al., (2024b) described ancestral guidance as an ethical vocabulary for speech, action, and religious moderation in Lamaholot society. These studies locate harmony in lived practices rather than abstract declarations. Yet most examine communities, families, or public rituals. Less is known about how local moral resources become a coherent counseling ecology inside a public school. This pattern is also reflected in Indonesian scholarship that connects local wisdom with religious tolerance (Dhani, 2023).

Studies in *Edu Consilium* demonstrate that culturally grounded guidance can be translated into practical services. Ahsan et al., (2021) developed career guidance from the Tidore principle of *toma loa se banari*. Jannah, (2022) showed how Madurese *macapat* could be internalised through group guidance. Fajriani et al., (2025) connected counselors' self-advocacy with local cultural values, while Nuryono, (2024) illustrated the importance of contextual adaptation in adolescent counseling. Together, these works support the principle that local knowledge should not be treated as decorative content. It can organise the goals, language, relationships, and methods of counseling. Nevertheless, the journal's existing discussion has not formulated a schoolwide counseling ecology for multireligious harmony in a Muslim-minority context.

The research gap can be condensed into three connected problems. First, Muslim-minority and inclusive Islamic education studies explain curriculum, institutional accommodation, religious moderation, and teacher strategy, but rarely specify the preventive, developmental, and responsive counseling mechanisms through which these arrangements affect belonging, identity safety, agency, and conflict competence (Hasugian et al., 2023; Pane & Sangrila, 2024; Salmiati et al., 2023). Second, research on local wisdom and culturally grounded counseling shows that local values can support interfaith relations and counseling practice, but it seldom maps how physical space, moral language, repeated cooperation, access to opportunities, and conflict response operate as one coordinated school ecology (Agung, Nasih, et al., 2024; Keban et al., 2024; Pajariantanto et al., 2022). Third, the earlier Tosari analysis identified inclusive educational practices but did not explain the mechanisms linking them, their counseling functions, the risks attached to each practice, or how counselors might translate them into a coherent whole-school framework. These three gaps align directly with the present research questions and motivate the reconstruction of TRCE.

This article addresses those gaps by proposing the Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology (TRCE) as a conceptual framework grounded in one information-rich case. The term Tengger identifies the cultural setting rather than essentialising all Tengger people. Relational refers to the central proposition that harmony develops through repeated, equitable, and repairable connections. Counseling ecology refers to coordinated supports distributed across physical space, religious learning, shared activity, student participation, and conflict response. The framework comprises five layers: safeguarded spiritual space, reciprocal moral translation, cooperative encounter, equitable participation, and restorative deliberation. TRCE differs from the earlier inclusive-education model of the Tosari case in four respects: it explains mechanisms rather than only listing practices; connects those mechanisms to developmental counseling outcomes; explicitly identifies risks, power, and safeguards; and translates the findings into functions that counselors can assess and coordinate. Because the framework has not undergone implementation testing or external validation, it is presented consistently as a grounded conceptual framework rather than a validated counseling model.

The study asks two questions. First, what relational and institutional mechanisms allow a Muslim-minority public school in Tengger to sustain multireligious harmony? Second, how can those mechanisms be reconstructed as a culturally grounded counseling ecology? Its purpose is to reinterpret existing qualitative data through counseling theories and formulate a transferable conceptual proposition for religiously diverse schools. The contribution is therefore not a claim that one case supplies a universal formula or a validated intervention. It is a grounded explanation of how identity protection, moral dialogue, common work, equitable access, and fair repair may operate as an integrated counseling ecology.

Method

This study employed a qualitative case study with a phenomenological orientation. The case-study component bounded the inquiry to one public junior high school, its Muslim-minority configuration, and the institutional practices through which students of different religions experienced school life. The phenomenological orientation refers to the interpretive attention given to how participants understood recognition, religious practice, cooperation, participation, and disagreement. It is therefore not presented as a separate transcendental or descriptive phenomenological methodology. The case design located participants' meanings within school routines, facilities, and leadership arrangements, while the phenomenological orientation kept the analysis attentive to lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The site was SMP Negeri 1 Tosari, Pasuruan, in the Tengger highlands of East Java. Four participants were purposively selected from the original dissertation dataset because each represented a strategically different position in the case: the principal represented policy and institutional arrangements; the Islamic education teacher, who also served as vice-principal for student affairs, represented religious learning and student-development practice; one Muslim student represented the minority religious experience; and one Hindu student represented the majority religious group at school. Selection required direct involvement in, or direct experience of, the practices analysed in this article. The small sample was intended for information-rich role comparison rather than demographic representation or saturation across the whole school. A school counselor was not included because the original dissertation sampled participants to study inclusive Islamic education, before TRCE had been conceptualised as a counseling framework. Counseling personnel appeared in participants' descriptions of conflict handling, but were not interviewed directly. This absence is treated as a limitation of the secondary reanalysis and a priority for subsequent validation studies.

Data were generated in December 2024 through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant direct observation, and document review. Interview topics included the rationale for inclusive education, access to worship, religious teaching, extracurricular participation, gotong royong, peer relationships, and conflict management. Observation focused on physical religious facilities, ordinary cross-religious interaction, shared activities, participation practices, and visible

school norms; the researcher observed these settings without directing the activities being observed. Documents reviewed included materials describing the school vision, student-affairs arrangements, and school programs. They were used to corroborate institutional claims, identify how inclusion was formally represented, and compare reported practices with observable arrangements. The present article reanalysed the complete dissertation dataset rather than collecting new data. The original fieldwork followed voluntary participation and confidentiality, and this secondary analysis used only de-identified material from that dataset, with no new participant contact or new identifiable data. No separate ethics approval number for secondary publication is reported because none was available in the study records used for this reanalysis; accordingly, the article does not claim a new intervention or a new round of participant consent.

Analysis followed four iterative movements adapted from Miles et al., (2020): data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. The path from raw material to TRCE was made explicit. First, interview statements, observation notes, and document information were condensed into action-oriented units such as protecting worship, teaching shared moral meanings from different traditions, working together, opening activities to all students, listening to affected parties, and deliberating. Second, first-cycle codes were compared across participant positions and data sources. Third, second-cycle pattern coding grouped recurrent codes by counseling function: identity safety, meaning-making, relational contact, distributive inclusion, and relational repair. Fourth, these functional categories were interpreted as five linked layers: safeguarded spiritual space, reciprocal moral translation, cooperative encounter, equitable participation, and restorative deliberation. Finally, the five layers were integrated into the TRCE conceptual framework by examining how one layer enabled, constrained, or repaired another. For example, reports of a mushala and pura plus faith-specific instruction were coded as recognition of religious practice, grouped under identity safety, and reconstructed as safeguarded spiritual space. Negative-case questions were used throughout to test whether accommodation could become separation, cooperation could reproduce dominance, or deliberation could remain adult-controlled. A component was retained only when supported by more than one participant position or data source.

Theoretical integration occurred after inductive coding. Ecological systems theory was used to examine person-environment reciprocity. Relational-cultural theory clarified mutual empathy, authenticity, and growth-fostering connection. Multicultural and social justice counseling competencies informed attention to counselor awareness, worldview, relationships, advocacy, and institutional action. Intergroup contact theory helped explain why common goals, cooperation, equal status, and authority support matter (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006a, 2006b). These frameworks functioned as interpretive tools rather than predetermined categories. The distinction between first-cycle and pattern-level coding was also informed by qualitative coding guidance (Saldaña, 2021).

Credibility was strengthened through source and method triangulation, comparison of Muslim and Hindu student accounts, and alignment between reported practices and observed or documented arrangements. An audit trail connected raw statements, first-cycle codes, pattern categories, the five layers, and the final framework. Reflexivity was especially important because the original inquiry was framed from Islamic education and the first author entered the reanalysis with prior familiarity with the site and its inclusive-education interpretation. That position could privilege Islamic educational categories or read accommodation as inherently benevolent. To reduce this risk, the reanalysis deliberately compared Muslim and Hindu accounts, used negative-case questions, required cross-source support for each retained layer, separated inductive coding from later theoretical integration, and examined recognition, agency, participation, and power rather than assuming inclusion from institutional intent. Transferability rests on thick description of mechanisms rather than representativeness. Dependability rests on the transparent analytical sequence. Confidentiality and voluntary participation guided the original fieldwork, and role labels are used throughout the article.

Result

The analysis produced five interdependent layers. The layers are empirical reconstructions supported by converging interview, observation, and document evidence, while their counseling labels and proposed relationships are the researchers' interpretive contribution. No single layer adequately explained harmony. Physical accommodation without relational contact could produce parallel lives; shared activity without identity protection could demand assimilation; moral teaching without equitable participation could remain rhetorical; and open participation without a credible repair process could fail when tension emerged. Harmony appeared more durable when protection, interpretation, encounter, participation, and repair reinforced one another.

The first layer, safeguarded spiritual space, concerned material and symbolic recognition. Empirical evidence converged around the school's provision of a *mushala* for Muslim students, a *pura* for Hindu students, and religious instruction according to students' beliefs. The Muslim student associated the *mushala* with being able to maintain prayer comfortably, while the Hindu student's account supported the parallel importance of access to the *pura* and appropriate religious teaching. Observation of the religious facilities and school information about faith-specific arrangements corroborated these accounts. The interpretive step was to understand this reciprocal provision as more than infrastructure: it reduced the need for either group to repeatedly negotiate the legitimacy of its religious identity.

This layer served a counseling function because identity safety precedes honest participation. Students who expect ridicule, coercion, or institutional neglect may conceal important parts of themselves. Concealment can weaken belonging and make counseling disclosure more difficult. By normalising distinct worship needs, the school reduced the need for students to negotiate legitimacy repeatedly. The environment carried part of the counseling work. It communicated, before any individual session, that difference could be named without penalty.

Safeguarding did not mean collapsing religions into a common doctrine. The school protected boundaries while locating both traditions within an equal institutional frame. This distinction was visible in participants' emphasis that no student was compelled to follow another religion. The result was differentiated inclusion: students could belong together without becoming religiously identical. The finding warns counselors against approaches that celebrate unity by avoiding substantive difference. Silence may look peaceful but can leave minority needs unrecognised.

The second layer, reciprocal moral translation, emerged from participant accounts of religious teaching. Muslim students encountered *ukhuwah insaniyah*, or human fraternity, while Hindu students encountered *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasises harmony with the divine, other people, and nature. The empirical point is that the school retained distinct religious vocabularies while directing them toward relational conduct such as cooperation, care, and respect. The interpretive contribution is the concept of reciprocal moral translation: different traditions provide internally credible reasons for shared ethical action without being treated as theologically interchangeable.

Reciprocal moral translation differs from generic tolerance instruction. Generic instruction often tells students to respect difference without giving them culturally meaningful reasons or practices. Translation begins within each community's moral vocabulary and then identifies relational implications that can be recognised across communities. A Muslim student can cooperate because human fraternity is religiously meaningful. A Hindu student can protect relationships and the environment because harmony is integral to *Tri Hita Karana*. The shared action does not require a shared theology.

For counseling, this layer offers a language for values clarification and perspective taking. Counselors can invite students to articulate how their own traditions understand dignity, responsibility, forgiveness, or care. They can then facilitate comparison without ranking beliefs. Such dialogue treats spiritual identity as a resource rather than a problem to be neutralised. It also protects against superficial multiculturalism in which counselors learn facts about groups but do not engage the meanings that guide students' choices.

The third layer, cooperative encounter, was most visible in weekly *gotong royong* and other shared activities. Participant accounts described Muslim and Hindu students cleaning and caring for the school together, and observation of ordinary shared activity supported the pattern of routine cooperation. Similar cross-religious participation appeared in scouting, arts, sport, and science activities. These data were coded as repeated cooperative contact because students encountered one another as contributors to common outcomes rather than merely as members of different religious groups.

Participants did not describe cooperation as a special interfaith ceremony. Its routine character was important. High-profile harmony events can produce symbolic consensus while leaving everyday peer networks unchanged. *Gotong royong* created low-stakes contact over time. Students could observe reliability, exchange help, and revise assumptions through action. This finding accords with contact theory: interaction is more likely to improve relations when status is relatively equal, goals are shared, cooperation is required, and authorities provide support.

The school did not rely on proximity alone. Students from different religions may occupy the same classroom yet remain socially separate. Cooperative encounter turned proximity into reciprocal experience. In guidance terms, these routines are better understood as naturally occurring developmental contexts with counseling relevance, not as formal group-counseling interventions designed or delivered by a counselor. They created opportunities to practise communication, task coordination, responsibility, and empathy. Counselors can build on such contexts through preparation, reflection, mixed-group participation, rotating responsibilities, and monitoring for unequal labour or informal exclusion.

The fourth layer, equitable participation, concerned access to extracurricular and developmental opportunities. Student accounts indicated that scouting, traditional dance, sport, and science groups were open regardless of religion, while program information supported the existence of shared student-development spaces. The empirical finding is therefore not simply that students interacted politely, but that opportunities for participation and visible contribution were described as religiously open. The counseling interpretation is distributive: belonging is tested through who can develop talent, represent the school, lead peers, and enter valued networks, not only through attitudes of tolerance.

Equitable participation extended the model from interpersonal tolerance to distributive justice. A school may maintain polite relations while reproducing inequality through leadership appointments, schedules, uniforms, food practices, or celebration calendars. The Tosari case showed an effort to make student-development spaces jointly owned. Muslim and Hindu students worked toward goals that were not defined by religious membership. They encountered one another through competence and contribution, which widened the basis of recognition.

For counselors, this layer requires advocacy and data awareness. Counselors should examine participation patterns, not only respond to complaints. Useful questions include whether minority students join preferred activities, hold leadership roles, receive schedule accommodations, and feel safe declining religiously incompatible practices. Universal access may require targeted support. A student who has technically been invited may still need information, encouragement, peer accompaniment, or negotiation with adults.

The fifth layer, restorative deliberation, described the school's response to potential conflict. Participants reported that religion-related conflict was rare, but they also described a *musyawarah* process involving guidance personnel, the homeroom teacher, and relevant parties when problems occurred. Their accounts emphasised listening, empathy, open communication, and a fair solution. The empirical evidence therefore lies in the reported existence and expected use of a deliberative response pathway; the restorative interpretation is the researchers' explanation of how that pathway can protect voice, accountability, and continued relationship after tension.

Musyawarah functioned as relational repair. It was not simply a meeting to determine who violated a rule. It created a structured opportunity to hear different accounts, identify harm, clarify misunderstanding, and restore workable relationships. The involvement of guidance personnel located conflict within student development rather than punishment alone. Fairness was described

through openness and inclusion of affected parties, although the case also indicates the need for stronger student voice in future practice.

The five layers were assembled into the Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology as a conceptual framework, not a validated intervention model. The sequence is analytical rather than rigid. Safeguarded spiritual space supports identity security. Reciprocal moral translation supplies culturally credible reasons for mutual care. Cooperative encounter turns values into repeated shared experience. Equitable participation converts interpersonal acceptance into access and agency. Restorative deliberation provides a pathway for repairing strain and returning to shared life with improved relational knowledge. Feedback can move in both directions: successful repair can strengthen trust in shared activities, while unequal participation can weaken safety and moral dialogue. These proposed connections are grounded in the case and require testing in later implementation research.

Table 1 summarises the model. Each layer contains a school practice, a counseling mechanism, an intended developmental outcome, and a risk that requires monitoring. The risk column is essential. Local wisdom and religious language are not inherently inclusive. They become counseling resources only when students can interpret them, participation is voluntary and equitable, and power differences remain open to review.

Table 1. The Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology

Layer	Observed practice	Counseling mechanism	Developmental outcome	Risk to monitor
Safeguarded spiritual space	Mushala, pura, faith-specific instruction	Identity safety and institutional recognition	Belonging and disclosure	Symbolic equality without equal access
Reciprocal moral translation	Ukhuwah insaniyah and Tri Hita Karana	Values clarification and perspective taking	Empathy without identity erasure	False theological equivalence
Cooperative encounter	Weekly gotong royong and mixed activities	Repeated interdependence and contact	Trust and relational competence	Coercion or unequal labour
Equitable participation	Open extracurricular and leadership opportunities	Advocacy, agency, distributive inclusion	Visible contribution and wider networks	Formal access with hidden barriers
Restorative deliberation	Musyawarah involving counselor and relevant parties	Voice, accountability, and relational repair	Conflict competence and renewed trust	Forced reconciliation or weak safeguarding



Figure 1. Conceptual flow of the Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology

Feedback across the five layers builds identity safety, relational competence, belonging, and multireligious harmony.

Discussion

The central finding is that multireligious harmony at SMP Negeri 1 Tosari was sustained through an ecology rather than a single tolerance program. This advances the earlier inclusive-education analysis of the same case by moving from a descriptive inventory of practices to an explanatory counseling framework. The earlier analysis identified worship facilities, religious teaching, gotong royong, open extracurricular participation, and deliberative conflict management.

TRCE adds the mechanism level: those practices are interpreted respectively as identity protection, moral translation, cooperative contact, distributive inclusion, and relational repair. It further identifies risks and power conditions attached to each layer and specifies how counselors can assess their connections. The novelty therefore lies not in claiming new field practices, but in reconstructing existing empirical practices into an integrated, testable counseling ecology.

This ecological account extends Bronfenbrenner's insight that development occurs through reciprocal processes between persons and environments. In the Tosari case, the relevant microsystems included classroom, worship space, extracurricular groups, and counseling encounters. Their influence depended on mesosystem connections. Religious teaching became more credible because it aligned with gotong royong. Equal facilities reinforced the message of equal participation. Conflict deliberation protected relationships formed in shared activity. A counselor working only inside an office would touch one microsystem but miss the connections that sustain or weaken belonging.

TRCE therefore positions the school counselor as an ecological coordinator rather than only a provider of office-based remedial services. Conventional counseling functions such as individual counseling, group counseling, assessment, and crisis response remain important, but TRCE extends the counselor's field of attention to the conditions that shape whether students need, trust, or can benefit from those services. The counselor is expected to consult teachers, review participation patterns, facilitate student voice, examine the inclusiveness of routines and schedules, coordinate preventive activities, support fair conflict pathways, and connect school practice with family and community resources while maintaining professional boundaries. This shift is consistent with the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, which place intervention at intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, community, and policy levels (Ratts et al., 2016). TRCE thus does not replace conventional guidance and counseling; it broadens its unit of analysis from the individual student to the relationships and institutional arrangements that shape student development. This broader orientation is compatible with culturally responsive counseling approaches that connect client experience with social and cultural context (Kim & Park, 2022).

The first layer clarifies the relation between inclusion and identity boundaries. Some approaches assume that harmony requires minimising visible religious difference. The case suggests the opposite. Separate, fairly supported worship spaces reduced competition because students did not need to struggle for recognition. This finding resonates with research showing that local and religious identities can support tolerance when institutions frame them through reciprocity rather than dominance (Pajarianto et al., 2022). Recognition created a secure basis for contact.

Yet physical symmetry should not be romanticised. Two facilities can exist while differences in quality, access, scheduling, or symbolic prestige persist. Counselors and leaders must ask students how provision is experienced. They should examine whether worship schedules conflict with instruction, whether students can request accommodation without embarrassment, and whether facilities carry equal institutional care. Identity safety is an experienced condition, not a photograph of infrastructure.

The second layer contributes the concept of reciprocal moral translation. Agung, Nasih, et al., (2024); Agung, Suradarma, et al., (2024) described local wisdom as cultural capital in interfaith communication. TRCE specifies a school mechanism through which that capital can circulate. *Ukhuwah insaniyah* and *Tri Hita Karana* allow participants to enter dialogue from within their traditions. The approach avoids two errors: imposing one religion's vocabulary on all students and reducing ethical dialogue to culturally thin slogans.

The counselor's task is not to declare theological equivalence. It is to facilitate accurate listening and identify relational commitments that can support shared school life. This requires spiritual humility, collaboration with qualified religious educators, and clear professional boundaries. A counselor may ask how a belief guides responses to a peer in difficulty, but should not adjudicate doctrine. Where a practice conflicts with student rights or welfare, cultural respect must be joined with ethical scrutiny.

Reciprocal translation also deepens compassion. Compassion is sometimes presented as an individual disposition. The case shows it can be institutionally rehearsed. Students learn to connect moral language with concrete acts: sharing work, making room, listening during disagreement, and supporting another group's religious needs. These acts provide observable material for group reflection. Counselors can ask what made cooperation possible, whose contribution was overlooked, and how the group handled discomfort. Reflection converts activity into transferable relational learning.

The third layer explains why gotong royong carried more developmental force than one-off celebration. Repeated cooperation gave students evidence about one another. It created what Pettigrew and Tropp, (2006a) describe as conditions through which contact reduces prejudice, especially knowledge, anxiety reduction, and empathy. The ordinary nature of the task lowered the pressure to perform harmony. Students could build trust through small, verifiable contributions.

Gotong royong is often praised as inherently Indonesian and therefore inherently harmonious. Such claims risk generalisation. Cooperative work can reproduce gendered labour, seniority, religious dominance, or coercion. TRCE treats local wisdom as a design resource whose consequences must be assessed. Counselors should observe who assigns tasks, who performs undesirable work, whose suggestions are heard, and whether refusal is possible. A culturally familiar practice becomes growth-fostering when mutuality is actively protected.

This critical stance differentiates the model from folkloric uses of culture. Ahsan et al., (2021) and Jannah, (2022) demonstrate that local principles can be translated into structured guidance content. TRCE adds that implementation requires attention to power, access, and evaluation. Cultural relevance is not achieved merely by naming a tradition. The tradition must shape the intervention's relationships and goals, and students must be able to contest how it is used.

The fourth layer connects belonging to participation. Students experience inclusion through access to roles, not only friendly attitudes. Equitable extracurricular participation expanded cross-religious networks and allowed students to be recognised through talent. This finding adds a distributive dimension to relational-cultural theory. Growth-fostering connection is difficult when one group controls valued opportunities. Mutual empathy must be accompanied by structures that make contribution visible and agency possible.

School counselors can operationalise this insight through an inclusion audit. Participation data can be disaggregated by religion and gender while preserving privacy. Student focus groups can explore hidden barriers. Activity schedules can be checked against worship and holy days. Leadership selection can be reviewed for transparency. The goal is not mechanical demographic balance in every small group. It is to identify patterns showing that some students face predictable exclusion.

Equity also requires distinguishing equal treatment from responsive support. Giving every student the same schedule may disadvantage those with particular worship obligations. Opening an activity to everyone may not help a minority student who anticipates rejection. Counselors can provide anticipatory guidance, peer allies, or consultation with activity supervisors. Such action supports agency without casting minority students as deficient.

The fifth layer situates conflict within the ecology rather than outside it. A harmonious school is not one in which disagreement never occurs. Claims of no conflict may signal trust, but they may also indicate silence, avoidance, or unequal power. TRCE therefore defines harmony as the capacity to address tension without humiliation, coercion, or relational abandonment. *Musyawarah* is valuable when it gives affected students voice, clarifies impact, and produces accountable repair.

The model's restorative interpretation parallels counseling's concern with meaning and relationship. Punitive responses may stop behaviour while leaving fear and stereotypes intact. Restorative deliberation asks what happened, who was affected, what each person needs, and how trust can be rebuilt. Counselors can prepare participants separately, assess safety, prevent forced reconciliation, and follow up after agreements. Serious harassment or violence still requires safeguarding and formal accountability. *Musyawarah* must not replace protection.

The case also reveals a productive relationship between Islamic education and multicultural counseling. Inclusive Islamic education contributed *ukhuwah insaniyah*, compassion, justice, and

deliberation. The Hindu setting contributed *Tri Hita Karana* and the lived norm of coexistence. Counseling theory supplied concepts for identity safety, mutual empathy, contact, advocacy, and repair. None of these knowledge systems was sufficient alone. The framework emerged through their intersection.

This intersection supports the conference theme of local wisdom, indigenous spirit, and multicultural compassion. Local wisdom appears in gotong royong, *musyawarah*, and the Tengger setting's everyday coexistence. Indigenous spirit appears not as a static cultural object but as locally authorised ways of understanding harmonious relations. Multicultural compassion appears in the movement from recognition to shared action and repair. The three elements form a practical sequence rather than separate topics.

TRCE can also be translated into the four components of comprehensive guidance and counseling used in Indonesian schools: basic services, responsive services, individual planning, and system support (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014). Basic services can use reciprocal moral translation and guided reflection on cooperative encounters to develop perspective taking, respect, communication, and conflict competence for all students. Responsive services can use restorative deliberation when tension, exclusion, identity strain, or help-seeking problems emerge. Individual planning can help students negotiate participation, leadership, educational choices, and religious obligations without losing access to developmental opportunities. System support can operationalise safeguarded spiritual space and equitable participation through consultation, inclusion audits, coordination with teachers and leaders, review of schedules and facilities, family-community collaboration, and referral or safeguarding procedures. The five TRCE layers therefore cut across the four service components: each layer identifies an ecological function, while the national BK structure identifies how counselors can deliver or coordinate that function in practice.

A whole-school implementation could begin with ecological assessment rather than immediate branding of the framework. Counselors can map worship access, curriculum messages, shared routines, participation patterns, and conflict pathways, then compare that map with confidential student accounts, especially minority experiences. The next step is co-design with religious teachers, student leaders, homeroom teachers, families, and relevant community figures. Co-design reduces the risk of extracting local values from their social owners. Service alignment then places specific activities within basic services, responsive services, individual planning, or system support. Because TRCE has not yet been implementation-tested, these steps are proposed as an operational pathway for future practice and evaluation rather than as evidence of proven effectiveness.

Evaluation should use both process and outcome indicators. Process indicators include access to facilities, frequency and quality of mixed-group cooperation, participation patterns, student voice in deliberation, and follow-up after conflict. Outcomes include school belonging, identity safety, cross-group friendship, willingness to seek help, perceived fairness, and confidence in resolving disagreement. Qualitative narratives remain important because stable averages may hide minority harm. A mixed evaluation design would be appropriate in later studies.

The framework has implications for counselor education. Trainees need more than knowledge of cultural categories. They need practice in cultural humility, spiritual assessment, power analysis, facilitation across difference, and institutional advocacy. Case-based learning can ask trainees to distinguish respectful accommodation from segregation, cooperation from coerced labour, and deliberation from pressure to reconcile. Supervision should examine counselors' religious positions and assumptions, especially where one identity is socially dominant. Critical-reflective and democratic-education scholarship likewise stresses the need to examine power, positionality, and the social conditions of inclusion rather than treating diversity as a set of static cultural facts (Gorski & Dalton, 2020; Zembylas, 2021). Attention to student well-being and help-seeking is also consistent with international concern for adolescent mental health and supportive educational environments (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2021).

TRCE may transfer to other plural schools at the level of function, not cultural form. A school outside Tengger may not use the same concepts or rituals. It still needs ways to protect spiritual

identity, translate moral commitments, create cooperative contact, distribute opportunity, and repair harm. Local communities should name the forms through participatory inquiry. This functional transfer avoids copying Tengger culture while preserving the framework's explanatory logic.

Several alternative explanations delimit the present interpretation. Harmony may partly reflect broader Tengger community norms rather than school practices alone. Participants may have presented socially desirable accounts because tolerance is institutionally valued. Rare reported conflict may indicate successful prevention, limited disclosure, or both. The small sample may omit students who feel excluded, and the absence of a directly interviewed school counselor limits claims about counseling practice. The study also cannot isolate the causal effect of any single layer. These considerations do not invalidate the framework, but they restrict it to an analytically grounded proposition that requires external testing.

Future research should conduct multi-site comparisons across Muslim-minority and Muslim-majority schools. Longitudinal designs could examine whether participation in the ecology predicts belonging, empathy, and conflict competence. Participatory action research could give students authority to refine the layers and indicators. Quantitative scale development could test the model's dimensionality, while social network analysis could identify whether cooperative activities actually widen cross-religious ties. Intervention studies might compare routine cooperation with cooperation plus guided reflection.

The framework's strongest theoretical contribution is the proposition that harmony is maintained through linked relational affordances. An affordance is an environmental possibility for action. A *mushala* or *pura* affords identity practice; paired moral concepts afford mutual interpretation; *gotong royong* affords interdependence; open activities afford agency; *musyawarah* affords repair. These possibilities become real only when students perceive them as safe, credible, and fair. Counseling work helps align environmental possibility with lived experience.

This proposition sharpens the novelty relative to the earlier inclusive-education analysis of the Tosari case. The previous analysis identified facilities, cooperation, open religious teaching, extracurricular inclusion, and fair conflict management as educational components. TRCE does not present these same practices as a new discovery. Instead, it reconstructs them into five counseling mechanisms, links those mechanisms to developmental outcomes, makes risks and power visible, and provides a structure for assessment and service coordination. The conceptual advance is therefore explanatory and counseling-oriented rather than programmatic. It remains provisional until tested across sites and through implementation research.

The framework can also be read through a temporal lens. Students do not acquire interreligious competence in one lesson. They encounter the ecology repeatedly across the school year. A new student first notices whether religious identity is materially safe. The student then hears moral language in lessons, tests that language in shared work, seeks a place in extracurricular life, and observes what adults do when disagreement occurs. Each episode updates expectations about the school. When messages remain consistent, trust accumulates. When one layer contradicts another, trust can decline quickly. A school may teach fraternity while denying accommodation, or praise equality while excluding minority students from visible roles. Temporal consistency is therefore an additional condition for the five layers to work.

This temporal reading suggests that counseling evaluation should track critical transitions. Entry into junior high school, the beginning of a religious season, leadership selection, major community ceremonies, and return after a conflict are moments when belonging becomes especially visible. Counselors can gather brief student reflections at those points rather than waiting for an annual climate survey. The resulting information can reveal whether institutional messages are being interpreted as intended. It can also identify students who need targeted support without assuming that every member of a religious minority has the same experience.

Family and community relations form another boundary of the ecology. The school sits within a Tengger social world where religious difference is woven into neighbourhood and kinship relations. Students bring community narratives into school and carry school experiences back home. The framework should therefore include consultation with parents, religious figures, and

cultural leaders, while preserving the school's professional and legal responsibilities. Community involvement is valuable when it increases contextual accuracy and support. It becomes problematic when adults use cultural authority to silence students, disclose confidential information, or impose reconciliation. Counselors must negotiate this boundary carefully.

Digital communication adds a further challenge. Peer relations formed through classroom and gotong royong continue through messaging groups and social media, where tone is harder to interpret and religious content can circulate without context. A school may appear harmonious in person while students encounter stereotypes or provocative material online. TRCE can guide digital preventive services by using the same five functions. Students need safe ways to express identity, skills for interpreting morally charged content, cooperative digital projects, equitable access to group communication, and procedures for repairing online harm. This extension requires empirical study because the original data focused mainly on school-based interaction.

The concept of compassion within TRCE should also be distinguished from pity. Pity places one group in the position of giver and another as dependent recipient. Multicultural compassion recognises vulnerability and dignity on all sides while remaining attentive to unequal power. The provision of a mushala, for example, should not be narrated as generosity from a Hindu majority to Muslims. It is an institutional recognition of students' rights and developmental needs. Likewise, Muslim teachings about fraternity should not position Hindu students as objects of Islamic benevolence. Reciprocal translation makes every tradition a speaking subject and every participant accountable for the quality of shared life.

This distinction has methodological consequences. Researchers studying harmonious communities may unintentionally reproduce majority-centred narratives by interviewing leaders and treating minority agreement as confirmation. The Tosari dataset included students from both religions, which enabled limited comparison, but future research needs a wider range of voices. Quiet students, students who avoid activities, graduates, parents, counselors, and members of smaller religious groups may identify fractures that visible participants overlook. Participatory mapping, anonymous diaries, and student-led focus groups could reduce the pressure to present an ideal school image.

The small number of participants is therefore both a strength and a limitation. It allowed close attention to four strategically different positions and generated a coherent explanatory model. It cannot establish saturation across the whole student population. The model should be treated as analytically grounded, not statistically representative. Its value lies in the clarity of its propositions and their availability for testing. This stance avoids overstating the evidence while preserving the case's capacity to generate theory.

Practical adoption should proceed through adaptation rather than branding. Schools do not need to label every service TRCE. They need to examine whether the five functions are present and connected. A school may already possess effective local practices under different names. Counselors can document those practices, invite students to explain their meanings, and identify missing links. Where no shared work exists, they can co-design one. Where deliberation lacks safety, they can improve preparation and follow-up. Where facilities exist but students feel marginalised, they can investigate the discrepancy between provision and experience.

An implementation team could use a simple cycle each semester. First, listen to students through confidential interviews, group discussion, and participation data. Second, map strengths and risks across the five layers. Third, select one manageable improvement, such as making extracurricular schedules more religiously responsive or adding guided reflection after gotong royong. Fourth, implement the change with clear responsibility. Fifth, review student experience and revise. This cycle keeps the framework responsive and prevents local wisdom from becoming a fixed slogan.

The framework also creates testable propositions. When students perceive spiritual space as safe and fairly supported, they should report stronger identity safety and help-seeking confidence. When reciprocal moral translation accompanies cooperative contact, cross-group empathy should be stronger than after generic tolerance instruction alone. When access to activities is equitable, cross-religious friendship networks should become broader and less segregated. When deliberation

is experienced as procedurally fair, students should show greater willingness to report tension and lower expectations of retaliation. These propositions can guide later quantitative or mixed-method studies.

Measurement will require cultural and ethical care. Existing scales of school belonging, intergroup contact, and procedural justice may supply useful items, but they cannot simply be translated linguistically. Cognitive interviews should examine how students understand terms such as harmony, tolerance, fairness, and safety. In some contexts, students may describe harmony as avoiding open disagreement. In TRCE, harmony includes the ability to voice difference and seek repair. Instruments must capture that distinction or they may reward silence.

Finally, the framework invites a more precise view of indigenous and multicultural counseling. Indigenous grounding does not mean that every local practice should be preserved unchanged. Multicultural commitment does not mean that cultural differences should be treated as equivalent in every ethical respect. Counseling brings a disciplined process of listening, contextual interpretation, rights protection, and outcome review. Local wisdom provides socially meaningful resources. Spiritual traditions provide moral depth. Student experience determines whether their combination is genuinely supportive. TRCE remains viable only when these three sources of authority continue to check one another.

Limitations of the Study

This study has five principal limitations. First, it is based on one information-rich school case and four strategically selected participants, so it does not establish population-level saturation or statistical representativeness. Second, the article is a secondary reanalysis of a dissertation dataset collected for an inclusive-education inquiry; a school counselor was described in the data but was not directly interviewed. Third, socially desirable reporting may have contributed to the low level of conflict described by participants. Fourth, community norms in Tengger may account for part of the observed harmony, so school effects cannot be isolated. Fifth, the proposed relationships among the five TRCE layers have not been tested through intervention, longitudinal, or multi-site research. These limitations require the framework to be treated as a grounded conceptual proposition and define the next stages of validation.

Conclusion

This study reconstructed inclusive education practices at a Muslim-minority public junior high school into the Tengger Relational Counseling Ecology, a grounded conceptual framework rather than a validated intervention model. Its novelty lies in explaining how previously identified school practices can work together through five counseling mechanisms: safeguarded spiritual space protects identity; reciprocal moral translation connects distinct religious meanings to shared relational conduct; cooperative encounter creates repeated interdependence; equitable participation links belonging with access and agency; and restorative deliberation provides a pathway for relational repair. In contrast with the earlier Tosari inclusive-education model, TRCE adds mechanism, developmental outcome, risk, power, and counseling-service implications. For Indonesian practice, the framework can be translated across basic services, responsive services, individual planning, and system support, allowing counselors to work not only with individual problems but also with the school ecology that shapes belonging and help-seeking. The framework remains bounded by one information-rich case, four primary participants, secondary analysis of an existing dataset, and the absence of a directly interviewed school counselor. Future studies should therefore test TRCE through multi-site comparison, direct participation of school counselors and wider student groups, longitudinal and participatory designs, and pilot implementation linked to process and outcome indicators. Schools interested in the framework should adapt the five functions to local cultural forms and evaluate student experience before treating TRCE as an established practice model.

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