

Cultural Resilience and Solidarity: Adaptation Strategies of the Confucian Community in the Face of Oppression

ABSTRACT

This study explores the adaptation strategies employed by the Confucian community in Indonesia during the New Order era in response to systemic discrimination. The aim is to examine how these strategies contributed to the preservation of their cultural and religious identity, fostered solidarity within the community, and promoted interfaith collaboration despite facing repressive government policies. A qualitative research approach was employed, including interviews with community members and key religious organisations such as MAKIN (*Majelis Agama Khonghucu Indonesia*) and MATAKIN (*Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia*), along with archival research. The study identifies three main strategies: active resistance, passive compliance, and network collaboration. Active resistance included public demonstrations and symbolic acts of defiance, while passive compliance involved adapting to discriminatory policies, such as registering as Buddhists on official documents. Network collaboration through interfaith dialogues, particularly with organisations like MAKIN, played a critical role in strengthening social bonds and garnering external support. The findings suggest that these strategies not only allowed the Confucian community to survive under oppressive conditions but also facilitated the long-term regeneration of their cultural and religious identity. The study highlights the significance of interfaith collaboration and cultural resilience in fostering solidarity among minority groups and promoting social harmony. This research contributes uniquely to the field by focusing on the experience of the Confucian community in Indonesia, a topic previously underexplored. It offers new perspectives on the role of interfaith collaboration as an adaptive strategy and provides valuable lessons for other minority groups facing discrimination. The study concludes with policy recommendations for supporting cultural preservation and enhancing inclusivity in contemporary Indonesia.

Keywords: Adaptation strategies; Confucian community; Interfaith collaboration; Minority groups; Systemic discrimination.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as an archipelago rich in cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious diversity, is often considered an example of harmony in pluralism (Sibawaihi, 2022). However, in reality, this diversity is often misunderstood and faces significant challenges, especially in the context of religious and cultural minorities (Kadir, 2019; Syarif, 2018). Discriminatory majority politics frequently affect the religious practices of minority groups in Indonesia (Hamdi, 2018). Political policies that do not always accommodate the needs and aspirations of minorities present unique challenges for these groups in expressing their cultural and religious identities (Finke, Martin, & Fox, 2017). This situation is particularly evident in the history of the Confucian community in Indonesia, which had to adapt and survive amid pressure from the majority. For instance, during the New Order regime, the Confucian community faced restricted access to public religious expressions, which forced them to perform religious rituals in private settings and often excluded them from social and cultural engagements.

Rituals like the Lunar New Year were celebrated discreetly, often within homes or places of worship, to avoid legal repercussions. Data from the Confucian community indicate that more than 60% of its members faced administrative obstacles in accessing public services due to their religious identity being removed from official documents such as identity cards (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*, KTP). According to a report by the Ministry of Religious Affairs during the period, over one million ethnic Chinese were forced to identify their religion as that of the majority to access essential public services (Ahnaf, 2020). This created additional hardships in their daily lives, ranging from education to healthcare. Such conditions fostered social alienation and compelled the Confucian community to continually fight to preserve their identity within a repressive socio-political landscape.

Before the Reform era, the Confucian community in Indonesia experienced various forms of systematic discrimination in both social and bureaucratic aspects. The New Order government, through assimilation policies, sought to erode Chinese cultural and religious identity by banning their religious and cultural practices in public spaces (C. A. Coppel, 2006). One of the most oppressive policies was Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967, which prohibited the public celebration of Chinese religious and cultural traditions and forced Confucians to practise their faith in private. These policies placed significant pressure on the Confucian community to assimilate into Indonesian norms while struggling to maintain their cultural and religious identity. Although the Reform era brought some changes, including the official recognition of Confucianism and the declaration of the Lunar New Year as a national holiday, the legacy of assimilation policies continues to impact the Confucian community today.

Although previous research provides valuable insights into religious continuity under repressive regimes, such as in Central Asia (DeWeese, 2011) or Bulgaria (Karpát, 2004), this study stands out due to its focus on the survival strategies of minority communities in the context of urbanisation in Southeast Asia, a region that remains underexplored. This study complements existing literature by providing an in-depth local case study on the survival strategies of religious minority communities in the context of urbanisation in Southeast Asia. MAKIN in Jakarta serves as a unique model illustrating the interaction between minority

communities, state-led discriminatory policies, and the challenges of urbanisation. Additionally, previous studies have tended to focus on survival phenomena within rural or national contexts, leaving unanswered questions about how religious organisations such as MAKIN could adapt community strategies in urban contexts like Jakarta, which presents unique political, social, and cultural pressures.

This study contributes uniquely to the existing literature by examining how the Indonesian Confucian Religion Council (*Majelis Agama Khonghucu Indonesia*, MAKIN) in Jakarta survived during the New Order regime—a topic and period that previous research has not widely explored. Unlike DeWeese (2011) focus on Soviet Central Asia or Schmuck (2000) study on disaster survival strategies in Bangladesh, this research examines how a minority religious organisation in an urban Southeast Asian context adapted to survive under state-led religious discrimination. Furthermore, while Reeh (2013) explored relational dynamics and religious conversion behaviour, this study delves into the practical, community-based strategies employed by MAKIN to navigate Jakarta's socio-political landscape. In contrast to Derezotes (2009) global perspective on religious resurgence and cooperation, this study provides a deep local analysis of MAKIN's religious practices, community mobilisation, and strategic negotiations with state authorities. Additionally, by addressing the specific challenges faced by MAKIN in the urban environment of Jakarta, this study offers new insights into the intersection of religion, urbanisation, and state repression, making it a significant contribution to understanding religious continuity in Southeast Asia.

This study aims not only to depict the survival strategies of the Confucian community but also to provide a theoretical framework for understanding cultural resilience within urban religious minorities. Practically, the research offers guidance to policymakers in understanding the needs of minority communities under discriminatory pressures. Specifically, this study will explore how MAKIN, as a minority religious organisation, mobilised social and cultural resources to preserve the identity of its community amidst intense political pressures.

The hypothesis of this study posits that the combination of active, passive, and network strategies enabled the Confucian community not only to survive but also to develop adaptive patterns that strengthened their internal solidarity and enhanced inter-community relations. These strategies are also anticipated to result in a model of cultural resilience that could be applied to other urban minority contexts facing similar challenges.

METHOD

This study investigates the survival strategies of the Confucian community during the New Order era, focusing on *Majelis Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* (MAKIN, Indonesian Confucian Religion Council) in Jakarta as the unit of analysis. MAKIN was chosen due to its historical significance as the primary organisation representing the Confucian community in Indonesia and its active role in preserving religious identity amidst socio-political challenges. Jakarta was selected as the research location because of its dual role as the epicentre of governmental power and a hub for the Confucian community, where pressures were most intense.

A qualitative research design was employed to explore the nuanced socio-political pressures faced by the Confucian community and the strategies they

adopted to survive (Maxwell, 2008). The qualitative approach, particularly a case study method, was chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the organisational dynamics, personal experiences, and interactions between minority communities and state policies. This approach was deemed most appropriate to capture the complexity of the topic, which cannot be adequately represented through quantitative methods.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with six key informants, including three religious leaders and three active members of MAKIN, chosen based on their significant roles and direct experiences. The sample size was determined by the principle of data saturation. Secondary data were sourced from government archives, policy documents, organisational records, and academic literature, such as Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967, MAKIN's internal reports, and relevant scholarly articles. These materials provided historical and contextual background to complement primary data.

The data collection process was conducted in three stages. First, semi-structured interviews were carried out to gather insights into informants' personal experiences, organisational strategies, and perceptions of the socio-political environment. Second, direct observations of MAKIN's activities, including religious ceremonies, organisational meetings, and community outreach programmes, were conducted at MAKIN's office in North Jakarta. Finally, an extensive literature review was undertaken to validate and contextualise the findings from interviews and observations.

Data analysis followed a systematic process to align with the research objectives. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and themes, such as active, passive, and network strategies. Data triangulation was applied to enhance validity and reliability by cross-referencing interview accounts with observational data and secondary sources. For example, descriptions of religious practices were compared with MAKIN's records and state policies, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of MAKIN's adaptive strategies during the New Order era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Identity Crisis and Discrimination Against the Chinese-Confucian Community

The history of Confucianism in Indonesia is deeply intertwined with the nation's socio-economic and cultural development. Originating in the 17th century, Confucian values served as a moral compass for the Chinese-Indonesian community, shaping their contributions to trade, education, and the arts. The establishment of organisations like *Khong Kauw Tjong Hwee* (Confucian Society Association) in 1923 in Bandung (Sun, 2020) showcased their growing organisational capacity and cultural pride. These contributions extended to fields such as batik production, traditional Chinese herbal medicine, and trade networks that integrated local economies with global markets (Chia, 2020).

Despite their significant contributions, the Chinese-Confucian community faced systemic discrimination, particularly during the New Order era. Although

Confucianism was formally recognised as one of Indonesia's six official religions through Presidential Decree No. 1 of 1965, this recognition failed to translate into societal acceptance. State policies, such as Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967, prohibited public Confucian practices, relegating rituals to private settings. Similarly, Cabinet Presidium Instruction No. 49/U/IN/8/1967 banned Mandarin and Chinese characters, even within homes. These measures systematically eroded cultural continuity, alienating the community from mainstream society and perpetuating their marginalisation.

Table 1. Discriminatory Policies of the New Order Against the Chinese Community

Policy	Content
Government Regulation No. 10/1959	Prohibited Chinese people from living and conducting business in rural areas, forcing migration to cities.
Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967	Restricted public religious practices and celebrations of Confucianism, confining them to private settings.
Cabinet Presidium Instruction No. 49/1967	Banned the use of Chinese language and characters in public and private spaces.
MPRS Decree No. XXVII/1966	Prohibited traditional Chinese religions in education and culture, leading to the closure of foreign schools.
Cabinet Presidium Circular No. SE06/1967	Mandated assimilation, requiring Chinese-Indonesians to adopt Indonesian names and removing Confucianism from official documents such as ID cards.

During the New Order era, Chinese-Confucian communities in Indonesia faced assimilation pressures that eroded their cultural identity and social status. A policy mandating the adoption of Indonesian names removed visible markers of Chinese heritage, such as replacing "Liu Wei" with "Wibowo." However, this did not foster integration but forced the abandonment of ancestral identities while societal prejudice persisted. The prohibition of Mandarin and Chinese characters disrupted intergenerational linguistic continuity, reducing Chinese language proficiency by 40% between 1965 and 1990 (Kuntjara & Hoon, 2020; Virgosita, 2020). This linguistic suppression weakened cultural value transmission and diminished the communal significance of celebrations like Chinese New Year and Cheng Beng, further disconnecting younger generations from their cultural roots (Finke & Mataic, 2021). Confucianism's exclusion from identity cards compelled adherents to register as Buddhists to access basic services, highlighting systemic alienation. Religious ceremonies were forced into secrecy, isolating the community from broader societal engagement.

The discriminatory policies of the New Order era starkly contradicted the principles enshrined in Indonesia's 1945 Constitution. Article 29 guarantees the right to religious freedom, yet the systemic marginalisation of the Chinese-Confucian community violated this fundamental provision. These inconsistencies undermined Indonesia's foundational principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in

Diversity—Indonesia’s national motto promoting pluralism), which calls for inclusivity and harmony in a multicultural society. Instead of fostering unity, the New Order’s assimilationist policies deepened societal divisions and alienated minority groups.

Despite these challenges, the Chinese-Confucian community displayed extraordinary resilience. Drawing from cultural resilience theories Geertz and adaptive strategies (Scott, 1985), they devised innovative ways to preserve their identity and traditions. Religious leaders conducted private training sessions for clergy, ensuring the transmission of religious knowledge despite public restrictions. Family homes were transformed into spaces for communal worship, fostering a sense of solidarity and continuity within the community. These acts of adaptation not only sustained their faith but also reinforced their collective strength.

To address historical injustices and foster inclusivity, the Indonesian government must take concrete steps to protect minority rights. Strengthening legal protections for all officially recognised religions is essential, with oversight by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to ensure compliance. Incorporating lessons on past discrimination into national educational curricula can raise awareness among future generations, fostering empathy and understanding. Platforms for interfaith dialogue, involving organisations like the Indonesian Council of Churches (PGI) and the Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia (*Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* or MATAKIN), can promote societal cohesion and mutual respect (William & Novanto, 2023).

2. Role of MAKIN in Preserving Religious Identity

The Chinese-Confucian community in Indonesia, particularly during the New Order era, depended heavily on organisations such as MAKIN (*Majelis Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* or the Indonesian Confucian Religious Council) to preserve their cultural and religious identity amidst systemic discrimination. MAKIN Jakarta, as a leading organisation, demonstrated remarkable adaptability by ensuring the continuity of religious practices, fostering solidarity, and safeguarding Confucian traditions despite oppressive policies (Putro, 2021).

State restrictions forced MAKIN to conduct religious activities in private or unconventional spaces. For example, MAKIN Jakarta utilised the Intan Cinema in Karet Sawah during the 1970s as a temporary place of worship. The cinema, borrowed from a community member, was discreetly transformed into a spiritual sanctuary. Worshippers coordinated attendance to avoid detection and brought minimal ceremonial items to maintain secrecy. Djuidahwati, a MAKIN member, shared:

“We conducted worship services privately and celebrated Lunar New Year (Tahun Baru Imlek—a celebration marking the start of the lunar calendar year) in the simplest manner within our homes. Even in secret, these gatherings became a source of spiritual strength.”

In Surabaya, MAKIN disguised religious ceremonies as cultural events in community halls, while in Medan, rotating prayer groups met in private homes to mitigate risks of government intervention. These diverse strategies reflect the

organisation's ingenuity and the community's determination to preserve their faith under difficult circumstances.

MAKIN prioritised the training and education of Confucian clergy to ensure the sustainability of religious practices. Informal training sessions were often held in private homes, with senior religious leaders mentoring prospective clergy in Confucian doctrines and rituals. Djuidahwati recounted:

"With limited resources, we continued to train future religious leaders privately. This was critical to preserving our religious traditions for future generations."

In Bandung, these sessions were integrated into cultural workshops, blending Confucian philosophy with broader discussions on ethics and moral teachings. This approach allowed MAKIN to maintain doctrinal continuity while circumventing state restrictions on formal religious education.

Beyond religious activities, MAKIN provided critical logistical and moral support to its members. In Jakarta, MAKIN collaborated with local Chinese associations to offer legal aid, helping members navigate bureaucratic challenges stemming from the exclusion of Confucianism from official recognition. Partnerships with national organisations like MATAKIN (*Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* or the Supreme Council of Confucian Religion in Indonesia) strengthened advocacy efforts, addressing issues such as the removal of Confucianism from identity cards.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of MAKIN's Strategies

Strategy	Description	Examples
Hidden Worship Practices	Conducting clandestine ceremonies in private or unconventional spaces to avoid government scrutiny.	Intan Cinema in Jakarta, rotating prayer groups in Medan, cultural events in Surabaya.
Educational Efforts	Informal training for clergy and integrating Confucian teachings into disguised cultural events.	Private mentoring in Jakarta, cultural workshops blending philosophy and ethics in Bandung.
Community Support Networks	Providing logistical and moral support through alliances with local and national organisations.	Legal aid in Jakarta, partnerships with MATAKIN, interfaith dialogue initiatives across Indonesia.

The adaptive strategies employed by MAKIN ensured the survival of Confucian traditions during the New Order era, but the long-term effects of systemic discrimination persist (Reeh, 2013). Generational gaps in cultural knowledge and language proficiency remain significant challenges. The suppression of Mandarin and the restriction of cultural celebrations, such as *Tahun Baru Imlek* and *Cheng Beng* (*ancestral worship*), created a disconnect between older and younger generations. Addressing these gaps requires targeted revitalisation initiatives to rebuild the community's cultural and religious identity. MAKIN's experiences offer critical lessons for Indonesia's multicultural society. Systemic discrimination not only undermines minority communities but also weakens national cohesion. By

recognising and addressing historical injustices, Indonesia can foster a more inclusive and harmonious society.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs must prioritise comprehensive recognition and equal treatment for all officially recognised religions, including Confucianism. This entails reinstating Confucianism in official documents and public services, ensuring the community's rightful status within the national framework is restored. Such measures would address longstanding inequalities and provide a solid foundation for the preservation of Confucian heritage. Cultural preservation requires government funding to support revitalisation programmes aimed at sustaining the Confucian community's heritage. Initiatives such as Mandarin language classes, the restoration of temples, and the organisation of Confucian festivals are pivotal in safeguarding cultural identity and ensuring intergenerational continuity. These efforts would bridge the gaps caused by historical suppression and reconnect younger generations with their cultural roots.

Education plays a crucial role in fostering societal awareness and empathy. National curricula should include lessons on historical discrimination, enabling future generations to understand the struggles and resilience of minority communities such as the Chinese-Confucians. By integrating this history into educational frameworks, Indonesia can nurture a more inclusive and equitable society. Interfaith collaboration is essential to building mutual respect and societal cohesion. Collaborative platforms involving organisations like MAKIN and the Indonesian Council of Churches (PGI) can foster dialogue, promote understanding, and strengthen the bonds among Indonesia's diverse religious communities. These initiatives would not only bridge cultural divides but also reinforce the nation's commitment to pluralism.

The resilience demonstrated by MAKIN during the New Order era exemplifies the strength of the Chinese-Confucian community in the face of systemic oppression. Through hidden worship practices, informal educational efforts, and robust support networks, the community managed to preserve its traditions and values. However, resilience alone cannot compensate for the systemic failures that necessitated such survival strategies. Moving forward, Indonesia must actively address the root causes of historical injustices and ensure the protection of minority rights. Embracing its multicultural identity, the nation should uphold constitutional principles and foster inclusivity, creating an environment where all cultural and religious identities can thrive without fear or marginalisation. By doing so, Indonesia can fully realise the true spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), strengthening its societal fabric and ensuring that every citizen feels valued and secure in their identity.

3. Adaptation Strategies of the Confucian Community in Indonesia

This research identifies three main adaptation strategies employed by the Confucian community in Indonesia during the New Order era to address discriminatory pressures (Wibowo & Thung, 2010). The first strategy is active resistance, exemplified by the large-scale demonstrations in 1966 as a protest against the removal of Confucianism from official documents. Additionally, the limited practice of religious rituals served as a symbolic form of resistance to maintain their cultural identity under strict restrictions. The second strategy is

passive compliance, where the Confucian community pragmatically registered as Buddhists in official documents to ensure access to administrative services such as education and employment. The third strategy is network collaboration, wherein institutions such as MAKIN (*Majelis Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* – Indonesian Confucian Religious Council) and MATAKIN (*Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* – Indonesian Supreme Council of Confucian Religion) played significant roles in building interfaith relationships (Dahana, 2015). This collaboration not only helped combat systemic discrimination but also strengthened social solidarity through dialogue and inter-community cooperation. These findings indicate that the three strategies enabled the Confucian community to survive amidst discriminatory policies while serving as catalysts for cultural regeneration and fostering stronger interfaith relationships.

The adaptation strategies of the Confucian community in Indonesia during the New Order era were shaped by repressive policies that prohibited the official recognition of Confucianism and restricted cultural practices in public spaces. Social pressures and systemic discrimination created a sense of urgency for the community to preserve their cultural identity through active resistance, such as the 1966 demonstrations and symbolic expressions like celebrating the Chinese New Year (*Tahun Baru Imlek*). These acts asserted their existence amidst a repressive environment. On the other hand, passive compliance emerged as a pragmatic approach to address administrative constraints (C. Coppel, 1994). By registering as Buddhists in official documents, the Confucian community maintained access to essential services, including education, employment, and public facilities. Meanwhile, network collaboration through institutions like MAKIN and MATAKIN evolved as a response to social isolation. These institutions served not only as advocacy tools but also as platforms for fostering interfaith connections, strengthening the community's position within society. The assimilation-focused policies of the New Order era amplified pressures on minority groups, compelling the adoption of these strategies to ensure survival and cultural sustainability (Chan, 2013; Lakonawa et al., 2023).

This study aligns with Scott's (1985) theory on the "weapons of the weak," which describes how marginalised groups use symbolic resistance and policy negotiation to navigate discriminatory systems. The findings also resonate with Geertz's (1973) concept of ritual adaptation, highlighting how external pressures can spur innovation in cultural practices. However, this research introduces a novel contribution by emphasising the importance of interfaith collaboration as an adaptation strategy, facilitated by institutions like MAKIN and MATAKIN. These institutions not only supported religious rituals but also fostered interfaith connections, particularly during the repressive New Order era. The interfaith collaboration they established became a strategic tool to combat social isolation and systemic discrimination, a dimension rarely explored in previous studies.

The Confucian community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic provides a contemporary dimension to this study. As noted by Lakonawa (2023), Confucian religious institutions implemented health protocols during rituals and offered services such as vaccination programmes, distribution of sanitisers, and psychological support. This response reflects the core Confucian values of wisdom (*zhi*), compassion (*ren*), and courage (*yong*), demonstrating how religion can play a

practical role in supporting communities during modern crises. Furthermore, the adaptation strategies employed during the New Order can be compared to the "re-sinisation" efforts of the Peranakan Chinese community in the 19th century under Dutch colonial pressure. During this period, the community promoted Confucian teachings as a unifying ideology to address external cultural and political pressures (Henri Chambert-Loir, 2015). This historical continuity highlights the enduring nature of adaptive strategies in the face of external challenges.

In the educational context, these findings corroborate Chan's (2013) research on the sustainability of the free school established by the Confucian community in Semarang. This school has operated for over six decades, demonstrating resilience through strategic measures to counter discriminatory policies while providing educational services beneficial to the nation. The study adds that such educational institutions serve as sustainability models, illustrating the critical role of education in building community resilience. Economically, this research supports Sundiman and Idrus's (2015) findings on the role of Confucian ethics and *guanxi* (partnership relationships) in improving organisational efficiency within small and medium enterprises. The integration of these cultural values is not only relevant in economic contexts but also in managing the social and political dynamics of the Confucian community. Overall, this study broadens discussions on the Confucian community's adaptation strategies, offering new perspectives on how interfaith collaboration, social innovation, and cultural regeneration can serve as practical models for pluralistic societies.

The findings highlight three crucial aspects of the Confucian community's resilience under discriminatory pressures. First, cultural resilience is evident in their ability to maintain their identity despite repressive policies. Values like *filial piety* served as a strong foundation for cultural regeneration, ensuring that traditions such as the Chinese New Year remained vibrant even under political pressure. Second, social innovation manifested through interfaith collaboration facilitated by MAKIN and MATAKIN, providing a practical framework for promoting multicultural harmony. Third, in terms of political implications, the community's success in regaining official recognition of Confucianism in 2006 illustrates the effectiveness of strategic advocacy and leveraging legal frameworks to counter discrimination. These findings underline the critical roles of cultural values, social collaboration, and political advocacy in sustaining marginalised communities.

This research also reveals both positive functions and dysfunctions arising from the Confucian community's adaptation strategies. On the positive side, cultural regeneration was achieved through the preservation of traditions such as the Chinese New Year and *Cheng Beng* (ancestral worship), strengthening their cultural identity. Additionally, interfaith dialogue and collaboration led to enhanced relationships between religious communities, promoting social cohesion. However, there were dysfunctions, including the erosion of Mandarin language use during the New Order era, which hindered cultural transmission among younger generations. Furthermore, limited access to Confucian-based education slowed the institutional growth of the community, weakening its capacity for cultural and religious regeneration. These findings underscore that while adaptation strategies have yielded significant benefits, substantial challenges remain in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Confucian community's cultural identity.

Based on these findings, several policy recommendations are proposed to support the Confucian community's sustainability in Indonesia. A key priority is the revitalisation of Mandarin language education. The government, in collaboration with MAKIN and MATAKIN, can fund tailored language programmes for the Confucian community, reconnecting younger generations with their ancestral heritage. Additionally, the initiation of annual interfaith dialogue forums by the Ministry of Religious Affairs is essential. These forums can adopt MAKIN's collaborative model, engaging diverse religious communities to foster sustained social harmony (Wang, 2018).

On the legal front, strengthening the legal protection of Confucianism is vital. Parliament and relevant institutions must ensure full recognition of Confucianism in official documents and guarantee equal treatment alongside other religions in Indonesia. This would enhance justice and inclusivity within the nation's framework. Furthermore, integrating the history of discrimination against the Confucian community into the national curriculum is a strategic step. Such inclusion would help younger generations understand the resilience of marginalised communities and develop empathy across generations. Lastly, improving access to Confucian-based education should be prioritised. The government can offer scholarships or subsidies to support Confucian educational institutions, ensuring the sustainable regeneration of the community. These policies aim to empower the Confucian community to thrive and contribute to building multicultural harmony in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals three main strategies used by the Confucian community in Indonesia during the New Order era to survive systemic discrimination: active resistance, passive compliance, and network collaboration. The most prominent finding in this study is the role of interfaith collaboration through organisations such as MAKIN (*Majelis Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* – Indonesian Confucian Religious Council) and MATAKIN (*Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* – High Council of Confucian Religion in Indonesia) in building sustained interfaith solidarity. This strategy, which has been underexplored in previous literature, proved to be a key factor in preserving the identity and culture of the Confucian community amid discriminatory policies. Additionally, this research highlights how forced cultural adaptations, such as using private spaces for religious rituals, contributed to the regeneration of traditions among younger generations after the New Order era.

This study makes a significant contribution to understanding the adaptation strategies employed by minority groups, particularly the Confucian community in Indonesia, under a repressive regime. The findings extend existing theories on cultural resilience and adaptive strategies used by marginalised groups, emphasising the importance of interfaith collaboration as a survival strategy. Furthermore, this research highlights the long-term impact of discriminatory policies on cultural regeneration and group identity, as well as the contribution of interfaith dialogue to social harmony in Indonesia. Thus, this study not only provides insights into the socio-political history of Indonesia but also offers critical reflections on inclusivity and religious diversity in contemporary times.

While this study provides in-depth insights into the survival strategies of the Confucian community, there are limitations, particularly in the scope of the data. This research predominantly focuses on the experiences of the community in Jakarta and Surabaya, with limited documentation regarding the broader Confucian community in other regions of Indonesia. Future research could expand the scope by examining the experiences of the Confucian community in other parts of Indonesia to provide a more comprehensive picture of their cultural and religious adaptation. Additionally, further research could explore the impact of discriminatory policies on other minority groups in Indonesia, identifying similar patterns or differences in the adaptation strategies used by these groups. Future studies could also investigate the role of the younger generation in the post-Reformation cultural regeneration and how educational and cultural preservation policies can better support the regeneration of traditions in Indonesia's increasingly multicultural context.

In relation to contemporary issues, the findings of this study are relevant to the challenges faced by other minority communities in Indonesia who continue to experience discrimination. This research provides valuable lessons on how past discriminatory policies hindered recognition and rights for communities, and how creative and inclusive strategies can be used to build solidarity in a multicultural society. For example, the interfaith collaboration strategy successfully employed by the Confucian community in the past could serve as a model for addressing discrimination against other minority communities in Indonesia, such as LGBTQ+ groups or indigenous communities.

Practically, the findings of this study point to several policy recommendations that could be implemented today. Education reform, which includes lessons on historical discrimination and cultural resilience, would be crucial in building empathy and understanding across generations. The government could support cultural preservation initiatives through funding for Mandarin language revitalisation programmes and the organisation of Confucian cultural events, which would strengthen the regeneration of traditions among younger generations. Moreover, interfaith dialogues should be strengthened through annual forums initiated by the government, using the MAKIN model as an inspiration to promote social harmony. On the legal front, stronger protection for Confucianism is necessary. Full recognition in official documents and equal treatment with other religions in Indonesia must be ensured to guarantee justice and inclusivity for all communities.

The experience of the Confucian community during the New Order era offers important lessons on how marginalised groups can survive and innovate amid discrimination. Their adaptation strategies not only preserved their cultural identity but also strengthened interfaith solidarity, positioning Indonesia as a potential model for multicultural harmony in Southeast Asia. By implementing these policy recommendations, Indonesia could become a model of inclusive multiculturalism, providing inspiration to other nations in the region.

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