

Educational Management Innovation: Integration Model of Military and Higher Education Curriculum in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to design an integrated curriculum model between military education and higher education in Indonesia that can support the improvement of military personnel's academic qualifications. A descriptive qualitative approach was used. Semi-structured interviews were employed during the data collection phase to explore the perspectives of higher education management experts and military education experts selected through purposive sampling. The research lasted 91 days and involved relevant experts from the military education unit of the Indonesian National Army-Army and leading universities in the field of education. A thematic analysis was used in the data analysis process with the support of the NVivo application. Findings: 1) There is a significant structural gap in Indonesia's military education system, particularly regarding academic recognition, educational system integration, and the utilization of technology. 2) An integrated curriculum model can be designed with three dimensions: a) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), b) integration of academic standards, c) utilization of learning technology. The development of this integrated curriculum must be supported by two aspects: the formulation of relevant policies and a collaborative curriculum drafting mechanism. Practically, it can guide the development of educational programs in both military training units and civilian higher education. This creates opportunities for accelerating academic qualifications as well as the recognition and enhancement of skills among Indonesian Army personnel. Further research is recommended to large-scale surveys and quantitative analyses such as SEM. Additionally, pilot studies are crucial to empirically test the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum and RPL.

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and rapid technological change, transformation within the defense sector has become imperative. The strategic orientation of the Indonesian National Army must extend beyond traditional warfare capabilities toward becoming a modern, professional institution grounded in public trust (Effendy, 2025). Consequently, the role of soldiers has shifted from purely tactical actors to strategic agents requiring advanced intellectual capacity. The increasing complexity of global threats, such as cyber warfare, hybrid conflicts, and geopolitical dynamics - demands not only operational excellence but also competencies in strategic analysis, defense policy formulation, and military diplomacy (Duarte et al., 2024). Thus, academic competence has emerged as a critical component in developing an adaptive and globally competitive military.

Modern military professionalism, therefore, cannot rely solely on discipline, loyalty, and technical proficiency; it must be reinforced by intellectual capability. Prior studies emphasize that theoretical mastery, critical thinking, and reflective capacity are central to contemporary military education (Hagen, 2022; Klinkert et al., 2019). Military engagement in education enhances adaptive civil-military relations (Cancio, 2018), while strengthening intellectual capacity is essential for sustaining national security (Sungkono et al., 2024). Accordingly, academic development should be positioned alongside technical and tactical training as a core dimension of military professionalism.

Academic competence is also closely linked to national resilience. Soldiers' ability to interpret strategic environments, manage crises, and respond to multidimensional threats is highly dependent on intellectual capacity. Interprofessional military education has been shown to enhance crisis management effectiveness (Vafadar et al., 2021), while the integration of academic reflection with practical experience fosters both physical resilience and analytical capability. Hence, strengthening academic competence constitutes not only an educational priority but also a strategic element of sustainable national defense. Despite its importance, the academic dimension of military education in Indonesia faces structural challenges, particularly the misalignment with civilian higher education systems. Military education emphasizes discipline and technical

skills, whereas civilian institutions prioritize theory, research, and critical inquiry (Antrobus & West, 2022). This divergence limits formal recognition within academic frameworks, compelling many Army officers to pursue additional education for academic legitimacy, thereby creating systemic inefficiencies (Muradi, 2017). In contrast, several countries have successfully integrated military and civilian education. Nigeria aligns military education with national development priorities (Dii, 2022), while Korea demonstrates integration as part of broader development strategies (Kim, 2017). Developed countries further emphasize intellectual and critical thinking capacities in military education models (Supratiknya, 2023). These examples highlight Indonesia's gap in achieving academic parity and underscore the need for policy innovation.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) offers a promising mechanism to address this gap by acknowledging experiential and non-formal learning as academic credit. Globally, RPL has been widely adopted to legitimize professional experience, including in military contexts (Maurer, 2023). However, in Indonesia, its implementation remains largely confined to civilian higher education, such as at the Open University (Milwan et al., 2025), and has not been systematically applied within military institutions. Proper implementation of RPL could enable the conversion of operational experience and leadership training into academic credentials, improving both efficiency and accessibility in military education.

Simultaneously, advancements in educational technology provide further opportunities for reform. E-learning, digital simulations, and narrative wargaming have demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing learning outcomes and reflective capacity (Hagen, 2022; Owens et al., 2024), while also improving accessibility and flexibility (Culkin, 2017). Nonetheless, the implementation of such technologies in Indonesian military education remains inconsistent (Lutfi, 2022). Integrating RPL with educational technology thus represents a strategic pathway toward a more adaptive, knowledge-based system.

Previous work by Wuryanto et al. (2025) has proposed an initial RPL framework for military education. While conceptually significant, its implementation remains constrained by structural barriers, hierarchical organizational culture, and limited integration with civilian higher education. These limitations indicate that existing approaches have yet to comprehensively address the demands of military education reform. To overcome these challenges, a more integrative approach is required. This study proposes the development of a curriculum model that integrates military and civilian higher education systems. Such a model would incorporate RPL mechanisms while aligning learning outcomes with national higher education standards, thereby creating a more efficient, relevant, and globally competitive educational ecosystem. Accordingly, this study aims to design an integrated curriculum model to enhance the academic qualifications of military personnel in Indonesia. It explores expert perspectives, analyzes systemic gaps, and formulates a contextual and applicable model. Two research questions guide the study: (1) What gaps exist in Indonesia's military education system? and (2) What form of integrated curriculum can effectively support the enhancement of military academic qualifications?

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic framework, integrating RPL, higher education standards, and educational technology within a single systemic model. Unlike prior studies that address these elements separately, this approach connects structural, cultural, and technological dimensions. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature on military-civilian education integration, particularly in developing contexts. Practically, it offers a foundation for policy development aimed at strengthening the professionalism, academic legitimacy, and intellectual capacity of the Indonesian National Armed Forces.

2. Method

2.1. Research Approach

A descriptive qualitative approach (Stanley, 2023) was adopted in this study because of its suitability for gaining an in-depth understanding of a specific group (Rashid, Rashid, Warraich, Sabir, & Waseem, 2019), namely experts in higher education management and experts in military education management. This approach allows us to explore their perspectives in addressing the two research questions: (1) What are the existing gaps in Indonesia's military education system? (2) What kind of integrated curriculum model between military education and higher education in Indonesia can support the enhancement of military personnel's academic qualifications? Through this qualitative approach, the research findings will be presented in a descriptive narrative format.

2.2. Research Participant

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for this study (Charli, Eshete, & Debela, 2022; Lichtman, 2023). The research objectives and questions guided us in selecting study participants from specific entities. First, considering that gaps in military education can only be understood by experienced military education management experts, this group was selected from the outset. Second, as another group whose perspective is equally important in proposing an integrated curriculum model, experts in higher

education management were also involved. Specifically, we established purposive criteria for both groups. Please refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Purposive Sampling Criteria

Entities Naming	Category	Criteria
A1	Military education expert of the army	Over 7 years of experience as a practitioner and curriculum developer in <u>military education (Indonesian Army) in Indonesia</u> Has experience in field operations and holds a college degree in civil engineering
A2	Higher education management expert	With over 10 years of experience and a focus on research in academic higher education management or vocational higher education management in <u>Indonesia</u> <u>From a higher education institution specializing in education</u> Has been involved at least three times in the development of educational curricula and/or training programs in the field of higher education in the digital age

By adhering to the criteria in Table 1, we successfully recruited 11 participants. There were 6 participants in the category of Army Military Education Experts (A1) and 5 in the category of Higher Education Management Experts (A2). All participants were from three institutions: two Indonesian Army military personnel education and training institutions, and one leading university in the field of education in Indonesia.

2.3. Instrument Validation and Data Compilation

The semi-structured interview instrument (Belina, 2023) was designed into three groups of questions. First, to serve as an initial guide for interviews with Category A1 participants, as an investigation into the gaps that have emerged in the Indonesian Army’s military education to date. Second, to elaborate on opportunities for developing an integrated curriculum from the perspective of Category A2 participants. Third, to guide the focus group discussion (FGD) among all participants when they are engaged together. The FGD is a crucial component of the data collection phase. Only through this approach can the diverse perspectives of all participants each representing their respective entities be accommodated and complement one another, ultimately leading to a collective consensus on the integrated curriculum model to be developed.

Each interview instrument contains a list of open-ended questions (Weller et al., 2018) designed to elicit relevant explanations from participants, which are then followed by spontaneous follow-up questions from the researcher to delve deeper into the data (Bingham, 2023). The FGD instrument was designed in a similar style, but included specific prompts for the protocol officer or discussion moderator to lead, guide, and facilitate the discussion. Before use, to providing the validity and reliability, each instrument was reviewed by the research methods experts involved. Although some debate occurred, the final version of the instruments was agreed upon by the research methods experts and the researchers. Thus, the instruments were deemed effective, validated, and ready for use in the iterative data collection process until data saturation was reached.

2.4. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used as the data analysis technique in this study. This technique was applied in six steps, as described by Ahmed et al. (2025) to the results of interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), in order to identify existing gaps in Indonesia’s military education system and to design an integrated curriculum model between military education and higher education in Indonesia that can support the improvement of military personnel’s academic qualifications. In addition to being a technique that is well-suited for qualitative research (Dahal, 2025), the selection of this technique was also deemed relevant to the nature of the data from the interviews and FGDs, which consist of textual transcripts. This relevance is crucial in line with the methodological perspectives of Åkerblad et al. (2021) and Charli et al. (2022) who state that the selection of data analysis techniques must consider their alignment with the data type, research questions (RQs), and research objectives. The six-step analysis process we employed is illustrated in Figure 1.

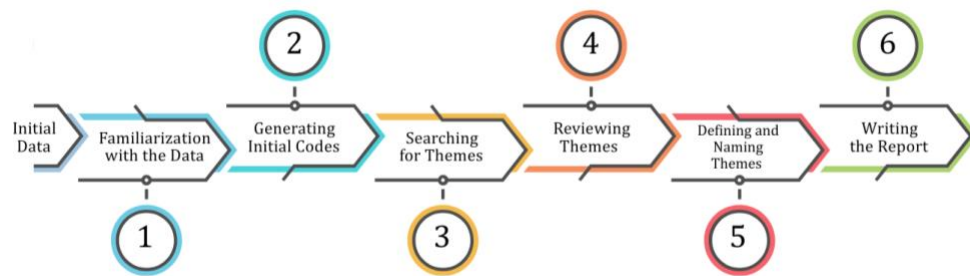


Figure 1. The Six Stages of Thematic Analysis (Source: Adopted from Ahmed et al. (2025))

This data analysis process are supported by NVivo version 12, which is widely regarded as a reliable tool for qualitative data analysis (Allsop, Chelladurai, Kimball, & Marks, 2022; Edwards-Jones, 2014). The study was conducted over 91 days, from December 1, 2025, to March 4, 2026. This total duration included 69 days for interviews and data analysis, as well as 22 days for compiling the research report. The participants' backgrounds hailing from three different institutions with varying amounts of free time along with the data collection process, which was repeated up to three times to reach saturation, contributed to the relatively long duration. The research findings are presented in a descriptive narrative format, highlighting themes and codes that emerged from the perspectives of the experts involved.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

Internationally recognized research ethics are strictly and consistently applied at every stage of the research process from planning and data collection to reporting results to ensure scientific integrity and the protection of participants (Bredal, Stefansen, & Bjørnholt, 2024). Participant selection is based not only on their level of expertise, experience, and the relevance of their roles to the research focus, but also takes into account the principle of voluntariness, whereby each individual participates without coercion and with full consent to contribute to this research.

The data collection process through interviews was conducted in a planned and professional manner, specifically by first scheduling appointments based on a mutually agreed-upon time between the researcher and the participants, thereby respecting the respondents' availability and comfort (Belina, 2023). This approach also aims to create a conducive, open, and ethical interview atmosphere, so that the data obtained can be more in-depth and credible. Additionally, to maintain confidentiality and protect participants' identities, the principle of anonymity is strictly applied in the preparation of the research report. The real names of each participant are not listed; instead, they are replaced with an identification code consisting of the symbol 'P' followed by a sequential number, such as 'P1' for the first participant, 'P2' for the second participant, and so on. In the participant classification, codes P1 through P6 refer to the group of education experts in the army (A1), while P7 through P11 refer to the group of higher education management experts (A2). This coding not only aims to maintain the confidentiality of identities but also facilitates the data analysis process based on the participants' areas of expertise.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The main findings of the study are reported based on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 11 participants divided into two groups: Group A1 (P1–P6), consisting of army education experts, and Group A2 (P7–P11), consisting of higher education management experts. The analysis was conducted thematically by identifying patterns of meaning emerging from participants' statements regarding the challenges and opportunities in developing military education integrated with civilian higher education.

3.1.1. The Gap in Academic Recognition of Military Experience

The findings indicate that military personnel's field deployment experiences have not been recognized as part of formal academic achievements. This was consistently highlighted by participants from both groups. P1 stated that "complex field operations actually hold strategic learning value but have never been converted into academic credits within the formal education system" (interview, December 2, 2025). In line with this, P3 emphasized that "military assignments often result in analytical and leadership competencies, but lack equivalent academic recognition" (interview, December 5, 2025). From a higher education perspective, P8 noted that "the absence of formal mechanisms to recognize military experience leads to duplication of learning when military personnel pursue civilian education" (interview, January 10, 2026). This highlights inefficiencies in the education system that prolong the process of advancing academic qualifications.

3.1.2. The Urgency and Challenges of Implementing RPL

All participants agreed that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a much-needed mechanism in the Indonesian Army's military education. However, its implementation faces structural challenges. P2 noted that "RPL is a logical solution for recognizing military experience, but its initial design still conflicts with the military education system, which is hierarchical and based on a closed curriculum" (interview, December 7, 2025). P5 added that "the development of RPL has begun, but there are no clear operational standards yet" (interview, December 12, 2025). From group A2, P9 stated that "the main challenge lies not in the RPL concept itself, but in integrating the system with national higher education regulations" (interview, January 15, 2026). Thus, RPL is viewed as a potential solution that still requires systemic refinement.

3.1.3. The Gap in Technology-Based Military Education

Other findings indicate a gap in the use of educational technology within the Indonesian military. P4 stated that "the use of e-learning in military educational institutions remains limited and has not been well integrated into the curriculum" (interview, December 14, 2025). P6 added that "digital simulations and modern learning technologies have not been optimally utilized" (interview, December 18, 2025). Meanwhile, P10 highlighted that "civilian universities are more advanced in integrating learning technologies, resulting in a significant gap" (interview, January 20, 2026). This underscores the need for digital transformation in military education.

3.1.4. The Limitations of Civilian Higher Education in Accommodating Military Needs

Participants also noted that civilian higher education, while excelling in the development of analytical skills, has not yet been fully able to accommodate the specific needs of the military. P7 stated that "civilian higher education is excellent at fostering critical thinking skills, but it lacks relevance to military operational needs" (interview, January 5, 2026). P11 added that "civilian curricula are designed from the outset for non-military professions, so specific adaptations are necessary" (interview, February 7, 2026).

3.1.5. The Need for an Integrated Curriculum

The findings indicate a strong need to develop an integrated curriculum between military education and civilian higher education. P3 emphasized that "curriculum integration is key to bridging the gap between military needs and academic standards" (interview, December 6, 2025). P8 added that "an integrated curriculum must be able to balance theoretical and practical aspects" (interview, January 12, 2026).

3.1.6. The Importance of a Policy Framework

Participants agreed that formal policies are needed as a basis for implementing an integrated curriculum. P1 stated that "without clear regulations, the integration of military and civilian education will be difficult to achieve systematically" (interview, December 3, 2025). P9 added that "the policy must be agreed upon by stakeholders from both sectors" (interview, January 18, 2026).

3.1.7. Collaboration in Curriculum Development

The final theme emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in curriculum development. P5 stated that "curriculum development must involve military education experts and civilian academics to ensure relevance and quality" (interview, December 11, 2025). P10 adds that "aspects such as objectives, duration, learning methods, and the RPL model must be designed comprehensively" (interview, January 22, 2026).

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Gaps in Indonesia's Military Education System

The findings of this study reveal significant structural gaps in Indonesia's military education system, particularly regarding academic recognition, the integration of educational systems, and the utilization of technology. The lack of recognition of field assignment experience as part of academic achievement indicates that the military education system has not yet fully adopted a competency-based approach. This contrasts with global trends that emphasize the importance of practical experience as a valid source of learning (Libel, 2021; Mukherjee, 2018). The need for RPL mechanisms is becoming increasingly relevant in this context. However, as revealed in the findings, the implementation of RPL still faces structural and cultural barriers. These findings align with the research by Callado-Muñoz & Utrero-González (2019) which indicates that integrating military education into the higher education system requires complex institutional adjustments. Furthermore, the tension between academic approaches and military practice has also been identified in the study by Antrobus and West (2022), which highlights the difficulty of integrating critical thinking into a hierarchical military culture. The gap in the use of educational technology is also a significant issue. Compared to other countries that have widely adopted AI and e-learning in military education (Alnaqbi & Yassin, 2021; Viet, Dang, & Nguyen,

2020), Indonesia still lags behind in terms of technology integration. In fact, the use of technologies such as blended learning and digital simulations has been proven to enhance the effectiveness of military education (Garcia Estrada et al., 2024; Sonesson, Boffard, Lundberg, Rydmark, & Karlgren, 2018). Thus, digital transformation is a critical prerequisite for the modernization of military education.

3.2.2. An Integrated Curriculum Model Combining Military Education and Higher Education in Indonesia That Can Support the Enhancement of Military Personnel's Academic Qualifications

The findings section indicates that civilian higher education excels in developing analytical skills but is not yet fully aligned with military needs. This reinforces the argument that an integrated curriculum model is needed to combine the strengths of both systems. Studies by Mujkic et al. (2019) and Paget (2016) indicate that military education integrated with the civilian system can enhance democratic values and global interoperability. Meanwhile, Burkett and Aguirre (2020) emphasize the importance of a systematic educational structure to support specific military needs. From the synthesis of the findings, we identified three key dimensions as the core of an integrated curriculum model between military education and higher education in Indonesia that can support the improvement of military personnel's academic qualifications. See Figure 2.

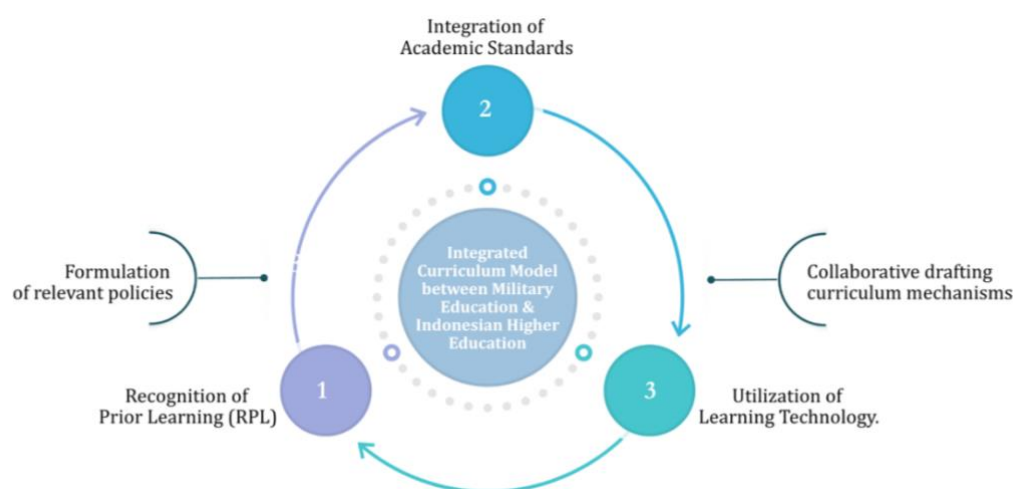


Figure 2. Integrated Curriculum Model between Military Education & Indonesian Higher Education

Figure 2, which illustrates the integrated curriculum model we propose, has an advantage over previous studies because it simultaneously combines three main dimensions: recognition of prior learning (RPL), integration of academic standards, and the use of learning technologies. This approach goes beyond previous research, which tended to be partial in nature, such as focusing solely on the technological aspect (Alnaqbi & Yassin, 2021) or on civil-military relations (Mukherjee, 2018).

In addition to promoting these three key dimensions, this model also emphasizes the urgency of developing relevant policies and collaborative mechanisms in the curriculum development process. The urgency of policies, serving as a legal framework, can provide clear regulations. This helps prevent difficulties in the integration and sustainable implementation of the curriculum. This aligns with the findings of Salkutsan and Stolberg (2022) which indicate that military education reform requires strong policy support, particularly in situations of strategic change. Meanwhile, the emphasis on collaborative mechanisms, which also emerged from the perspectives of experts involved in the research, relates to their view that collaboration between military education experts and civilian academics is a key factor in the success of curriculum integration. Interestingly, although they come from two different professional environments, a common thread in their views emerges. That is, a collaborative approach enables the formulation of a more comprehensive and contextual curriculum, as demonstrated in the studies by Cole et al. (2025) and Yahupov et al. (2020) which emphasize the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in military education.

Overall, this study's primary strength lies in its integrative approach, which combines structural, cultural, and technological dimensions in military education. Compared to the previous studies listed in Table 1, this study offers a more comprehensive contribution by linking various aspects that were previously studied separately. Thus, the results of this study not only enrich the academic literature but also provide significant practical implications for the development of military education policy in Indonesia.

3.2.3. Theoretical and Conceptual Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications at the theoretical, practical, and public policy levels in the context of the transformation of military education in Indonesia. In general, the results confirm that the modernization of military education can no longer be understood merely as an enhancement of technical and operational capabilities, but must include systematic integration with civilian higher education, recognition of professional experience, and adaptation to advancements in learning technology. Therefore, the policy implications and recommendations derived from this study should be understood as part of a strategic effort to build a military education ecosystem that is more adaptive, efficient, and globally competitive.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the argument that modern military professionalism is determined not only by discipline and combat readiness, but also by academic legitimacy and intellectual capacity. The finding that field assignment experience is not yet recognized as part of academic achievement indicates an epistemic gap between practical knowledge and formal knowledge. This underscores the need to redefine the concept of learning in military education, where operational experience is positioned as a knowledge source equivalent to formal academic learning. This study also expands the concept of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in a military context, not merely as an administrative mechanism for credit conversion, but as a strategic instrument to bridge two distinct educational systems. The integration of RPL, the academic curriculum, and learning technologies forms a new conceptual framework that is more holistic than previous approaches, which tended to be fragmented. Thus, this study contributes to the development of the literature on the integration of military and civilian education, particularly in the context of developing countries facing structural and cultural challenges.

3.2.4. Practical Implications for Military Educational Institutions

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study indicate that military educational institutions in Indonesia need to undergo a fundamental transformation in curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation systems. The absence of formal mechanisms to recognize field experience leads to duplication of learning and inefficiencies in the process of advancing academic qualifications. Therefore, the implementation of RPL is an urgent necessity to enhance the efficiency and relevance of education. At the same time, the gap in the utilization of educational technology indicates that military educational institutions need to accelerate digital transformation. The use of e-learning, digital simulations, and blended learning not only enhances learning flexibility but also enables the development of competencies that are more adaptable to the dynamics of modern warfare. In this regard, digital transformation should not be viewed as an add-on but as a core component of the future military education system. Another practical implication is the need to enhance human resource capacity, particularly among military instructors and educators. Strengthening academic capabilities, teaching methodologies, and collaboration with civilian academics are key factors in ensuring the success of educational integration. Without this capacity building, educational reform efforts risk stagnation or even internal resistance within the organization.

3.3. Implications

3.3.1. Public Policy Implications

At the policy level, this study confirms that the integration of military education and civilian higher education requires strong and coordinated regulatory support. The absence of a clear legal framework is one of the main obstacles to the implementation of an integrated curriculum and RPL. Therefore, a national policy is needed that can unify the interests of various stakeholders, including the Indonesian National Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemdiktisaintek) of the Republic of Indonesia. Furthermore, the resulting policy must be able to accommodate the unique characteristics of military education, including hierarchical structures, operational needs, and organizational culture. In other words, integration cannot be carried out uniformly with the civilian education system but must be adapted to the military context. This contextual policy approach is key to ensuring the successful implementation of educational reform.

3.3.2. Policy Recommendations

Based on the implications identified, this study proposes seven strategic policy recommendations. First, the development of an integrated RPL system within military education. The government and the Indonesian National Armed Forces need to develop an RPL system that is integrated with the national higher education framework. This system must allow for the recognition of operational experience, military training, and leadership competencies as part of academic achievements. Assessment mechanisms need to be designed on a competency-based approach using portfolios, performance evaluations, and validation by competent assessors.

Second, Designing an Integrated Military–Civilian Curriculum. A curriculum model is needed that systematically combines the strengths of military and civilian education. This curriculum must include the alignment of learning outcomes, the integration of strategic courses, and the development of inter-institutional

credit transfer schemes. A dual-track or joint degree approach could serve as an alternative to enhance the flexibility and relevance of education. Third, Strengthening Regulations and Governance. The government needs to establish national regulations that serve as the legal basis for the integration of military and civilian education. These regulations must cover curriculum standards, accreditation systems, quality assurance mechanisms, and the division of authority among institutions. Additionally, cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms are needed to ensure the effective implementation of policies.

Fourth, the Digital Transformation of Military Education. Investment in educational technology must be a top priority. The development of e-learning platforms, technology-based simulations, and the use of AI in learning must be systematically promoted. This transformation must be accompanied by training for educators so they can make optimal use of the technology. Fifth, Strengthening Human Resource Capacity and Academic Culture. Military education reform requires a change in organizational culture that supports intellectual development. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the capacity of military instructors through advanced education, pedagogical training, and collaboration with civilian academics. Additionally, incentives should be created for military personnel to pursue academic qualifications.

Sixth, Strengthening Inter-institutional Collaboration. Cooperation between military educational institutions and civilian universities needs to be strengthened through joint programs, collaborative research, and academic exchanges. This collaboration not only improves the quality of education but also accelerates the transfer of knowledge and innovation. Finally, Phased Implementation through Pilot Projects. As an initial step, policy implementation can be carried out through pilot projects at several military educational institutions. This approach allows for the evaluation and refinement of policies before they are widely implemented. Pilot projects can also serve as a means to identify implementation challenges and develop more context-specific solutions.

Ultimately, the policy implications and recommendations derived from this study underscore that the transformation of Indonesia's military education requires a comprehensive and integrated approach. By combining the recognition of prior learning through RPL, the development of an integrated curriculum, the strengthening of regulations, and the utilization of educational technology, the Army has a significant opportunity to build a modern and globally competitive education system. Moreover, military education reform is also part of the national strategy to strengthen national resilience. Soldiers who are not only operationally superior but also possess high intellectual capacity will become strategic assets in facing increasingly complex security challenges in the era of globalization. Thus, the implementation of the proposed policies will not only improve the quality of military education but also strengthen Indonesia's position in the global arena.

3.4. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the limited number of participants (11 informants from groups A1 and A2) restricts the generalizability of the findings, meaning the results better represent the experts' perspectives than the military education system as a whole. Second, the study's focus on the Indonesian Army means the findings may not necessarily reflect conditions in other branches, such as the Indonesian Navy and the Indonesian Air Force, which have different characteristics. Third, the proposed integrated curriculum and RPL models are still conceptual and have not been empirically tested, so their effectiveness has not been verified. Fourth, interview-based data has the potential to contain subjective bias, even though literature triangulation was performed. Fifth, this study has not deeply explored the macro-policy factors and political dynamics that could influence the implementation of military education reform.

Further research is recommended to use a mixed-methods approach to enhance the validity and generalizability of findings, including large-scale surveys and quantitative analyses such as SEM. Cross-domain comparative studies (army, navy, air force) are also needed to develop more adaptive models. Additionally, experimental research or pilot studies are essential to empirically test the effectiveness of integrated curricula and RPL. Technology-based research development, such as the use of AI for RPL assessment as well as studies on blended learning and digital simulation, is also a key priority. More comprehensive policy reviews are needed to understand regulatory and governance aspects, including international comparisons. Furthermore, research on military organizational culture needs to be developed to identify factors of resistance and adaptation to change. Finally, longitudinal studies are recommended to measure the long-term impact on professionalism and national resilience.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that the transformation of Indonesia's military education is a strategic necessity in addressing the increasingly dynamic and complex challenges of global security. The shift in the soldier's role from a tactical actor to a strategic actor demands the strengthening of intellectual capacity and academic legitimacy on par with operational capabilities. However, the research findings indicate that Indonesia's military education system still faces various gaps, particularly regarding the recognition of field experience as academic achievements, limited integration with civilian higher education, and the suboptimal utilization of learning technologies. To address these challenges, this study proposes an integrated curriculum model between military

education and civilian higher education as a strategic approach. This model combines Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), integration of Academic Standards, and Utilization of Learning Technology. It emphasizes that the development of an integrated curriculum must be supported by the formulation of relevant policies and a collaborative curriculum drafting mechanism. The theoretical implications of this research are the development of a curriculum that can practically guide educational development in both military training units and civilian higher education. It creates opportunities for accelerating academic qualifications as well as the recognition and enhancement of skills among Indonesian Army personnel. Seven explicit recommendations for each stakeholder are discussed. This approach is expected to produce military personnel who are not only operationally professional but also academically excellent and adaptable to global dynamics. Overall, this study provides theoretical and practical contributions to the development of military education in Indonesia. The implications suggest that military education reform must be carried out comprehensively through system integration, policy strengthening, and organizational culture transformation. Thus, military education can become a main pillar in building professionalism while strengthening national resilience in the era of globalization. Further research is recommended to enhance the validity and generalizability of the findings, including large-scale surveys and quantitative analyses such as SEM. Cross-service comparative studies (army, navy, air force) are also necessary to develop a more adaptive model. Additionally, experimental research or pilot studies are crucial to empirically test the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum and RPL.

Author Contributions

Agus Wuryanto: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Funding acquisition; Writing, review, and editing the original draft. Aan Komariah: Methodology; Project administration. Tjutju Yuniarsih: Resources; Supervision; Validation. Asep Suryana: Software; Visualization. All authors have equal contributions to the paper, also have read and approved the final manuscript.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/ or publication of this article.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

The author(s) declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

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