

Analyzing the Global Diversity Character of Students at Warugunung Public Elementary School Rembang

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of teachers in fostering the global diversity character of students at Warugunung Public Elementary School, Rembang, offering a novel perspective on multicultural education in rural Indonesian contexts. Employing a qualitative descriptive case study design, the research focuses on three core dimensions of the teacher's role: as educators, instructors, and trainers. Data were gathered through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving school principals, teachers, and students. The findings indicate that teachers significantly promote values of tolerance, empathy, and respect through role modeling and value habituation. Some instructors have begun embedding diversity themes into lesson content; however, instructional planning and assessment tools rarely incorporate explicit diversity indicators. As trainers, teachers facilitate experiential learning via collaborative projects that encourage intercultural interaction. The study reveals persistent challenges, including limited institutional support, inadequate training, and minimal community involvement, which impede long-term impact. This research contributes to the body of knowledge by providing a contextual model for cultivating global diversity character in rural elementary schools, underscoring the importance of systemic policy frameworks, targeted teacher training, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen multicultural education.

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INTRODUCTION

The increasingly complex dynamics of global society require students to possess not only academic competencies but also a strong global diversity character. This character encompasses an individual's capacity to respect, understand, and engage meaningfully with people from diverse cultural, religious, value-based, and identity backgrounds. It extends beyond mere tolerance, integrating curiosity, empathy, and the ability to build authentic intercultural relationships. As highlighted by (Bennett, 2021) and further reinforced by (Banks, 2017), such competencies are essential for navigating interconnected and pluralistic environments in the 21st century. An inclusive mindset, combined with adaptive competence in multicultural contexts, is therefore indispensable for preparing students to thrive in diverse social landscapes (Syarnubi, Syarnubi, Arvin Efriani, Suzana Pranita, Zulhijra Zulhijra, Baldi Anggara, Alimron Alimron, Maryamah Maryamah, 2024).

In alignment with this perspective, the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, through BSKAP Decree No. 018/H/M/2024, defines global diversity as an awareness of cross-national differences—including religion, culture, and gender—accompanied by concern for global issues. This makes global diversity character not merely a moral supplement but a core life skill vital for contemporary citizenship. International frameworks echo this urgency. (UNESCO, 2015), in its *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*, emphasizes educating for global diversity as a means to nurture critical and empathetic individuals who contribute to peacebuilding and the prevention of identity-based conflicts. The framework's objectives include addressing global challenges such as climate change, poverty, conflict, and migration; promoting tolerance and appreciation for diversity; cultivating social responsibility; and preparing a generation that upholds both global and national identities. More recent discourse underscores that schools play a pivotal role in equipping learners with the dispositions and skills necessary to engage in constructive dialogue across differences.

According to BSKAP Decree No. 031/H/KR/2024, students who possess a strong global diversity character are expected to demonstrate the ability to recognize and appreciate cultural differences, engage in effective intercultural communication, critically reflect on diversity-related experiences, and uphold principles of social justice. However, empirical data from the 2023-2024 Education Report of SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang indicate that students' global diversity character remains suboptimal. In 2023, the average score was 56.47, which declined to 51.77 in 2024, a decrease of 4.70 points. These scores fall significantly below the "good" category threshold of 85–100. Concurrently, the school's learning quality score dropped from 63.06 in 2023 to 58.38 in 2024, suggesting a broader decline in educational performance. These indicators signal that the teacher's role in fostering global diversity character has not yet reached its full potential.

Preliminary observations conducted on March 12, 2025, revealed four primary challenges. First, teachers have not consistently integrated global diversity education into the learning process. Second, instructional methods remain predominantly passive, limiting opportunities for active student engagement with diversity-related issues. Third, daily school routines lack the habituation of values that promote intercultural respect and empathy. Fourth, there are no structured collaborative activities involving students and the broader community, which could otherwise serve as experiential platforms for developing global diversity character. These findings point to a critical gap between policy expectations and on-the-ground practices, underscoring the urgency of evaluating how teachers contribute to the cultivation of such competencies.

Teachers, as the primary agents of education, hold a strategic role in shaping students' values, knowledge, and skills. In their capacity as educators, they transmit values and foster ethical dispositions; as instructors, they deliver academic content and guide intellectual development; and as trainers, they facilitate the acquisition of practical skills through experiential learning. Literature on character education affirms that teachers who actively integrate global diversity values into both curriculum and school culture can significantly enhance students' intercultural competence. However, in rural contexts, challenges such as limited access to professional development, inadequate instructional resources, and minimal exposure to diverse perspectives often hinder this process.

SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang was purposefully selected as the research site due to its strategic location on the border of two subdistricts Pancur and Lasem and its close proximity to three other public elementary schools within an 800-meter radius. While this geographic positioning offers opportunities for inter-school collaboration, it also presents risks of exclusivist attitudes or heightened inter-school rivalry due to differing educational systems or intensified competition. This context makes the school a particularly relevant setting for examining how global diversity character can be cultivated from an early age, especially in a rural Indonesian environment.

The novelty of this study lies in its focused exploration of the teacher's multidimensional role educator, instructor, and trainer in enhancing the global diversity character of public elementary school students. This specific angle remains underexplored in both national and international scholarship, particularly within the practical realities of Indonesian basic education. By addressing

this gap, the study aims to make a dual contribution: first, by offering an empirically grounded account of how teachers operationalize global diversity education in a rural setting; and second, by providing actionable insights for policymakers, teacher educators, and school leaders on how to design interventions that are contextually relevant, adaptive, and responsive to Indonesia's pluralistic sociocultural landscape.

METHODS

Grounded in the research problem, this study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. This design was specifically chosen to enable an in-depth exploration of how teachers act as educators, instructors, and trainers in developing students' global diversity character at SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang. A descriptive case study is particularly appropriate because it allows researchers to investigate phenomena in a bounded system through a rich, contextualized lens (Yin, 2018). The focus on "how" and "why" questions aligns with the research aim of understanding the processes and dynamics of character education implementation in a specific school setting. This choice also accommodates the complexity of capturing multiple perspectives and situational nuances that quantitative methods may overlook.

Qualitative descriptive research is particularly suitable for documenting real-life educational practices in detail, without the intention of developing new theories or establishing causal relationships. (Creswell & Poth, 2018) note that this approach effectively narrates actual phenomena, such as teachers' application of instructional strategies to instill global diversity values. The integration of descriptive qualitative methods with a case study framework provides a robust foundation for uncovering the interconnected elements of teacher roles, student engagement, and the school environment in fostering global diversity character (Yin, 2018).

The study was conducted at SD Negeri Warugunung, Rembang Regency, selected purposively for its strategic and socio-cultural relevance. Its geographical location at the border of two subdistricts and proximity to several other schools presents a unique demographic mix, making it ideal for studying the development of global diversity character. This purposive sampling was justified because it ensures the inclusion of participants with relevant experiences that directly address the research objectives. Inclusion criteria required teachers to have at least two years of active teaching experience at the school and willingness to participate. This ensured that informants had sufficient institutional knowledge and familiarity with the school's character education practices. The research participants included the school principal, selected teachers, and students engaged in character-building activities.

Data collection was conducted over six months (March–August 2025) to allow sustained engagement, repeated observations, and cross-verification of findings over time. The prolonged duration also supported time triangulation, ensuring that the data reflected consistent patterns rather than temporary or situational occurrences. Data were collected through a triangulated process involving classroom and extracurricular observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by soft instruments such as interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation protocols, as well as hard instruments like audio recorders and cameras (Ibrahim, 2015). Observation instruments were designed to capture teacher practices in their three core roles; interview guides explored in depth the strategies and challenges in implementing global diversity character education; and documentation gathered printed and digital materials, school reports, and activity plans relevant to the theme.

To ensure validity and reliability, the study employed source triangulation (principals, teachers, students), method triangulation (interviews, observations, documentation), and time triangulation (multiple data collection points) as recommended by (Sugiyono, 2024). This combination allowed for cross-checking and verification of findings across perspectives, methods, and timeframes, thus strengthening the credibility of the results.

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model as cited in (Sugiyono, 2024). This process was iterative and continued until data saturation was reached. It involved three main stages: (1) Data reduction, where raw information was carefully reviewed, summarized, and

coded to identify segments relevant to the research questions; for example, teachers' descriptions of lesson strategies were grouped under "instructional methods for diversity." (2) Data display, in which the reduced data were organized into thematic charts, narrative descriptions, and matrices to reveal relationships between teacher roles, instructional strategies, and observed student behaviors. (3) Conclusion drawing and verification, where emerging patterns-such as the influence of extracurricular activities on students' openness to cultural diversity-were interpreted and validated through repeated comparisons with the raw data. This systematic process ensured that conclusions were firmly grounded in the evidence collected throughout the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores how teachers at SD Negeri Warugunung, Pancur District, Rembang Regency, contribute to enhancing students' global diversity character through their roles as educators, instructors, and trainers. Data were collected through direct observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis.

Teachers' Role as Educators

The educator role was reflected in teachers' efforts to internalize global diversity values through daily learning interactions. Teachers instilled messages of tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect by incorporating value-oriented narratives, verbal affirmations, and demonstrating inclusive behavior. Classroom discussions and heterogeneous group activities were utilized to help students understand cultural, religious, and opinion-based differences. Additionally, national and religious holidays were employed as teachable moments to highlight Indonesia's rich pluralism.

However, these practices were largely incidental and lacked systematic integration into instructional tools such as lesson plans. Moral education often occurred through informal interactions rather than structured, intentional learning pathways. This aligns with (Widiastuti, 2019), who asserts that diversity character is most effectively nurtured through habituation and exemplary modeling within social contexts. Similarly, (Rachmawati & Sumarni, 2020) found that dialogic and reflective learning fosters multicultural awareness in elementary students.

The creation of open forums where students could express differing views further supported inclusive learning environments, as also demonstrated by (Huda et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the absence of institutionalized planning suggests a disconnect between vision and execution. As (Arif & Hidayat, 2022) argue, when curriculum frameworks fail to articulate diversity explicitly, character education becomes normative and hard to assess. This is reinforced by (Nurhasanah & Salim, 2023), who emphasize the importance of measurable indicators in ensuring replicable and sustainable character education. Thus, the educator role demands stronger curricular support to institutionalize the transmission of global diversity values.

Teachers' Role as Instructors

As instructors, teachers linked academic content with diversity themes by using media depicting figures from different backgrounds and facilitating reflective classroom discussions on social realities. Some incorporated assignments exploring local cultural diversity, aiming to bridge curriculum and community context. However, findings show inconsistency in how these values were embedded in formal teaching documents. Lesson plans often lacked explicit inclusion of global diversity character indicators, and affective-social outcomes were underrepresented compared to cognitive goals.

This observation confirms (Oktaviani et al., 2018), who advocate for issue-based learning to enhance student awareness of diversity. (Setiawan & Fitriyani, 2019) highlight the necessity of multicultural learning resources to deepen value internalization. Unfortunately, instructional resources that support global diversity education remain limited at SDN Warugunung.

Effective integration of character education, according to (Wahyuni et al., 2021), requires alignment across planning, execution, and assessment stages. Yet, the study found that lesson plans still tend to prioritize cognitive aspects, lacking authentic assessment tools for evaluating diversity-

related outcomes. Moreover, the application of cross-thematic approaches essential to impactful character education remains weak due to insufficient training and policy support. As noted by (Damayanti & Prasetyo, 2022), thematic and interdisciplinary methods are critical for embedding character formation in learning, but require systemic capacity-building.

Additionally, while (Gunawan & Mustari, 2022) emphasize the importance of formative assessments based on observed student behaviors, this study revealed that such assessments were rarely conducted. Teachers relied more on informal observations, leaving the reflective process underdeveloped. These limitations indicate that while intentions exist, the instructional role in promoting global diversity character remains fragmented and under-resourced.

Teachers' Role as Trainers

The trainer role was evidenced by efforts to build students' social competencies through experiential and collaborative learning activities. Teachers facilitated cultural performances, group-based projects, social initiatives, and diversity-themed games to promote empathy, teamwork, and inclusive behavior. Observations showed that students responded positively, demonstrating openness and mutual care across cultural differences.

These practices are supported by (Kusumawati et al., 2020), who highlight the value of experiential learning in character development. (Riyanto & Lestari, 2021) found that students engaged in collaborative projects develop stronger empathy and multicultural awareness. Teachers at SDN Warugunung played a key role in designing these activities to include not only cognitive but also emotional and social dimensions of learning.

However, the implementation of training activities outside the classroom faced challenges. Limitations in facilities, time, and partnerships restricted continuity and sustainability. Extracurricular programs were often disconnected from formal character education efforts, reducing their long-term impact. This finding is in line with (Puspitasari & E, 2023), who stress the vital role of family and community involvement in reinforcing character values in elementary education.

(Haryono & Nabila, 2019) emphasize that meaningful character training requires post-activity reflection, yet in this study, student reflection was mostly spontaneous and verbal, without formal structures such as written journals or group debriefs. This hinders deep processing of diversity experiences.

Finally, the importance of integrated collaboration across school programs was also echoed (Halimah et al., 2024), who advocate for alignment between formal instruction, extracurricular activities, guidance services, and community partnerships. Unfortunately, in the case of SDN Warugunung, such integrative efforts remain sporadic and uncoordinated, limiting the broader impact of character-building initiatives.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teachers at SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang play a pivotal role in fostering students' global diversity character through their multidimensional functions as educators, instructors, and trainers. In alignment with Bennett's (2021) intercultural competence framework and UNESCO's (2015) Global Citizenship Education model, the teacher's role as an educator is manifested in modeling inclusive values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect in daily interactions. As instructors, teachers have begun integrating diversity themes into lessons, yet instructional design and assessment strategies require further development to align with measurable learning outcomes. As trainers, they provide experiential and collaborative activities that enhance students' social and intercultural skills, though these efforts remain limited in scope and sustainability.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending the discourse on character education by operationalizing the concept of global diversity character within the specific socio-cultural context of Indonesian rural elementary schools, an area that remains underexplored. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for policymakers and educators in designing targeted teacher professional

development, curriculum integration strategies, and school–community partnership programs to institutionalize diversity education.

This study is not without limitations. The focus on a single school context limits the generalizability of findings, and the qualitative emphasis restricts statistical validation of the observed impacts. Future research should adopt quantitative or mixed-method designs across varied geographic and socio-economic settings to strengthen empirical evidence and policy relevance. Moreover, further exploration into specific instructional models that effectively embed diversity values in primary education is necessary to develop scalable and context-responsive interventions.

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