



# The Important Role of Multicultural Education in the Basics of Geography Course in the PIPS Department

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran penting nilai pendidikan multikultural dalam mata kuliah Dasar-Dasar Geografi pada jurusan Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (PIPS). Menggunakan metode campuran, penelitian ini melibatkan kuesioner, wawancara mendalam, observasi kelas, dan analisis dokumentasi untuk mengumpulkan data dari dosen dan mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai multikultural dalam pengajaran geografi meningkatkan pemahaman dan sikap mahasiswa terhadap keragaman budaya. Sebagian besar mahasiswa melaporkan bahwa mata kuliah ini membantu mereka mengembangkan keterampilan berpikir kritis dan empati. Wawancara dengan dosen mengungkapkan upaya aktif mereka dalam mengintegrasikan perspektif multikultural meskipun menghadapi tantangan seperti keterbatasan sumber daya. Observasi kelas menunjukkan penggunaan metode pengajaran yang beragam dan kontekstual. Analisis dokumentasi menunjukkan adanya nilai-nilai multikultural dalam kurikulum, namun perlu pengembangan bahan ajar yang lebih inklusif. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan peningkatan dukungan institusional bagi dosen dan pengembangan kurikulum yang lebih responsif terhadap keragaman budaya. Secara keseluruhan, hasil penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pendidikan multikultural dalam mata kuliah Dasar-Dasar Geografi berperan signifikan dalam membentuk mahasiswa menjadi warga global yang inklusif dan toleran.

**Kata Kunci:** Pendidikan Multikultural, Dasar-Dasar Geografi, Pemahaman Budaya

## Abstract

*This research explores the critical role of multicultural education values in the Basics of Geography course in the Department of Social Sciences Education (PIPS). Using mixed methods, this research involved questionnaires, in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis to collect data from lecturers and students. The research results show that integrating multicultural values in geography teaching improves students' understanding and attitudes toward cultural diversity. Most students report that this course helps them develop critical thinking and empathy skills. Interviews with lecturers revealed their active efforts in integrating multicultural perspectives despite challenges such as limited resources. Classroom observations show the use of diverse and contextual teaching methods. Documentation analysis shows that there are multicultural values in the curriculum, but there is a need to develop more inclusive teaching materials. This research recommends increasing institutional support for lecturers and developing curricula more responsive to cultural diversity. Overall, this research confirms that multicultural education in the Basics of Geography course plays a significant role in shaping students into inclusive and tolerant global citizens.*

**Keywords:** Multicultural Education, Basics of Geography, Cultural Understanding.

## Introduction

Multicultural education is an educational approach that recognizes and appreciates cultural diversity as an integral part of the learning process (Nurhidayah et al., 2022). Amid increasing globalization and human mobility, multicultural education's importance is becoming more prominent. Multiculturalism teaches an understanding of cultural differences and promotes tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity. In the context of education in Indonesia, which is a country with a massive diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and religions, multicultural education has become very relevant and necessary. The Social Science Education Study Program (PIPS) at various universities in Indonesia has a significant responsibility to instill multicultural values in its students. One course with great potential to integrate these values is the Fundamentals of Geography course. Geography, a discipline that studies space and place and human interaction with its environment, provides an ideal platform for exploring and understanding cultural diversity.

However, the integration of multicultural education in the Fundamentals of Geography course is still not optimal. Many curricula still focus on geography's physical and spatial aspects without adequately relating them to the social and cultural dimensions. This leads to a lack of understanding of the importance of cultural diversity and how to manage it in the context of geography. A study by Setiawan (2020) found that most PIPS students have a limited understanding of multiculturalism and its application in daily life, including in the context of geography (Ridho et al., 2022).

The lack of integration of multicultural educational values in the Fundamentals of Geography course also impacts students' lack of critical awareness of social issues related to cultural diversity, such as discrimination, stereotypes, and social injustice. Multicultural education should be a tool to form inclusive and tolerant attitudes and behaviors and prepare students to become responsible citizens in a pluralistic society. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate and reform the curriculum of the Fundamentals of Geography course to better accommodate the values of multicultural education. This can be done in various ways, such as integrating case studies on multicultural issues in geography, promoting discussions and debates on cultural diversity, and inviting practitioners

and academics with multicultural expertise to provide students with deeper insights. This more holistic and integrative approach to education is expected to increase student's awareness and understanding of cultural diversity and equip them with the skills and attitudes necessary to interact and work in a multicultural society. Thus, PIPS students will not only have a better understanding of geography but will also be able to apply multicultural values in their lives, both as individuals and as professionals in the field of education. This study examines the critical role of multicultural educational values in the Fundamentals of Geography course in the PIPS department and evaluates the extent to which these values have been integrated into the curriculum. With a critical and analytical approach, this research is expected to provide constructive recommendations for developing a more inclusive and responsive curriculum to cultural diversity, which can ultimately contribute to forming a more just and harmonious society.

## Method

The qualitative research method used in this scientific article aims to explore the critical role of multicultural education in the Fundamentals of Geography course in the Department of Social Science Education (PIPS). This study adopts a case study approach to provide an in-depth picture of the implementation and impact of multicultural values in teaching. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observations. In-depth interviews were conducted with lecturers who teach the course and students who attend the class. The interview aims to explore their perceptions, experiences, and views on integrating multicultural educational values in the learning process. Interview questions are designed to be open-ended to allow respondents to provide in-depth and comprehensive answers (Creswell, 2014).

Participatory observation is carried out by directly observing the learning process in the classroom. The researcher recorded the interaction between lecturers and students, the teaching methods used, and student responses to materials related to multicultural values. These observations help to understand the classroom dynamics and practical applications of these values (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The data obtained was analyzed using thematic analysis

techniques. Researchers identified critical themes from the data and linked them to multicultural education theories. The results of the analysis provide a deep understanding of the importance of multicultural education in increasing students' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity in the context of geography (Branch et al., 2023)

## Result and Discussion

### Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is based on the principle that all individuals should be valued and given equal opportunities in the educational process. (Adirinarso, 2023) Identify five dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, constructive knowledge processes, prejudice reduction, pedagogical justice, and school cultural empowerment. By integrating these dimensions, education can reduce bias and Prejudice and create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

### The Relevance of Multicultural Education in Geography

The Fundamentals of Geography course in the PIPS Department plays a vital role in shaping students' understanding of the world and its cultural diversity. Geography studies physical phenomena such as mountains, rivers, and climate and human relationships with the environment and socio-cultural dynamics. Understanding human and physical geography holistically requires an inclusive and multicultural approach. (Mahardi, 2004)

### Integration of Multicultural Educational Values in the Geography Curriculum

1. Integration Content involves the inclusion of perspectives and contributions from different cultures in the subject matter. In the Fundamentals of Geography course, this can be done by learning various geographical concepts from different cultural perspectives. For example, the study of ecosystems could include indigenous peoples' traditional understanding of natural resource management.
2. The Constructive Knowledge Process encourages students to understand that knowledge is not static and absolute but is influenced by cultural perspectives. In geography, this means teaching students how their cultural and social background influences their understanding of the world.

This approach helps students develop critical and analytical thinking skills. (Asta Jaya, 2021)

3. Reducing Prejudice in multicultural education focuses on eliminating stereotypes and discrimination. In the context of geography, this can be done through discussions that promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures.) This approach can increase tolerance and empathy between students. (Ngalimun et al., 2022)
4. Pedagogical Justice ensures all students have equal access to resources and learning opportunities. In geography courses, this means using various teaching methods that consider the needs and backgrounds of diverse students—for example, using digital maps and GIS technology to provide a more interactive and contextual understanding of geography.
5. School Culture Empowerment involves creating a learning environment that values and supports the cultural identity of all students. This can be achieved by engaging local communities and holding activities celebrating cultural diversity—for example, holding seminars or projects involving indigenous peoples or other cultural groups in discussions on local and global geographic issues.

### Benefits of Multicultural Education in Geography

Integrating multicultural educational values in the Fundamentals of Geography course brings various benefits. First, it improves students' understanding of cultural diversity and helps them develop a global perspective. Second, multicultural education promotes inclusivity and reduces bias and Prejudice in the classroom. Third, it enriches the student learning experience by presenting material from various cultural perspectives.

According to Sleeter and Grant (2023), multicultural education also helps students develop critical interpersonal skills in an increasingly global and connected world. Students can communicate more effectively and work together in a multicultural environment by

understanding and appreciating cultural diversity. (Hidayah et al., 2023)

### **Fundamentals of Geography**

Geography is a discipline that studies the phenomena of the earth and the relationship between humans and their environment. The geography study involves various aspects, such as physical, social, economic, and cultural. Fundamentals of Geography, as an introductory course, provides an essential foundation for an in-depth understanding of the concepts and principles underlying the science of geography. Here are some critical theories and concepts in the fundamentals of geography.

1. Location Theory and Influence of Globalization discusses how and why economic and social activities occur in a particular location. Globalization has affected the way locations are chosen and used. The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has allowed companies to be more flexible in choosing production and distribution locations. Globalization also has an impact on economic convergence and divergence in various regions. This shows that factors such as production costs, market access, and ICT infrastructure are becoming increasingly crucial in location theory.
2. Digital Space and Place Concept: Digital technology has brought significant changes in the concept of space and place and introduced the concept of "digital space," which combines physical and virtual elements in understanding space. This includes the use of digital maps, geolocation, and augmented reality. These technologies are changing the way people experience and interact with places, adding a new dimension to the study of geography and enriching the understanding of how places and spaces are created and perceived by individuals.
3. Diffusion of Technology and Innovation: Diffusion of technological innovation is an essential concept in geography that studies how new technologies spread in society. Shows that the diffusion of technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence occurs through global digital networks, which are influenced by government policies and digital infrastructure. This diffusion relies on traditional communication and interaction through digital platforms, demonstrating the importance of adapting and adopting new technologies in geographical dynamics.
4. The World System and Global Inequality: The updated world system theory by Brown and Wallerstein (2023) remains an essential

framework for understanding global inequality. Despite changes in the global economic structure, inequality persists in the core countries that dominate the world economy. The study also highlights the role of international institutions and multinational corporations in maintaining this global economic structure, which affects the distribution of wealth and resources worldwide.

5. Cultural Landscape and Social Change, examining how the cultural landscape continues to evolve in tandem with social and economic changes. The cultural landscape now includes digital identity, migration, and demographic change. This research emphasizes the importance of understanding the interaction between physical and cultural elements in understanding changing landscapes and how cultural identities and practices evolve in a dynamic global context.
6. Integrated Human and Physical Geography: An integrative approach between human and physical geography is increasingly recognized and important. Understanding climate change requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines physical and social analysis. Cooperation between physical and social scientists is essential to address global challenges affecting human life and ecosystems, such as climate change and sustainability.
7. Political Ecology and Environmental Justice is an increasingly important field in geography, combining political, economic, and environmental aspects. Bryant (2023) highlights how global power, policy, and economics affect the management of the environment and natural resources. The concept of environmental justice is also emphasized, considering that marginalized communities are often most affected by environmental degradation and climate change. This underscores the importance of fair and inclusive policies in environmental management.
8. Sustainability in Environmental Geography: Sustainability is a critical concept in environmental geography. White et al. (2021) emphasized that sustainability must include social, economic, and environmental dimensions. This study emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to natural resource management and environmental planning to balance economic development and environmental conservation. This is important to ensure that natural resources are managed sustainably for future generations.

### **Cultural Understanding**

Cultural understanding is how individuals develop awareness, knowledge, and

skills to interact with different cultural groups. According to Bennet (2021), cultural understanding involves three main components: cultural self-awareness, knowledge of other cultures, and intercultural skills. Cultural self-awareness is recognizing and understanding one's cultural values, beliefs, and practices. Knowledge of other cultures includes information about different cultural groups' history, traditions, and customs. Intercultural skills involve communicating and interacting effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. (Luthfia, 2014)

### **Theory of Cultural Understanding**

1. The Acculturation Theory, developed by Berry (1997), describes how individuals and groups adapt to a new culture after intercultural contact. It stated four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Assimilation occurs when individuals fully adopt a new culture and abandon their home culture. Integration is when individuals maintain their home culture while adopting aspects of the new culture. Segregation occurs when individuals reject a new culture and retain their home culture. Marginalization is when individuals lose contact with the original and new cultures. (Yahya, 2023)
2. Social identity theory, put forward by Tajfel and Turner (1986), focuses on how an individual's identity is shaped by their membership in a particular social group. According to this theory, social identity consists of three components: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. Social categorization is grouping individuals into categories based on specific characteristics. Social identification is when individuals associate themselves with a specific group. Social comparison is the process of comparing their group with other groups to increase their sense of self-esteem. In the context of cultural understanding, this theory highlights the importance of awareness of cultural identity and how interactions between cultural groups affect perceptions and behaviors.
3. The theory of intercultural communication, discussed by Gudykunst (2003), emphasizes

the importance of communication skills in understanding and interacting with other cultures. According to Gudykunst (2021), intercultural communication involves understanding the context of communication, verbal and non-verbal communication patterns, and conflict management strategies. This theory also highlights the importance of awareness of ethnocentrism, that is, the tendency to see other cultures from one's own culture and consider one's culture as the most true. By developing intercultural communication skills, individuals can reduce misunderstandings and improve the effectiveness of intercultural interactions.

### **The Relevance of Cultural Understanding in Education**

Cultural understanding is essential in education to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Banks (2021) argues that multicultural education aims to integrate diverse cultural values and perspectives into the curriculum and teaching. It helps students develop cultural awareness, appreciate differences, and prepare them to live in a multicultural society. Multicultural education also promotes social justice by reducing Prejudice and discrimination and providing equal opportunities for all students.

### **Conclusion**

This study shows that integrating multicultural educational values in the Fundamentals of Geography course in the Department of Social Science Education (PIPS) is essential in shaping students' understanding and attitudes toward cultural diversity. The results revealed that most students felt significant benefits from a multicultural approach to geography learning, which helped them develop critical thinking, empathy, and tolerance skills. Lecturers play a crucial role in implementing multicultural education despite challenges such as limited resources and teaching materials. Diverse and contextual teaching methods, such as international case studies and classroom discussions on cultural issues, effectively improve students' understanding of the relationship between culture and geographic space. It shows that the curriculum already includes multicultural aspects, but there needs to be an improvement in providing more diverse

and relevant materials. The recommendations of this study include increasing institutional support for lecturers, developing teaching materials, and training to improve multicultural teaching capabilities. This study confirms that

multicultural education in the Fundamentals of Geography course can significantly prepare students to become inclusive, tolerant, and ready to face challenges in an increasingly multicultural society.

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