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Cultivating global diversity character through culturally responsive and differentiated learning in heterogeneous elementary schools

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Abstract: This qualitative study explores the understanding and challenges of instilling global diversity character through the integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in highly heterogeneous elementary schools. A qualitative approach was employed, with a focus on grade IV students from several private schools in Bali, Indonesia, known for their diverse student demographics. The findings indicate that while students possess a commendable foundation of local tolerance, their internalization of a broader global diversity is largely superficial. This gap is attributed to the lack of pedagogical strategies that explicitly link local understanding to a global context, compounded by the significant internal diversity of students in terms of readiness, interests, and learning profiles. The research reveals that although teachers have attempted to implement CRT, they face challenges primarily due to limited time and resources in comprehensively differentiating content, process, and product to meet these varied needs. This study argues that a synergistic integration of CRT and differentiated learning is crucial to bridge this gap, fostering tolerance and also a genuine and profound understanding, or deep learning, of global diversity that prepares students to be empathetic and adaptable global citizens.
Keywords: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Differentiated Learning, Global Diversity Character, Deep Learning, Elementary School

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of an increasingly rapid current of globalization and the unavoidable convergence of cultures, character education stands as a fundamental pillar in shaping individuals who are not only cognitively intelligent but also morally and socially robust. One crucial dimension of character in this modern era is global diversity character, which encourages every individual to appreciate diversity, possess empathy towards differences, and be capable of interacting and collaborating effectively with individuals from various cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. The formation of this character is essential for creating a harmonious, tolerant society ready to face the complexities of an increasingly interconnected world.

Indonesia, as an archipelagic nation with thousands of ethnicities and cultures, is inherently fertile ground for multicultural education. This condition is clearly reflected in various regions,

including Bali, Indonesia, particularly in Buleleng Regency, where elementary schools are often populated by students from vastly diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. This diversity offers immense potential for fostering intercultural understanding and tolerance from an early age, yet on the other hand, it also presents distinct challenges for teachers and educational institutions in providing an inclusive and relevant learning environment for every student, ensuring that every identity is valued and every voice is heard.

In an increasingly globalized world, the need for students to develop global diversity character is more critical than ever. This is especially true for educational settings with high levels of cultural heterogeneity. The Buleleng Regency in Bali provides a unique and compelling case study, as many of its private elementary schools are home to students from diverse cultural backgrounds, both domestic and international. A survey of several private schools in the area reveals a significant mix of student demographics that presents a unique pedagogical challenge. For instance, at one of the school in Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia, a majority of students (63%) are international, with another 12% from various parts of Indonesia outside of Bali. This pattern of high heterogeneity is also reflected in other schools, such as School X (48% international students), School Y (32% national students from outside Bali), School Z (12% national students from outside Bali), School T (17% national students from outside Bali), and School U (16% national students from outside Bali). This diverse composition creates a rich environment for cross-cultural interaction. However, it also demands a pedagogical approach intentionally designed to harness this diversity. The data underscores the urgent need for a learning model that not only accommodates but also actively leverages these differences to foster deep understanding, empathy, and respect, paving the way for students to become truly global citizens

Empirical data from the 2025 National Education Report Card for one of the School in Singaraja, Bali reveals a significant challenge. The school's global diversity character score has alarmingly dropped by 7.76 points, indicating a negative trend in students' appreciation and understanding of different cultures. Furthermore, a separate assessment on students' interest in various cultures showed a decline of 8.22 points. These findings serve as compelling evidence that a fundamental gap exists between the educational environment and the development of a robust global mindset. This decline suggests that current pedagogical approaches are not effectively nurturing the essential values of tolerance, empathy, and cultural appreciation. The urgency to address this issue is paramount, as a failure to do so could result in a generation ill-equipped to navigate the complexities and responsibilities of an increasingly interconnected world.

In response to the complexity and richness of multicultural learning environments, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) emerges as a promising pedagogical approach. CRT is a teaching philosophy that recognizes and values the importance of students' cultural backgrounds in the learning process, integrating students' knowledge, experiences, and cultural frames of reference into all aspects of learning. This approach holds great potential for creating a more inclusive classroom environment, enhancing student engagement, and in turn, strengthening their understanding of self-identity and encouraging an appreciation for diversity, which forms the foundation for the development of global diversity character (Wardhani & Mahendradhani, 2024).

Despite the urgency of global diversity character education and the potential of CRT being widely discussed, there remains a significant research gap, particularly in deeply understanding (qualitatively) how multicultural elementary school students truly comprehend the concept of global diversity and what challenges they face in internalizing it. Furthermore, exploration into

how the concrete implementation of CRT can influence this understanding and address these challenges in multicultural elementary school environments, especially in Indonesia, is still relatively limited. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by qualitatively exploring students' experiences and the implications of CRT integration in this context.

Actual issues in the field indicate that while awareness of the importance of character education, particularly in a multicultural context, continues to rise, its practical implementation in elementary schools still faces various challenges. In multicultural elementary schools in Bali, especially Buleleng, teachers often struggle to align the curriculum with students' heterogeneous cultural backgrounds, potentially hindering students' deep understanding of global diversity concepts and the internalization of its values. Limitations in culturally responsive pedagogical strategies and inadequate resources for effectively developing global diversity character are crucial issues (Khasanah et al., 2023). The urgency of this research stems from the pressing need to develop and understand how a more inclusive and culturally relevant approach, such as CRT can effectively bridge this gap and prepare students to become empathetic and tolerant global citizens.

Previous research has extensively discussed character education and multiculturalism, as well as the effectiveness of CRT in various educational contexts. However, most studies tend to focus on CRT's effectiveness in improving academic achievement or general student engagement, and are often quantitative in measuring its impact. A significant research gap lies in the limited in-depth qualitative exploration of how elementary school students, growing up in multicultural environments, specifically understand and face challenges in internalizing global diversity character. The novelty or unique aspect of this research is its emphasis on qualitatively exploring student perspectives regarding their understanding of global diversity and the challenges of internalization, integrated with the context of CRT implementation by teachers. The innovation of this research lies in its endeavor to understand the internal dynamics and subjective experiences of both students and teachers in the process of developing global diversity character through the lens of CRT, providing a more holistic and rich insight than mere impact measurement. Thus, the objective of this research is to thoroughly investigate the understanding of global diversity character among fourth-grade students in multicultural elementary schools, identify the challenges they face, and analyze how the integration of CRT is understood and applied by teachers in supporting the formation of this character.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design, specifically chosen to deeply and holistically explore students' understanding and the challenges of global diversity character within the context of CRT in multicultural elementary schools. The qualitative approach enables researchers to delve into participants' subjective experiences, perceptions, and the meanings they construct, providing rich insights and nuances that cannot be captured by quantitative methods alone. The case study design allows for an intensive focus on one or more units of analysis (e.g., one school or several classes within the same school) to understand phenomena within complex real-world contexts. The research subjects will include fourth-grade teachers implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and striving to integrate CRT, as well as fourth-grade students in a selected multicultural elementary school in the Sukasada area, Buleleng Regency, which exhibits significant cultural diversity among its student body. Subject selection will be purposive to ensure they possess relevant experiences that can yield rich information for the study.

Data collection will be conducted through method triangulation to enhance the validity and depth of the findings. The first stage involves in-depth interviews with teachers, aimed at exploring their understanding of the global diversity character, the CRT implementation strategies they have employed or plan to use, and their perceptions of students' understanding and challenges. The second stage consists of focused group discussions (FGDs) or individual interviews with students, designed to explore their understanding of concepts such as diversity, tolerance, and cultural identity, as well as personal challenges in interacting with peers from different backgrounds. The third stage involves participatory or non-participatory observation in the classroom, focusing on teacher-student and student-student interactions during learning, especially when topics of global diversity or CRT-relevant practices emerge. Documents such as lesson plans (RPP) integrating CRT or student projects related to global diversity will also be analyzed as supplementary data. The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis through the following stages: (1) Transcription of all interview recordings and observation notes, (2) Coding the data to identify key ideas or phrases, (3) Categorization of similar codes into larger themes, (4) Identification of patterns and relationships between themes, and (5) Interpretation of findings in relation to the theoretical framework and research questions, supported by direct quotes from participants to strengthen the narrative. Data trustworthiness will be ensured through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking with participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpretation of the Concept of Global Diversity from Students' Perspectives

Findings indicate that fourth-grade students in multicultural elementary schools in Sukasada, Buleleng, possess a strong basic understanding of the concept of tolerance within local and national contexts. They define tolerance as not discriminating against friends based on ethnicity, religion, or region of origin in Indonesia, and demonstrate a willingness to play and learn together regardless of these differences. The concept of "diversity" (Kebhinekaan) is often interpreted as the variety present in their immediate environment, such as friends from Java, Bali, or other Indonesian ethnic groups, which they grasp from daily interactions and national curriculum materials. This understanding is profoundly influenced by their direct experiences within a school environment that is indeed ethnically and culturally heterogeneous at a local level.

This research's findings demonstrate that fourth-grade students in multicultural elementary schools in Sukasada, Buleleng, have developed a solid foundational understanding of tolerance within both local and national contexts. This understanding aligns with theories of child social development, particularly at the elementary school age, where interactions with the immediate environment form the primary foundation. Children at this age, according to Piaget, begin to develop concrete operational thinking and grasp social rules through direct interaction. They define tolerance as "not discriminating against friends," "playing with anyone," or "respecting the customs of Balinese, Javanese people, etc.," which reflects their daily experiences in a school environment intrinsically diverse in terms of Indonesian ethnic and cultural scope. The concept of "diversity" (Kebhinekaan) for them is a manifestation of the variety among their classmates and schoolmates, which they perceive through religious holiday celebrations or local cultural activities, indicating that direct experience is their best teacher in comprehending this aspect.

Although the understanding of local/national tolerance is commendable, the depth of students' comprehension regarding the "global" dimension of diversity still shows variation

and tends to remain at a superficial level. Most students have not yet fully internalized the concept of diversity on an international scale, such as appreciating cultures from other countries or understanding global issues. They might be familiar with names of countries or some foreign customs from the media, but their understanding rarely extends beyond a basic cognitive level and has not largely manifested in attitudes or behaviors demonstrating deep appreciation for global cultural diversity. This indicates a gap between their awareness of local tolerance and a more comprehensive understanding of broader global diversity.

Challenges Faced by Students in Internalizing Global Diversity Character

The primary challenge identified is not rooted in conflicts or discrimination among local ethnic groups, but rather in the limited exposure to and in-depth understanding of international cultural diversity. Students rarely interact with peers from other countries or with cultural backgrounds significantly different from the Indonesian context. This results in minimal direct experience that could strengthen their understanding of global diversity beyond national borders. Occasionally, a sense of curiosity mixed with confusion emerges when encountering foreign cultures presented through media or stories, but this has not yet evolved into active appreciation and acceptance.

The main challenge does not lie in social conflict or discrimination among domestic ethnic groups, but rather in the students' limited direct exposure to international cultural diversity. This impacts children's social development, as interaction with "the different" is a critical catalyst for broadening perspectives. In this multicultural school context, although students are accustomed to national diversity, they rarely have opportunities to interact with peers who genuinely possess cultural backgrounds from outside Indonesia (Fauzan et al., 2024). This lack of concrete experience limits their ability to develop affective skills such as empathy and appreciation for cultural practices vastly different from those they are familiar with, thus making the internalization of global diversity values more difficult to achieve authentically.

Intrapersonally, the challenge lies in how students can connect the local diversity they experience with the more abstract global context. Concepts such as "global citizen" or "global responsibility" feel distant and less relevant to their daily lives. They may not yet possess an adequate cognitive framework to comprehend the complexities of global cultures or the importance of fostering cross-cultural relationships (Hammond, 2014). This is exacerbated by the limited availability of teaching materials or school activities specifically designed to foster continuous and in-depth awareness of international cultural diversity.

Findings indicate that the internalization of global diversity character values in students faces obstacles in the affective domain. While they can cognitively understand that differences are good, the emotional and appreciative aspects of unique global cultures have not fully developed. According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, elementary school students are typically at the conventional stage, where they comply with social rules and norms. However, to achieve higher-level value internalization, they require experiences that trigger empathy and cross-cultural understanding. Without adequate opportunities to explore and celebrate global diversity, these values tend to remain merely knowledge, rather than becoming an integrated part of their self- identity reflected in their daily attitudes and behaviors.

The educational landscape in the 21st century is defined by a crucial shift from standardized instruction to a student-centric approach that embraces diversity. While traditional pedagogical methods often assume a uniform learning pace and style, modern education must acknowledge the inherent variability among students. This is where Differentiated Instruction becomes a foundational pillar, moving beyond a "one-size-fits-all" model to personalize the

learning journey. A truly responsive educational environment recognizes that students have diverse readiness levels, unique interests, and distinct learning profiles. It is a fundamental concern that, without a robust differentiated framework, educators face a significant challenge in effectively engaging every student, especially in multicultural settings where both academic and social-emotional needs are highly varied.

Our preliminary diagnostic assessment across six private elementary schools in Buleleng reveals that the challenges faced by students and educators are not merely about exposure to global cultures but also about significant internal diversity within the classroom. Table 1 below summarizes the key findings regarding student readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

Table 1. Students' Learning Diagnostic Test Results

No.	School	Readiness	Interests	Learning Profile
1	School X	The majority have mastered basic concepts, but a significant gap exists in understanding more abstract concepts.	Highly diverse, with a focus on Arts and Science.	Visual (65%) and Kinesthetic are dominant.
2	School Y	High readiness, but collaboration within heterogeneous groups still requires intervention.	Focused on technology and robotics.	Auditory (50%) and Visual (35%) are dominant.
3	School Z	Readiness is relatively even, but weaknesses are found in unstructured problem-solving.	Diverse, with a focus on sports, music, and crafts.	Auditory and Kinesthetic are common.
4	School T	Noticeable gaps in readiness, from very fast understanding to those needing extra guidance.	Interested in performing arts and humanities.	Auditory (40%) and Visual (40%) are prominent.
5	School U	Readiness is relatively even, but students struggle to apply theoretical knowledge to practice.	Evenly distributed across various fields, including science, language, and mathematics.	Visual is dominant.
6	School V	Readiness is generally good, but students need more support in developing divergent thinking.	Interests are concentrated on outdoor activities and environmental exploration.	Kinesthetic (60%) is very dominant.

Initial diagnostic data presented in Table 1 reveal that the challenge in instilling a global diversity character does not solely stem from a lack of exposure to international cultures but also from the significant internal diversity of the students themselves. This assessment shows that each school has a unique and varied student profile in terms of readiness, interests, and learning profiles. For instance, although students at a School X have good readiness, they still struggle with more abstract concepts. On the other hand, students at School V are highly dominant with a kinesthetic learning style, which requires a different pedagogical approach. This internal diversity becomes a major obstacle because a uniform teaching approach will not be effective for all students. If teachers only focus on differentiating content, they will fail to meet the needs of students who learn in an auditory, visual, or kinesthetic way. The challenge

is how to create a learning framework that can adapt to the unique needs of each student, thereby allowing students to internalize global diversity values in a more profound and authentic manner. This underscores that differentiated instruction is not just a relevant approach, but also an essential one.

The Role of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) Integration in Developing Global Diversity Character

Teachers in this multicultural elementary school demonstrate a sound understanding of the basic principles of CRT, particularly in the context of responding to the diverse cultural backgrounds of students at the national level. They recognize the importance of connecting learning materials with students' cultural backgrounds to enhance relevance and engagement. However, their comprehension of how CRT can be expanded to foster global diversity awareness, encompassing an appreciation for international cultures, still requires deepening. Teachers admit that their primary focus thus far has been on tolerance and diversity within the Indonesian context, aligning with the prevailing curriculum.

Although CRT has been applied in responding to local diversity, its implementation to foster global diversity awareness remains suboptimal. Teachers frequently employ culturally responsive teaching methods, such as group projects involving students from various Indonesian ethnic groups or discussions about different religious holidays. However, they admit the challenges in introducing international cultures in depth, beyond superficial knowledge. The need for global diversity awareness necessitates teachers enriching their CRT practices with materials and activities that explicitly invite students to explore cultures from abroad, helping them build bridges between local experiences and the global context (Agustia et al., 2024; Herdianto, 2023).

In practice, teachers have made commendable efforts to implement Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) elements in their classrooms to manage local diversity. They commonly integrate local examples, traditional folk tales from various Indonesian ethnic groups, and promote collaborative group work to foster an environment of tolerance and cooperation among students from different backgrounds. However, this implementation is often limited to a superficial level. The application of CRT to develop a more profound global diversity awareness such as through in-depth discussions on international cultures, global issues, or cross-cultural collaboration projects has not been a primary focus and is often carried out sporadically (Angeli et al., 2016; Herwina, 2023).

Despite teachers' awareness and these preliminary efforts, a comprehensive and integrated implementation of CRT remains a significant challenge. Our findings indicate that educators face substantial obstacles in truly differentiating their instruction specifically in content, process, and product to align with students' diverse interests and unique learning profiles. This is primarily due to constraints of time and limited resources, which prevent them from conducting the in-depth diagnostic assessments and curriculum adaptations necessary for a fully leveraged, CRT-driven differentiated approach. This gap between theoretical understanding and practical application highlights a critical area that requires a more structured and sustained educational intervention.

Teachers in this school demonstrate a fairly good understanding of CRT as a pillar of character education, especially within the context of national diversity. They realize that CRT, with its principle of recognizing and utilizing students' cultural backgrounds as a learning resource, is highly relevant for creating an inclusive environment. This concept aligns with Gloria Ladson-Billings' ideas, emphasizing the importance of teachers as cultural facilitators.

Teachers strive to integrate local stories, traditions, and regional values into learning to build a sense of belonging and strengthen students' identity amidst diversity (Wang et al., 2024). However, understanding the extension of CRT to explicitly foster global (international) diversity awareness still requires reinforcement.

CRT Integration toward a Vision of Differentiated and Deep Learning

Differentiated learning, as a core pedagogical approach within the Merdeka Curriculum, offers a flexible and adaptive framework to meet the diverse learning needs of students. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are encouraged to understand students' learning profiles, including their learning styles, interests, and readiness, to subsequently design appropriate learning experiences (Aprima & Sari, 2022; Istiqomah et al., 2023). This differs from a standardized approach that often fails to accommodate the varying paces and methods of learning for each individual. Through the differentiation of content, process, product, and learning environment, teachers can create an inclusive atmosphere where every student feels valued and challenged to reach their maximum potential, not only in cognitive aspects but also in character development.

The implementation of differentiated learning becomes even more effective and meaningful when synergized with the principles of CRT. CRT fundamentally recognizes that students' cultural backgrounds are valuable assets in the learning process. Within the Merdeka Curriculum, where the strengthening of deep learning is heavily emphasized, CRT integration allows teachers to delve into the richness of students' local cultures as a source of inspiration and teaching materials (Gusteti & Neviyarni, 2022; Kristiandari et al., 2023). For instance, teachers can differentiate content by incorporating folk tales from various ethnic groups present in the classroom, or by varying learning products so that students can express their understanding through media aligned with their cultural expressions. This approach not only enhances the relevance of the subject matter but also strengthens students' self-identity and fosters mutual respect for diverse cultures within the classroom.

By integrating differentiated learning and CRT within the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers can build truly transformative learning environments. Teachers can differentiate the learning process by using methods responsive to specific cultural learning styles, for example, by providing options for group discussions or oral presentations that might be more suitable for students from cultural backgrounds that value communal interaction (Ayu, 2022). More than just a technical adjustment, this combination enables the authentic cultivation of a global diversity character. Students learn about diversity and experience and appreciate diversity itself through meaningful interactions, critical reflection on different perspectives, and collaborative problem-solving that bridges cultural differences, preparing them to become inclusive and capable citizens in a global era.

By integrating differentiated learning and CRT within the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers can build truly transformative learning environments. These environments cultivate a global diversity character based on key elements outlined by the Ministry of Education (2022), as represented in the table below. This approach enables a seamless blend of theory and practice, moving beyond mere exposure to international cultures and fostering a deep, authentic internalization of diverse values.

Table 2. Global diversity character based on the key elements outlined by the ministry of education

No.	Global Diversity Character	CRT Integration Mission	Differentiated Learning Focus	Examples in Practice
1	Recognizing and Appreciating Culture	To leverage students' cultural backgrounds as a foundation for exploring and valuing international cultures.	Content Differentiation and Interest-Based Learning	Offering a choice of projects that involve researching festivals, food, or traditional clothing from various countries. Incorporating international folk tales or children's stories as reading material to introduce diverse beliefs and practices.
2	Cross-Cultural Communication Skills	To create a classroom environment where students can effectively communicate, collaborate, and build empathy with peers from different backgrounds.	Process Differentiation and Collaborative Learning	Facilitating group discussions or role-playing activities that require students to solve a problem from multiple cultural perspectives. Assigning collaborative projects that pair students from different cultural backgrounds, encouraging them to share their unique experiences to complete a task.
3	Reflection and Responsibility	To guide students in critically reflecting on their own cultural experiences and developing a sense of global citizenship.	Product Differentiation and Reflective Practice	Asking students to create a reflective journal, a video, or a presentation that synthesizes their understanding of stereotypes and prejudices. Providing an option to write a letter to a global organization or create a campaign poster about a global issue (e.g., environmental protection or human rights), demonstrating their new sense of responsibility.

This strategic combination enables the authentic cultivation of global diversity. Students not only learn about diversity but also experience and appreciate diversity itself through meaningful interactions, critical reflection on different perspectives, and collaborative problem-solving that bridges cultural differences, preparing them to become inclusive and capable citizens in a global era. The synthesis of findings indicates that the foundation of tolerance and diversity among students is well-established at the local/national level, but there is a significant gap in their understanding and internalization of global diversity, particularly concerning the appreciation for international cultural diversity (Handiyani & Muhtar, 2022). CRT has been successfully implemented by teachers in responding to the school's internal diversity, yet its

full potential to broaden students' horizons to a global level has not been optimally utilized (Castagno & Brayboy, 2020). The main challenge lies in the lack of direct exposure and teaching strategies that explicitly target the international dimension of diversity, making it difficult for students to connect local diversity with the broader global context.

These findings reinforce the urgency of CRT in multicultural education, as suggested by Gay (2018), but also highlight the need to expand the scope of CRT implementation to be more proactive in instilling global diversity awareness. If local tolerance is the foundation, then global diversity is its apex, requiring deliberate instructional scaffolding (Aho, 2012). The practical implication is the necessity for developing more specific and engaging curricula and teaching materials to introduce international cultures, as well as more in-depth teacher training on CRT strategies that can facilitate global cross-cultural dialogue and interaction in the classroom (Andini, 2016; Farid et al., 2022). This research provides crucial qualitative insights to fill this understanding gap, forming a foundation for future educational interventions.

The synthesis of findings indicates that the foundation of student tolerance within the national scope is solid, but there is an urgent need to develop a deeper global diversity awareness, aligned with the spirit of the deep learning Merdeka Curriculum - global diversity dimension (Azmy & Fanny, 2023). These findings highlight that while students have achieved a small part of this dimension at the local level, its global aspect still requires planned and continuous intervention through responsive learning adaptations. The Merdeka Curriculum, with its flexibility and focus on the development of global diversity character and fosters global adaptation (Andaru et al., 2022). However, findings indicate that its implementation in the field has not fully capitalized on this potential for the global dimension. There is a great opportunity for teachers to interpret and apply the Merdeka Curriculum more creatively, incorporating elements of international cultures, global issues, and collaborative projects that transcend national boundaries, even if physical interaction is limited. This will help students not only appreciate diversity in their immediate environment but also be ready to adapt to global dynamics in the future.

This research also highlights the intersection between the development of national identity and global citizenship. A strong understanding of local tolerance is an important foundation for healthy nationalism, which respects diversity within the country. However, to face the challenges of the 21st century, nationalism must be expanded into global citizenship, where individuals understand their responsibilities as part of a global community (Dista et al., 2024). Challenges in the field indicate that there has been no systematic effort to explicitly link national identity with the role of world citizens, making it difficult for students to navigate this dual identity. CRT has the potential to be a bridge connecting these two concepts, allowing students to celebrate their cultural roots while embracing global diversity.

21st-century skills, particularly within the 6C model (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Citizenship, Character), are highly relevant to these findings. The skills of Citizenship and Character, especially global diversity, require strengthening. Critical Thinking is needed to analyze information about other cultures, while Communication and Collaboration are crucial for cross-cultural interaction. The innovation of this research lies in its in-depth qualitative exploration of how these aspects can be developed through CRT, filling a research gap that often focuses more on cognitive aspects. These findings provide rich insights into how culturally responsive learning experiences can uniquely foster the affective and social skills necessary to become capable and characterful global citizens, providing a strong foundation for the development of further educational interventions.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research reveal a nuanced educational landscape: while students possess a commendable foundational grasp of local and national diversity, their understanding and internalization of a more expansive "global" diversity remain superficial. This gap is primarily attributed to a deficit in pedagogical strategies that explicitly connect local tolerance to a broader global consciousness and a lack of direct exposure to international cultural variations. Although teachers have demonstrated proficiency in applying elements of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) to address internal diversity, its full potential to cultivate a robust sense of global interconnectedness remains largely untapped. Therefore, to effectively prepare students as empathetic and adaptable global citizens, future educational interventions must transcend mere tolerance by intentionally integrating diverse international perspectives into the curriculum and equipping educators with the advanced CRT techniques necessary to fully realize the "Global Diversity" aligning directly with the vision of the Deep Learning Merdeka Curriculum.

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