

## TEACHERS' ROLE IN FOSTERING GLOBAL DIVERSITY CHARACTER: A CASE STUDY AT WARUGUNUNG PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REMBANG

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates teachers' roles in fostering global diversity character among students at SD Negeri Warugunung, Rembang. A qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design was employed, using interviews, observations, and documentation with teachers, the principal, and students. The findings reveal three teacher roles. As educators, teachers model tolerance and empathy through daily interactions and value habituation. One teacher stated, "When students work in mixed groups, I remind them that every opinion matters and differences should be respected." Observations showed that religious and national holiday commemorations served as informal spaces for diversity learning. As instructors, teachers integrated multicultural perspectives into lessons, but inconsistently. Lesson plan reviews showed limited indicators, and a teacher admitted, "*I improvise during discussions because time is limited.*" As trainers, teachers facilitated cultural performances and collaborative projects that nurtured openness and cooperation, though documentation indicated extracurriculars remained detached from classroom learning. The study's novelty lies in its multidimensional analysis of teacher roles in a rural Indonesian school. Limitations include weak curriculum planning, lack of training, and limited external collaboration.

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### INTRODUCTIONS

The increasingly complex development of global society requires students not only to be academically competent but also to possess global diversity character. This character refers to the ability to respect, understand, and interact effectively with people from diverse cultural, religious, value-based, and identity backgrounds. It involves

curiosity, empathy, and the capacity to build meaningful intercultural relationships, making inclusive mindsets and adaptive competencies essential (Bennett, 2021). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through BSKAP Decree No. 018/H/M/2024 defines global diversity as an interest in cross-national differences (religion, culture, gender), along with concern for global issues. Thus, global diversity character has become an urgent necessity not merely as a moral value, but as a vital 21st-century life skill. UNESCO (2015) also emphasizes global citizenship education as key in fostering tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility while preparing future generations to face global challenges such as conflict, poverty, and migration.

Aligned with BSKAP Decree No. 031/H/KR/2024, students are expected to recognize and appreciate culture, engage in intercultural communication, reflect on diversity experiences, and uphold social justice. However, data from the Education Report of SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang shows that students' global diversity character is still low. In 2023, the score was 56.47, which declined to 51.77 in 2024 well below the "good" category standard of 85–100. Simultaneously, learning quality declined from 63.06 in 2023 to 58.38 in 2024.

Preliminary observations conducted on March 12, 2025, revealed several issues at SDN Warugunung: (1) teachers have not yet integrated global diversity character into learning; (2) teaching methods remain passive; (3) habituation of diversity values in daily activities is minimal; and (4) collaborative activities with the community have not been implemented. These findings indicate that the teacher's role in strengthening global diversity character has not yet been optimal.

SDN Warugunung was chosen as the research site because of its unique location on the border of Pancur and Lasem subdistricts, near three other schools within an 800-meter radius. Such conditions increase the risk of exclusivist attitudes or inter-school fanaticism, making the school an important arena for instilling global diversity character from an early age.

The novelty of this study lies in its focused exploration of the teacher's role as educator, instructor, and trainer in enhancing global diversity character at the elementary level, which remains underexplored in Indonesian primary education research. The study is expected to contribute to the development of adaptive and contextually relevant character education in Indonesia's pluralistic sociocultural setting.

### **Concept of Global Diversity Character**

Global diversity character refers to attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate cultural awareness, empathy toward different perspectives, and responsibility as a global citizen. Yulianti and Soetjipto (2021) define this character as the ability to engage in harmonious intercultural interactions. UNESCO (2018) explains that it involves knowledge, skills, and values needed to participate in a diverse global society. Similarly, Amira (2020) stresses the role of inclusion in civic education to prepare students for global challenges. In Indonesia, BSKAP Decree No. 018/H/M/2024 defines global diversity character as an interest in differences (religion, culture, gender) and concern for global issues.

Scholars have outlined several dimensions of global diversity character. Boix Mansilla and Jackson (2011) identify global knowledge, intercultural skills, ethical orientation, and value reflection as core aspects. Banks (2017) emphasizes cross-cultural empathy, social justice, and actions for social change. UNESCO (2015) highlights awareness of identity, moral responsibility, appreciation of diversity, and inclusive participation. Amira (2020) adds social inclusion and cross-cultural communication competence, while BSKAP Decree No. 031/H/KR/2024 outlines four pillars: (1) recognizing and appreciating culture, (2) intercultural communication, (3) reflection on diversity experiences, and (4) social justice.

### **Approaches to Developing Global Diversity Character in Schools**

Various strategies have been proposed for schools to foster global diversity character. Cahyani (2024) highlights the integration of cultural heritage into curriculum subjects, particularly IPAS (Social and Natural Sciences). Setiyawati et al. (2023) strengthen this approach through project-based character-building. Rohmah and Supriyadi (2024) recommend collaborative and reflective activities, while Manurung et al. (2023) design student worksheets (LKPD) with global diversity values using the ADDIE model. Muna et al. (2024) stress habituation

practices such as morning assemblies, cultural introductions, and 5S habits (Greeting, Smiling, Polite, Courteous) as part of daily routines to reinforce diversity values.

### **Teachers' Role in Fostering Global Diversity Character**

Teachers play a central role as agents of education. Asy'ari (2022) frames the teacher's role as a professional responsibility in transmitting both knowledge and values. Barbara (2015) and Saifuddin (2018) describe this responsibility as both social and moral. Arifin (2018) emphasizes teaching, guiding, training, assessing, and evaluating as core duties, which align with Law No. 14 of 2005 defining teachers as professional educators with roles in educating, teaching, training, and evaluating. Syahrul Sabanil et al. (2022) highlight teachers as facilitators, role models, and coaches in Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) projects. Noval and Adi (2024) expand the role into manager, innovator, motivator, and evaluator, while Tazia Aprilia et al. (2024) stress integrating local culture into teaching and fostering critical thinking. Zaenuri and Fatonah (2022) underline teachers as role models, mentors, and evaluators of student tolerance.

From these perspectives, the teacher's role can be categorized into three main dimensions: (1) Educator: instilling inclusive values and moral attitudes through role modeling, cultural discussions, and classroom agreements. (2) Instructor: integrating diversity-related content, interactive media, and projects into learning activities. (3) Trainer: developing practical intercultural skills through routines, simulations, collaborative projects, and conflict mediation.

## **METHOD**

Based on the research problem formulation, this study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. This approach was chosen as it allows for in-depth exploration of phenomena within a specific context namely, how teachers serve as educators, instructors, and trainers in strengthening students' global diversity character at SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang. According to Yin (2018), the case study approach is ideal for answering "how" and "why" questions about a phenomenon within bounded settings such as a school. He emphasizes that this approach enables the collection of data from various sources such as interviews with teachers, classroom observations, and school document analysis to produce a rich, contextually grounded understanding. Qualitative descriptive research is also highly effective for documenting in detail the processes and patterns of teacher roles, without aiming to develop theory or test causal relationships. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative descriptive research is appropriate for narratively describing real phenomena, such as how teachers at SD Negeri Warugunung apply instructional approaches to build students' character. Therefore, combining a case study approach with descriptive research design is a strategic choice, as it allows for the generation of detailed contextual insights without the intention of generalization. Yin (2018) reaffirms that a descriptive case study enables focused investigation of a single case to uncover specific processes and dynamics, such as teacher-student interaction in character building. By integrating interviews, observations, and documentation, this study constructs a comprehensive narrative that supports the goal of describing the teacher's roles—educator, instructor, and trainer in depth, in relation to enhancing global diversity character. This combination thus becomes a powerful tool to understand the phenomenon contextually.

The research was conducted at SD Negeri Warugunung, located in Rembang Regency. This site was selected for its relevance to the study's focus on teachers' roles in shaping students' global diversity character through an integrated educational approach. Site selection also considered the school's potential in developing character values through intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. The study was scheduled for six months, from March to August 2025, encompassing preparation, data collection, analysis, and the drafting of the research report. This extended duration is expected to yield a thorough and in-depth understanding of the object under investigation. The research design began with preliminary interviews to gather basic information regarding the study theme, particularly the declining trend in global diversity character scores at SDN Warugunung, as reflected in the 2023/2024 education report. The next step was to determine the research focus based on these initial findings. Data were then collected through research instruments including observation, interviews, and documentation to explore data in depth from various sources. The collected data were analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data display, and

conclusion drawing. The final results are presented in the research findings section, which comprehensively describes the role of teachers in enhancing students' global diversity character at SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang.

The subjects of this study were teachers at SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang who have fulfilled roles as educators, instructors, and trainers. Subject selection was carried out using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) active teachers with a minimum of two years of service at the school, and (2) willingness to participate in the study. In qualitative research, subjects are referred to as *informants*, those who provide relevant information. Informants in this study included the principal, teachers, and students directly involved in global diversity character development.

The primary research instrument was the researcher, serving as the key instrument actively engaged throughout the research process. In addition, supporting instruments were used, including soft instruments such as interview guides, observation protocols, and documentation checklists, as well as hard instruments such as audio recorders and cameras (Ibrahim, 2015). Data collection instruments included observation sheets focused on the teacher's role as educator, instructor, and trainer; interviews designed to explore issues related to the implementation of global diversity character education; and documentation in both printed and digital forms related to school programs.

The data collection technique employed was triangulation, enabling the researcher to gather data from multiple sources and methods, thereby enhancing data reliability. Techniques used included direct observation of teacher and student behavior, in-depth interviews with various informants, and analysis of supporting documents. According to Sugiyono (2018), observation is a unique technique for capturing nonverbal behavior directly. The interviews followed the approach of Kahn & Channel (2023), characterized by purposeful verbal interactions focused on specific content. Documentation, as defined by Sugiyono (2018), involves collecting data in the form of archives, books, images, and reports relevant to the research focus.

To ensure data credibility, this study employed triangulation validation. According to Sugiyono (2024), triangulation includes three forms: source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from principals, teachers, and students. Technique triangulation involved comparing data gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation of the same subjects. Meanwhile, time triangulation entailed repeated data collection at different times to assess consistency. This approach ensures that the data collected are not only valid at a single point but are stable over time.

Data analysis techniques referred to the Miles and Huberman model, as described in Sugiyono (2024). The analysis process was conducted interactively and continuously until data saturation was achieved. The first step was data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Next was data reduction, a process of summarizing and selecting data relevant to the research focus. This was followed by data display in narrative or visual form to facilitate understanding. The final step was conclusion drawing, allowing for the discovery of new insights not previously disclosed (Sugiyono, 2024). These findings include in-depth descriptions of teachers' roles in developing students' global diversity character.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This study aims to explore how teachers play their role in enhancing students' global diversity character through three main dimensions: as educators, instructors, and trainers. Data were obtained through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis at SD Negeri Warugunung, Pancur District, Rembang Regency.

#### Teacher's Role as Educator

Based on classroom observations, teachers often attempted to instill values of tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences during daily learning interactions. For example, during heterogeneous group work, students were reminded to listen to each other's opinions and accept differences in perspective. Teachers also took advantage of cultural and religious holidays, such as Independence Day or Idul Fitri, as informal moments to discuss the meaning of unity in diversity. However, these efforts were often spontaneous and not consistently included in formal teaching



documents. Lesson plan analysis confirmed that indicators related to global diversity character were rarely written explicitly. Interviews reinforced these observations: one teacher explained, *“When students work in mixed groups, I remind them that every opinion matters and differences should be respected”* (Interview, June 19, 2025). Another teacher admitted, *“I often use religious holidays to tell stories about tolerance, but it is still spontaneous, not always planned”* (Interview, June 19, 2025). These statements, along with document review, illustrate that while teachers recognize the importance of their role as educators in transmitting diversity values, the practice remains incidental and unsystematic.

The findings show that teachers are already functioning as educators by transmitting diversity values through informal learning practices. However, the lack of systematic integration in teaching plans weakens the sustainability of these efforts. This suggests that the formation of diversity character in students still depends heavily on the personal initiative and sensitivity of individual teachers, rather than being institutionalized within the school’s pedagogical framework. The implication is that character formation will remain fragmented and potentially inconsistent unless schools adopt policies to formally embed diversity education into lesson planning and curriculum design.

### **Teacher’s Role as Instructor**

As instructors, teachers sought to link academic content with global diversity character. Observations showed that some teachers used thematic teaching media featuring figures from different cultural or religious backgrounds to enrich student perspectives. Classroom discussions occasionally explored social issues such as bullying or cultural differences in the local community. Several teachers also assigned small projects encouraging students to recognize cultural variations around them. Despite these efforts, documentation of lesson plans and teaching materials revealed that diversity-related indicators were still missing from most RPP. One teacher admitted, *“Honestly, I haven’t written diversity character indicators explicitly in my lesson plan. Sometimes I just improvise during class discussions”* (Interview, June 19, 2025). Another noted, *“Time is limited and administrative demands are heavy, so character integration often becomes secondary”* (Interview, June 19, 2025). These findings indicate that diversity education as part of classroom instruction is uneven, depending largely on individual teacher awareness, and not yet consistently implemented across subjects.

The findings demonstrate that the role of teachers as instructors in fostering diversity character is present but still partial and inconsistent. While some efforts to integrate diversity into lessons exist, the absence of explicit indicators in planning documents makes these practices less structured. Teachers’ acknowledgment of barriers such as time constraints, workload, and lack of training further explains why character education is often overshadowed by cognitive learning targets. This situation highlights the need for institutional support in the form of training, curriculum guidelines, and reduced administrative burdens, so that teachers can systematically integrate diversity values into classroom instruction. Without such support, the integration of global diversity character risks being treated as optional enrichment rather than a fundamental educational goal.

### **Teacher’s Role as Trainer**

The role of teachers as trainers was observed in extracurricular and classroom-based activities aimed at cultivating practical skills of cooperation, tolerance, and empathy. Teachers facilitated cultural performances, collaborative games, and group projects that required students to work with peers from different backgrounds. Observations revealed that students generally showed openness, tolerance, and care toward one another during these activities. Teachers also provided opportunities for students to share experiences of diversity during class forums, which encouraged dialogue and mutual understanding. However, document analysis revealed that extracurricular programs related to diversity were still separated from formal classroom instruction, creating a lack of continuity. One teacher highlighted the positive impact of such activities, stating, *“Through cultural performances and group activities, students learn to cooperate and appreciate differences. They become more tolerant”* (Interview, June 20, 2025). Nevertheless, another teacher acknowledged the limitations, remarking, *“We rarely involve parents or the community in these activities, so the impact is sometimes limited”* (Interview, June 20, 2025). These statements show

that while effective at the student level, the scope of training practices remains constrained by weak collaboration with external stakeholders.

The findings indicate that teachers are successful in using practical activities to train students in global diversity character, providing them with real-life contexts for practicing tolerance and cooperation. However, the limited involvement of parents and the community reduces the long-term effectiveness of such training. Without external reinforcement, the values practiced at school may not be consistently applied in broader social contexts. This suggests the importance of building stronger school-community partnerships to ensure that character training activities are sustained and embedded in students' daily lives beyond the classroom. Furthermore, integrating extracurricular diversity activities with classroom instruction would provide a more holistic and continuous approach to developing global diversity character.

## Discussion

### Teacher's Role as Educator

The findings show that teachers at SD Negeri Warugunung have sought to shape students' diversity character through exemplary behavior, moral storytelling, and incidental value transmission during learning. This aligns with Widiastuti (2019), who argues that habituation and daily modeling are the most effective ways to cultivate diversity character. In this research, teachers' use of religious or national holidays as teaching moments confirms the power of habituation, but also reveals the reliance on incidental rather than structured practices. Rachmawati and Sumarni (2020) highlight the importance of dialogic and reflective approaches in enhancing multicultural awareness. Observations in this study show similar practices, as teachers encouraged students to voice opinions during class discussions. However, these practices remain spontaneous, not systematically documented in lesson plans.

This gap reflects what Arif & Hidayat (2022) describe as the disconnection between diversity visions and curriculum documents, which reduces character education to normative aspirations rather than measurable outcomes. Similarly, Nurhasanah and Salim (2023) warn that without clear indicators, character education depends too heavily on individual initiative and cannot be widely institutionalized. In the context of this study, the teachers' role as educators is evident but not supported by structural policies. Thus, compared to previous research, this study reinforces the argument that teacher exemplarity is effective but insufficient when not accompanied by systematic planning and institutional support.

### Teacher's Role as Instructor

Teachers in this study attempted to integrate diversity values into instruction by using thematic media and raising social issues in classroom dialogue. This resonates with Oktaviani et al. (2018), who emphasize that diversity-based learning strengthens students' awareness. However, lesson plan analysis showed that global diversity indicators were rarely included, making practices fragmented and inconsistent. This limitation echoes Setiawan and Fitriyani (2019), who found that inadequate use of multicultural resources hinders value internalization.

Wahyuni et al. (2021) assert that effective integration of character values requires comprehensive lesson planning and authentic assessment. In this research, although discussions and reflections occurred, teachers lacked systematic assessment tools, reducing the depth of diversity learning. Damayanti & Prasetyo (2020) emphasize the value of thematic and cross-subject approaches, but also note that implementation requires intensive training and policy support. This study confirms their view, as lack of training was cited by teachers as a significant barrier. Furthermore, Gunawan & Mustari (2022) stress the importance of formative assessment based on student behavior, yet documentation at SDN Warugunung showed minimal use of such assessment, leaving affective outcomes unmeasured.

Taken together, these findings show that while this study supports prior research on the benefits of integrating diversity into instruction, it also highlights how structural and resource limitations in Indonesian elementary schools create barriers to sustainable implementation. This positions the study as extending earlier literature by demonstrating

that teacher efforts alone cannot ensure comprehensive character formation without systemic curriculum alignment and institutional training support.

### **Teacher's Role as Trainer**

The study revealed that teachers implemented practical activities such as cultural performances, collaborative projects, and heterogeneous group tasks, which successfully nurtured tolerance and cooperation. This is consistent with Kusumawati et al. (2020), who found that experiential learning strongly supports value internalization. Similarly, Riyanto & Lestari (2021) report that collaborative projects increase empathy and multicultural awareness—findings mirrored in this study, where students displayed openness and care during group activities.

However, limitations were also evident. Teachers reported inadequate facilities and weak community partnerships, restricting the sustainability of diversity training outside the classroom. This supports Puspitasari and Kurniawan (2023), who emphasize the decisive role of family and community engagement in character education. Moreover, observations revealed that post-activity reflection was mostly spontaneous and verbal. This finding echoes Haryono & Nabila (2019), who caution that without structured reflection and teacher facilitation, character training loses depth. In this research, while students practiced tolerance, the absence of written or systematic reflection weakened long-term internalization.

Halimah et al. (2024) underline the importance of cross-program collaboration such as extracurriculars and counseling services to reinforce values. This study demonstrates that such collaboration at SDN Warugunung is minimal, with extracurricular activities separated from classroom-based learning. Thus, although the role of teachers as trainers is visible and effective at the classroom level, the lack of systemic integration across programs limits its broader impact. Compared to prior studies, this research highlights the tension between teacher-level initiatives and structural constraints, underscoring the need for holistic approaches that bridge classroom, extracurricular, family, and community domains.

Overall, the discussion confirms that teachers at SDN Warugunung already enact their roles as educators, instructors, and trainers in fostering global diversity character, but their practices remain fragmented, spontaneous, and dependent on personal initiative. While prior research affirms the effectiveness of habituation, dialogic learning, and experiential projects, this study critically shows that the absence of systematic planning, authentic assessment, and community collaboration undermines sustainability. Thus, the novelty of this research lies in illustrating how teachers' roles, though aligned with theoretical expectations, are constrained by institutional gaps. This positions the findings as both a confirmation and a critique of existing literature, while also pointing toward the urgent need for policy, curriculum, and partnership reforms to support teachers in fostering global diversity character more comprehensively.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that teachers play a significant role in shaping students' global diversity character at SD Negeri Warugunung Rembang through three main dimensions: as educators, instructors, and trainers. As educators, teachers instill values of tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences through exemplary behavior and habituation. As instructors, teachers begin to integrate diversity content into lessons, although most have not yet systematically included such content in instructional planning. In their role as trainers, teachers foster students' social skills through collaborative activities that support intercultural interaction and inclusive attitudes.

However, the study also reveals several limitations. First, the integration of global diversity values into instruction is inconsistent and still depends largely on individual teacher initiatives, due to the absence of specific guiding school policies. Second, teaching tools such as lesson plans and assessments do not yet fully include success indicators for diversity character development. Third, community and external stakeholder involvement in supporting student character formation remains limited. Additionally, facilities and teacher training on multicultural character education are still suboptimal, hindering the broader replication of good practices.

The novelty of this research lies in its simultaneous focus on the teacher's role as educator, instructor, and trainer within the context of global diversity character reinforcement at the elementary level, particularly in rural areas that have received limited scholarly attention. This study also offers a contextual perspective by depicting field practices that reflect real challenges in implementing multicultural values in primary education. Through a qualitative case study approach, this research provides a detailed description that may serve as a reference for policy development and educational practices related to global diversity character education in Indonesian elementary schools.

This study recommends the need for continuous teacher training, the development of teaching instruments that explicitly include global diversity values, and collaboration between schools, communities, and parents. Future research is encouraged to examine the effectiveness of specific interventions or instructional models designed to strengthen students' global diversity character using quantitative or mixed-method approaches, and to involve a broader range of schools to increase the generalizability of findings

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