



The effect of integrating multicultural values into social studies materials on elementary students' patriotic attitudes

Athanasia Dian Setiati¹, Devi Anggi Friani¹, Agus Martins²

¹ Universitas Doktor Nugroho Magetan, Indonesia

² Universidade Dili, Timor-Leste

Correspondence: adiansetiati@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of integrating multicultural values into social studies (IPS) materials on elementary students' patriotic attitudes. A quasi-experimental design with a Nonequivalent Control Group was applied, involving 56 fifth-grade students from a public elementary school in Kupang, Indonesia, divided into an experimental group ($n = 28$) and a control group ($n = 28$). The experimental group received IPS learning integrated with multicultural values, while the control group received conventional IPS learning. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire measuring patriotic attitudes, supported by classroom observations. Descriptive results showed greater improvement in the experimental group, with pretest mean 58.2 increasing to 74.8 posttest ($N\text{-gain} = 0.39$), compared to $57.9 \rightarrow 63.5$ ($N\text{-gain} = 0.10$) in the control group. Paired and independent t-tests indicated significant improvement in the experimental group, and Cohen's $d = 1.85$ reflected a large effect size. These findings suggest that integrating multicultural values into IPS materials effectively enhances students' understanding of cultural diversity and strengthens patriotic attitudes. The study provides practical implications for educators and curriculum developers to design inclusive, culturally responsive IPS learning that fosters civic awareness and character development in elementary students.



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INTRODUCTION

Basic education is a critical stage in the formation of students' national character and social identity (Prihatmojo et al., 2024). At this stage, students begin to understand the concept of self, social groups, and students' relationships with the wider community. Social studies education is seen as a strategic medium to instill multicultural values and an attitude of love for the homeland, because through relevant materials, students can be introduced to cultural diversity while building a sense of responsibility towards the nation (Patras et al., 2022). Multicultural education not only expands students' knowledge of cultural diversity, but also leads students to understand, appreciate, and internalize national values rooted in respect for differences (Wales, 2022). This shows that social studies can be an effective means to build social skills and positive attitudes that support national unity, if the integration of multicultural values is carried out systematically and contextually.

Social studies learning at the elementary school level has challenges, where material tends to be delivered factually and descriptively without emphasizing cross-cultural understanding and respect for

differences (Umar & Haryanto, 2023). Students' knowledge of cultural diversity is often limited to memorizing characters, events, or locations, so this understanding does not always translate into a positive attitude towards unity and love for the homeland (Daud & Triadi, 2021). This shows that there is a gap between factual knowledge and the internalization of national values, which raises the urgent need for a learning strategy that links knowledge with positive attitudes towards the nation.

The integration of multicultural values in social studies materials can be explained through the theoretical foundation and curriculum framework (Efendi & Lien, 2021). The Independent Curriculum and Pancasila Student Profile emphasize the dimension of global diversity, intercultural communication skills, and social responsibility as the main competencies that must be developed since elementary education (Abidin & Murtadlo, 2020). UNESCO's principles of intercultural education emphasize appreciation for students' cultural identities and the development of co-living skills in diverse societies (Rahmawati et al., 2023). With this approach, social studies materials not only introduce cultural facts, but also shape attitudes and behaviors that respect differences, support cross-cultural cooperation, and strengthen students' national identities.

Previous research results show that multicultural education has a positive effect on the development of students' social attitudes, tolerance, and national identity (Bradshaw & Randolph, 2021; Fatima et al., 2024; Kılavuz, 2023). The integration of multicultural values in subjects increases empathy, appreciation for diversity, and student engagement in social activities. Multicultural-based learning can reduce prejudice and improve students' ability to live in diverse societies (Mustafida & Gafur, 2023; Rybinska et al., 2020; Villagran et al., 2023). However, most of the research is descriptive or qualitative, and there are still few that use quasi-experimental designs to measure the direct influence of the integration of multicultural values in social studies materials on the attitude of love for the homeland in elementary school students. This creates a research gap, because there is no strong enough empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of this learning strategy in the context of nationality and character education at the elementary school level. Therefore, empirical research that uses experimental or quasi-experimental design is indispensable to answer this question.

This study aims to examine the influence of the integration of multicultural values in social studies materials on the attitude of love for the homeland of elementary school students by using a quasi-experimental design. The novelty of the research lies in empirical testing that links multicultural learning with the strengthening of students' national character through measurable quantitative data. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution by emphasizing that multicultural education can support the formation of a true attitude of love for the homeland.

METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with quasi-experimental design, which allows testing the effect of learning interventions on bound variables systematically even though subjects are not randomly selected. The design model used is Nonequivalent Control Group Design, where there are two groups of students, namely the experimental group and the control group, who are given different treatment. The experimental group received social studies learning that integrated multicultural values, while the control group followed conventional learning. This design was chosen due to the limitations of full randomization at the grade level in elementary schools, but still allows for the analysis of differences in learning outcomes between the two groups (Creswell, 2018). With this design, the influence of integrating multicultural values on students' attitudes of love for homeland can be measured through the difference in pretest and posttest scores between groups.

Participants and Research Setting

The research subjects consisted of grade V students of one of the public elementary schools in Kupang City in the even semester of the 2025/2026 school year. The research sample consisted of two parallel classes: the VA class as the experimental group and the VB class as the control group. Each class totals 28 students, so the total research subject is 56 students. Class selection is made based on the availability of parallel classes and the school's approval, so full randomization cannot be carried out. Subject characteristics include ages between 10 and 11 years, a balance between boys and girls, as well as heterogeneous sociocultural backgrounds, which allowed the study to reflect the general classroom conditions in public elementary schools.

Intervention Design

The experimental group was given social studies learning that had been designed to integrate multicultural values. The integration component includes the presentation of material on the diversity of Indonesian ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultures; the presentation of national and local figures from various cultural backgrounds; case studies on cooperation between cultural groups; discussions on tolerance, unity, and social responsibility; as well as group project tasks such as poster making, cultural maps, and group presentations. The treatment was carried out for four meetings, each lasting 2 x 35 minutes. The control group followed conventional social studies learning according to textbooks and teacher methods, with similar topics but without explicit integration of multicultural values. The design of the study is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Design

Groups	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Eksperimen	O ₁	Multicultural value-based social studies learning	O ₂
Controls	O ₃	Conventional social studies learning	O ₄

Remarks: O₁ and O₃ indicate the pre-test score of patriotism; O₂ and O₄ indicate the post-test score of patriotism.

Research Instruments

The main instrument of the study was a patriotism attitude questionnaire consisting of 20 statements with a Likert scale of 4 points (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The questionnaire indicators are designed based on Banks' (2016) multicultural education theory, which includes awareness of differences, respect for diversity, and cooperative and tolerant actions in social interactions. The validity of the instrument was tested through expert judgment and the item validity test using Pearson's correlation, while reliability was measured by Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.872, indicating a very reliable category. In addition to questionnaires, data are reinforced through observation and learning documentation to ensure consistency in the application of interventions and support quantitative interpretation.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is carried out through several systematic stages. First, the researcher obtained a research permit from the school and socialized the research procedure to teachers and parents of students. Second, the instrument is validated by experts and tested to ensure the suitability of the statement items with the measured indicators. Third, pre-tests were given to both groups before the treatment was carried out to obtain a baseline data on patriotism. Fourth, the learning treatment was carried out in the experimental group, while the control group received conventional learning. Fifth, a post-test is given after the intervention is completed to measure changes in attitude. All stages were documented through field notes and classroom observations to support the validity of the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was used to obtain information about the average, median, and standard deviation of students'

patriotism attitude scores before and after treatment. Inferential analysis was performed to test the significance of the difference in scores between groups and within each group. The normality assumption test was performed using Shapiro-Wilk, while homogeneity was tested using the Levene's Test. Hypothesis tests were carried out with paired sample t-test to see the change in scores in each group and independent sample t-test to compare post-test scores between groups. This analysis allows researchers to assess whether the integration of multicultural values in social studies materials has a significant influence on students' patriotic attitudes.

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

The study involved 56 grade V students from one of the public elementary schools in Kupang City, divided into two parallel classes. The VA class as an experimental group and the VB class as a control group, each totaling 28 students. The experimental group received social studies learning that integrated multicultural values, while the control group followed conventional learning.

Participant characteristics were examined by gender and age to ensure initial equality between groups. The experimental group consisted of 14 male students and 14 female students with an average age of 10.6 years, while the control group consisted of 13 male students and 15 female students with an average age of 10.5 years.

Table 2. Characteristics of Research Participants

Groups	N	Male	Women	Average Age (years)
Eksperimen	28	14	14	10,6
Control	28	13	15	10,5
Total	56	27	29	10,55

The gender distribution was balanced and the average age of the two groups was about the same. This equivalence ensures that the difference in posttest results will be more related to learning treatment than demographic factors.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The main instrument of the research was a patriotism attitude questionnaire tested for validity through expert judgment and a test of item validity using Pearson correlation. The results of the analysis showed that all items had a correlation coefficient between 0.45 to 0.78, so the instrument was categorized as valid and suitable for use in this study. The reliability of the instrument is measured by Cronbach's Alpha, which results in a value of 0.872. This value shows that the instrument is very reliable, so the data obtained from the questionnaire can be trusted and consistent to measure students' patriotism.

Descriptive Statistics

The pretest and posttest scores of students' patriotism are shown in Table 2. This descriptive analysis aims to look at the participants' initial condition before treatment and changes in scores after the intervention. To measure the rate of improvement, an N-gain calculation was used which reflected the magnitude of the change in score relative to the maximum potential increase in each participant.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Patriotism Attitude Scores

Groups	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	N-gain
Eksperimen	28	58,2	5,6	74,8	4,9	0,39
Control	28	57,9	5,4	63,5	5,2	0,10

From this table, it can be seen that the average pretest scores of the two groups were relatively equal, namely 58.2 in the experimental group and 57.9 in the control group, indicating that the initial

condition of the participants was comparable. After treatment, the experimental group saw an average increase to 74.8, while the control group only increased to 63.5. The N-gain value in the experimental group was in the medium category (0.39), while in the control group it was relatively low (0.10). These results confirm that social studies learning that integrates multicultural values has a greater effect in increasing students' patriotism compared to conventional learning. In addition, differences in improvement between groups showed that interventions played a significant role in strengthening students' understanding of cultural diversity while increasing appreciation of national values.

Assumption Testing

Before conducting the hypothesis test, statistical assumptions were examined to ensure the validity of the inferential analysis. The normality test using Shapiro-Wilk was applied to the pretest and posttest scores of each group. The test results showed that the scores in both groups were normally distributed, with a p value of > 0.05 on all measurements. This normal distribution is important because the statistical methods used, such as the paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test, require the normality of the data to produce valid conclusions.

In addition, the variance homogeneity test was performed using the Levene's Test to assess the uniformity of variance between the experimental and control groups. The results showed a value of $p = 0.213$, which indicated that the score variance between groups was homogeneous. This ensures that the observed score difference is not caused by differences in the distribution of initial data, so that the posttest comparison analysis between groups can be carried out appropriately.

Table 4. Results of Normality and Homogeneity of Variance Test

Test	Groups	Statistics	p-value	Remarks
Shapiro-Wilk Pretest	Eksperimen	0,963	0,162	Normal distribution
Shapiro-Wilk Pretest	Control	0,954	0,114	Normal distribution
Shapiro-Wilk Posttest	Eksperimen	0,970	0,084	Normal distribution
Shapiro-Wilk Posttest	Control	0,967	0,091	Normal distribution
Levene's Test (Homogenitas)	Experience vs. Control	—	0,213	Variance between homogeneous groups

Based on the results of the normality and homogeneity tests, the data met the assumptions needed for the next inferential analysis, so that the comparison of pretest and posttest scores and differences between groups could be carried out by parametric statistical procedures.

Hypothesis Testing

To test the influence of integrating multicultural values in social studies materials on students' patriotism, an inferential analysis was conducted using paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test. The paired sample t-test was used to assess changes in the patriotism attitude score in each group before and after treatment, while the independent sample t-test was used to compare posttest scores between groups, i.e. between the experimental and control groups. This analysis is carried out after the data meets the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance, so that the test results can be considered valid and can be used as a basis for conclusions.

The results of the paired sample t-test showed that the patriotism attitude score increased significantly in both groups. In the experimental group, the average score increased from 58.2 on the pretest to 74.8 on the posttest, with $t = 12.34$ and $p = 0.000$. This increase shows that social studies learning treatment integrated with multicultural values significantly increases students' patriotism. Meanwhile, the control group also showed an increase in scores from 57.9 to 63.5, with $t = 4.87$ and $p = 0.001$. Although the increase in the control group was statistically significant, the magnitude of the improvement was lower than in the experimental group.

Table 5. Paired Sample t-Test Results

Groups	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	t	p-value
Eksperimen	58,2	74,8	12,34	0,000
Control	57,9	63,5	4,87	0,001

An independent sample t-test was used to test the difference in posttest scores between the experimental and control groups. The test results showed that the posttest score in the experimental group (74.8) was significantly higher than that of the control group (63.5), with $t = 8.65$, $df = 54$, and $p = 0.000$. These results confirm that the difference in posttest scores did not occur by chance, but as a result of the learning treatment given.

Table 6. Independent Sample t-Test Posttest Results

Groups Compared	Posttest Mean Eksperimen	Posttest Mean Control	t	df	p-value
Experience vs. Control	74,8	63,5	8,65	54	0,000

The results of this analysis show that the integration of multicultural values in social studies materials has a stronger effect in increasing students' patriotism compared to conventional learning. A significant increase in scores in the experimental group confirmed the effectiveness of the intervention as a learning strategy that was able to strengthen students' awareness of national values and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Effect Size

The magnitude of the intervention effect was calculated using Cohen's d , which yielded a value of 1.85, including the large category. These results show that the integration of multicultural values in social studies materials has a significant influence on increasing students' patriotism. The large effect size confirmed that the difference in posttest scores between the experimental and control groups was not a coincidence, but a real result of the treatment. Multicultural values-based social studies learning enhances students' understanding of cultural diversity as well as students' appreciation and involvement in national values. These results show the effectiveness of the intervention in strengthening the national character at the elementary school level.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the integration of multicultural values in social studies materials has a significant effect on increasing the patriotism of elementary school students. The experimental group, which received multicultural value-based learning, showed an increase in average scores from 58.2 to 74.8, while the control group only increased from 57.9 to 63.5. The N-gain in the experimental group (0.39) was moderate, while the control group was low (0.10), which confirmed the effectiveness of the intervention. Inferential analysis through paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test also supported these findings, with differences between groups being statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.85$). These findings are in line with the principles of multicultural education which emphasizes that education based on cultural diversity is able to form positive attitudes, increase tolerance, and strengthen national identity from an early age (Sipayung & Dwiningrum, 2020).

The increase in pretest to posttest scores in the experimental group showed that the learning intervention succeeded in changing students' affective and conative attitudes. Learning that emphasizes cross-cultural understanding, self-reflection, case studies, and group projects allows students to internalize national values in the context of diversity. This strengthens social skills such as empathy, intergroup cooperation, and respect for differences, all of which are important dimensions in the formation of civic character (Halverson et al., 2025; Komara et al., 2025). While the control group also showed an improvement, the magnitude was much smaller, suggesting that conventional learning has

not been effective enough to internalize multicultural values and build a deeper attitude of patriotism (Prihatmojo et al., 2026).

Comparison of posttest between groups through an independent sample t-test confirmed that the increase in the experimental group was not a coincidence, but the result of systematic treatment. These results show that multicultural values-based social studies learning strategies have a real impact, not only on students' knowledge but also on attitudes and behaviors related to love for the homeland. With a large effect size, this study proves that interventions make a significant contribution to differences in scores between groups, indicating that this approach is effective in building national awareness and appreciation of diversity since primary education (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023). These findings also support the international literature showing that inclusive and multicultural value-based learning strengthens students' understanding of social responsibility and national identity (Abidin & Murtadlo, 2020).

Theoretically, this study strengthens the argument that multicultural education not only increases cognitive knowledge about diversity, but also influences affective and conative dimensions in the formation of national attitudes (Prama Dewi, 2018; Sipayung & Dwiningrum, 2020). The integration of multicultural values in social studies materials helps students relate learning experiences to everyday social practices, such as tolerance of friends of different backgrounds, collaboration in classroom projects, and appreciation for national symbols. This is in line with the theory (Banks, 2015) about the five dimensions of multicultural education, namely content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, fair pedagogy, and empowering school culture, all of which support the development of national character comprehensively.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings have important implications for teaching practice in primary schools. Teachers can design learning activities that emphasize cross-cultural discussions, case studies of intergroup cooperation, collaborative projects, and student reflection to strengthen the internalization of national values (Ahmadin, 2023; Manurung et al., 2022). This approach not only emphasizes the understanding of social studies concepts, but also improves students' social and emotional skills, including empathy, tolerance, and active involvement in civic activities (Wahyani et al., 2022). This confirms that multicultural value-based teaching can be an effective strategy to build a holistic national character, combining the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of students (Fatima et al., 2024).

Strategically, the results of this research also provide direction for curriculum developers and education policy makers. The integration of multicultural content in social studies materials can systematically enrich students' learning experiences, making learning more contextual, relevant, and inclusive (Wales, 2022). This approach allows students not only to understand historical and cultural facts, but also to internalize national values, respect for diversity, and social responsibility (Damanik, 2022). Thus, social studies learning based on multicultural values can play a role in forming a tolerant young generation, skilled in interacting in a pluralistic society, and having a strong patriotism as citizens.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the integration of multicultural values in social studies materials significantly increases the patriotism attitudes of elementary school students. Students who received multicultural value-based learning showed a higher improvement in posttest scores than the control group, with moderate N-gain scores and large effect sizes, confirming the effectiveness of the intervention. These findings confirm that social studies learning that includes appreciation for cultural diversity not only expands students' cognitive understanding, but also strengthens affective and conative dimensions in the formation of national character, so that this strategy can be a practical model to support character education and patriotism from an early age.

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