



The Understanding of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Among High School Students and Teachers in East Kalimantan

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Abstract: This study aims to assess the knowledge of culturally responsive education among high school teachers and students in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. It utilizes a mixed-methods design, adopting a convergent mixed-methods approach. Data for this research were collected from high school students across various districts and cities within the province of East Kalimantan. The research data comprise quantitative information from questionnaire responses regarding knowledge of culturally responsive education. A questionnaire, commonly employed in survey research, is a structured instrument in which student participants select answers to pre-designed questions and provide basic demographic or personal information. Qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with teachers. Data analysis involves two approaches: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative analysis uses NVIVO software, while the quantitative analysis employs descriptive statistics and inferential t-tests. The findings indicate that all respondents fall within the proficient classification. The interviews with three teachers reveal four themes: 1) awareness and understanding of cultural diversity, 2) addressing injustice in the classroom, 3) building cross-cultural communication, and 4) curriculum and cultural diversity.

Keywords: cultural diversity; culturally responsive pedagogy; high school students; high school teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Multicultural responsive education acknowledges that students come from diverse backgrounds, each with distinct approaches to learning and interaction. Consequently, students and educators must grasp the principles of multicultural responsiveness and the social environment to foster a learning atmosphere that prepares the nation's youth for engagement in global relations. The future educational landscape in East Kalimantan will require a pronounced emphasis on multicultural responsive education, especially in light of establishing Nusantara's National Capital (IKN). This development will undoubtedly influence the surrounding areas, encouraging the emergence of a pluralistic and multicultural modern society. In this context, as argued by Gay (2015), educators' decisions and actions are guided by principles of local contextuality and the plurality of instruction, informed by the varying configurations of students. Therefore, it is crucial for the millennial demographic in Kalimantan, particularly those in primary and secondary education, to be equipped with the necessary cultural perspectives and responses.

Closely aligned with the aims of multicultural education, culturally relevant curricula and instructional practices were being described and examined by scholars of cultural difference, following the work of progressive social scientists such as Benjamin Bloom (Gay, 2018). The concepts of culturally relevant pedagogy proposed by Ladson-Billings (1995) and culturally responsive pedagogy created by Gay (2018) and later affirmed by Paris (2012) as culturally sustaining are also highlighted. The distinction between multiculturalism and culturally responsive pedagogy is emphasized by the African American scholar Geneva Gay (Gay, 2018). Furthermore, the foundational concept of multicultural responsive education draws from the theory of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), which posits that students' learning styles are shaped by their cultural backgrounds, necessitating teaching approaches that align with these cultural perspectives. This aligns with efforts to revitalize cultural expressions to support educational practice (Villegas, 1991; Provenzo et al., 2009). Culturally responsive teaching is defined as the *practice that occurs when there is respect for the backgrounds and circumstances of students, regardless of individual status and power*.

Numerous studies have addressed this issue, exploring strategies employed by various stakeholders to create a multicultural, responsive school environment, caring, and school belongings concerning RCP (Tanase, 2022; Guan et al., 2022; Ialuna et al., 2024; Franco et al. 2024). Research has shown that students who integrate students' interests into the curriculum, make connections to real-life contexts, and offer autonomy in decision-making contribute to a more culturally responsive educational experience. For instance, in Syahmani

et al. (2024), a teaching module based on Culturally Wetland Responsive Teaching was developed, and it was found that this module is effective for the collegiate properties of the solution. Other studies have highlighted the positive effects of culturally responsive pedagogy in promoting cultural diversity within schools (Brown, Burns, et al., 2022; Wildfeuer, 2021; Wrench et al., 2022; Ghazarian et al., 2022; Halim, 2022; Min et al., 2022), culturally responsive teaching and leadership (Highfield et al., 2024; Brown, Altrichter, et al., 2022; Sancho et al., 2024); culturally responsive teaching and critical thinking (Kehl et al., 2024); culturally responsive teaching and accountability standards (Ramsay-Jordan, 2020). Even regarding cultural intelligence and the affective domain (Utari et al., 2025; Comstock et al., 2023; Lee & Herner-Patnode, 2025; Haynes et al., 2025) underscore the link between self-efficacy, cultural responsiveness, and effective teaching. Lee and Herner-Patnode (2025) show that teacher preparation programs enhance preservice teachers' self-efficacy and ability to teach diverse students. Comstock et al. (2023) find that improvements in culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy drive positive changes in teaching practices. Utari et al. (2025) reveal that cultural intelligence significantly strengthens teachers' self-efficacy, especially in remote areas, aiding them in adapting and developing essential skills. Moreover, some research findings highlight the significance of culturally responsive teaching, practical teaching content, and media use in class, such as intercultural competence (Idris, 2020), cultural sensitivity (Ihsani & Prastikawati, 2024; Siliunas et al., 2024), online educational resources in cultural responsiveness (Bhatnagar & Many, 2022); teachers' competence (Gulya & Fehérvári, 2024). Therefore, this body of research aligns with previous arguments, namely, that it is advisable to encourage merging research findings to enhance students' experiences and learning in schools more effectively. It is maintainable that the convergence of these findings will facilitate the implementation of culturally responsive-sustaining education.

Moreover, specifically related to the practical issue, the two notable studies can be viewed further when considering class practices incorporating a multicultural perspective: Fitriadi et al. (2024) and Syahmani et al. (2024). Fitriadi et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the cultural dimensions of Indonesian basic education through an extensive literature review, scrutinizing the scientific contributions to integrating cultural perspectives within the educational landscape. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, the study meticulously identified and selected literature sources, gathered data, conducted analyses, and refined the manuscript. The synthesis of findings from various studies indicates that incorporating cultural contexts and traditional practices, particularly in mathematics and music education, substantially enhances students' understanding, learning experiences, and overall academic development. Concurrently, Syahmani et al. (2024) explored a computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) model designed to improve science literacy skills in alignment with the development of e-modules grounded in Culturally Wetland Responsive Teaching (CWRT), aimed at enriching both science literacy and the character of Waja Sampai Kaputing or Wasaka. Education in chemistry can play a crucial role in fostering this trait, emblematic of the people of South Kalimantan, and should be integrated into the educational process to familiarise students with this distinctively regional character. This research aims to evaluate the efficacy, validity, and practicality of CWRT-based e-modules in promoting science literacy and Wasaka character development, focusing on colligative properties as described. Findings revealed that the modules were effective, as demonstrated by the N-gain value of science literacy competence and the Wasaka character of students, which was categorised as high. The results suggest that e-modules rooted in Culturally Wetland Responsive Teaching are valid, practical, and effective for teaching the colligative properties of solutions.

Numerous studies have presented findings on the success and benefits of culturally responsive teaching (CRT), with most yielding significant results that reinforce the necessity of implementing CRT. However, these studies often focus on separate aspects of the approach and practitioners. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive perspective, examining the essential understanding that both students and teachers must develop simultaneously before implementing CRT. Given the urgent need to prepare human resources for the future development of IKN in East Kalimantan, addressing multicultural responsiveness education becomes imperative. It is therefore important to analyze the understanding of knowledge and experiences related to multicultural response among high school students and teachers in East Kalimantan, contributing to preparing local human resources for IKN's development. More specifically, this study aims to assess the knowledge of culturally responsive education among high school students and teachers in East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

METHODS

This study adopts a mixed-methods design using a convergent mixed-methods approach. In this method, the researcher gathers quantitative and qualitative data (explanatory sequential design), analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to ascertain whether the findings converge and support each other (Creswell, 2013). A quantitative survey design collects data from a sample or the entire population to describe attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics (*Culturally-Responsive-Pedagogy-CRP-Self-Assessment*). Specifically, this study adopts a cross-sectional survey design, where data is collected simultaneously to examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and practices. In this context, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions reflect

individual perspectives on culturally responsive education knowledge among high school students. This knowledge is categorized into four levels: foundational, intermediate, advanced, and exemplary. The classification framework is adapted from the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Self-Assessment and Reflective Conversations, developed by the Due East Educational Equity Collaborative© (*Culturally-Responsive-Pedagogy-CRP-Self-Assessment*). This study involves the analysis of qualitative data obtained from interviews, focusing on high school student's knowledge and experiences regarding the concepts of multicultural responsiveness and climate change.

The data for this research were collected from high school students in districts and cities within the province of East Kalimantan. The research data consists of quantitative information from questionnaire responses regarding their knowledge of culturally responsive education. A questionnaire, commonly used in survey research, is a structured instrument in which participants of students select responses to pre-designed questions and provide basic demographic or personal information (Creswell, 2012). Meanwhile, qualitative data were gathered by using in-depth interviews among teachers. This study's questionnaire is adapted from the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) Self-Assessment and Reflective Conversations framework, published by the Due East Educational Equity Collaborative© (*Culturally-Responsive-Pedagogy-CRP-Self-Assessment*). The questionnaire evaluates four classifications of culturally responsive education knowledge: (1) Early, (2) Intermediate, (3) Advanced, and (4) Exemplary, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the CRP Assessment Classification Rubric in the Questionnaire

1-Beginning	a new concept or aspect of one's professional practice
2-Intermediate	When someone has done but still needs more practice
3-Proficient	When someone has done it consistently and systematically
4-Example	When someone has done it consistently and systematically and can reflect on the impact of what is done and is ready to become a mentor to their friends

Meanwhile, Table 2 presents the criteria interval for the classification of CRP assessment, which was utilized for the analysis. With this description in Table 1, Table 2 quantifies the assessment.

Table 2. Criteria interval of CRP assessment classification

Interval	Interval%	Category
1 – 50	0 – 24.99	Beginning
51 – 101	25 – 49.99	Developing
102 – 152	50 – 74.99	Proficient
153 – 202	75 - 100	Exemplary

The questionnaire comprised 31 items organized into four domains: the "Cultural Diversity" domain, which included 8 statements; the "Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement" domain, which contained 10 statements; the "Building Relationships Across Cultural Differences" domain, which included 6 statements; and the "Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity" domain, which consisted of 7 statements. The response options in the questionnaire were developed according to a rubric classification: "Beginning" was assigned a score of 1, "Intermediate" a score of 2, "Advanced" a score of 3, and "Exemplary" a score of 4. The questionnaire was distributed to participants via Google Forms.

This study's target population includes all students enrolled in public and private high schools throughout the districts and cities of East Kalimantan Province. The inclusion of both public and private schools is important because they together reflect the full range of characteristics of students and teachers. The sample will be selected using a cluster random sampling technique. Figure 1 provides specific details about the sample used in this study. Furthermore, Figure 1 illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents across various regencies and municipalities. Most respondents (82.67%) are from Samarinda Municipality, making it the most represented area. Kutai Timur Regency follows with 5.45%, while Paser Utara Regency accounts for 4.46%. Several other areas contribute smaller percentages: Berau Regency and Balikpapan Municipality, each at 1.49%, and Kutai Kartanegara Regency, Paser Regency, Bontang Municipality, and Kutai Barat Regency, each at 0.99%. The chart highlights the prominent presence of respondents from Samarinda, with significantly fewer participants from other regions.

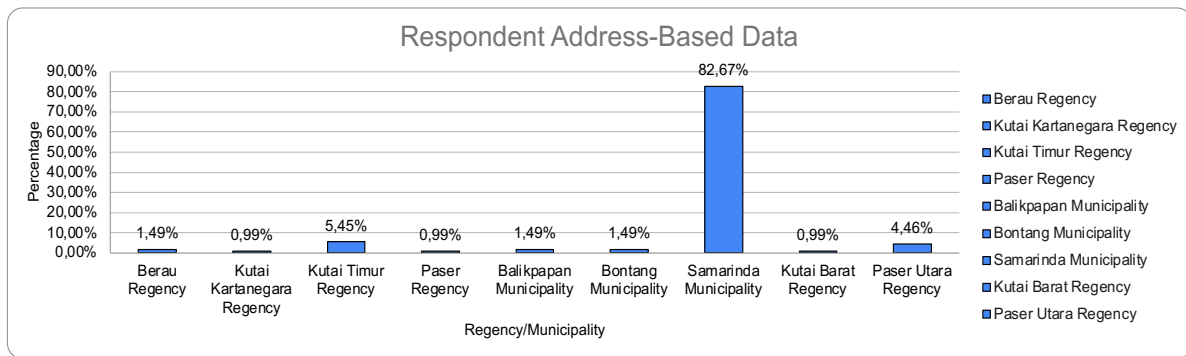


Figure 1. Distribution of research samples

Figure 2 represents the percentage distribution of respondents across three different class levels: Class 10, Class 11, and Class 12. The most significant proportion of respondents comes from Class 10, accounting for 38%. Class 11 follows closely with 34%, while Class 12 has the smallest share at 28%. This distribution indicates that most respondents are from the lower grade levels, with fewer participants from the senior class. The color coding distinguishes each category, making it easy to interpret the data. This study's data analysis involves two approaches: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative analysis uses A new version of NVivo 12 software procedures, while the quantitative analysis employs descriptive statistics and inferential t-tests using SPSS version 26.

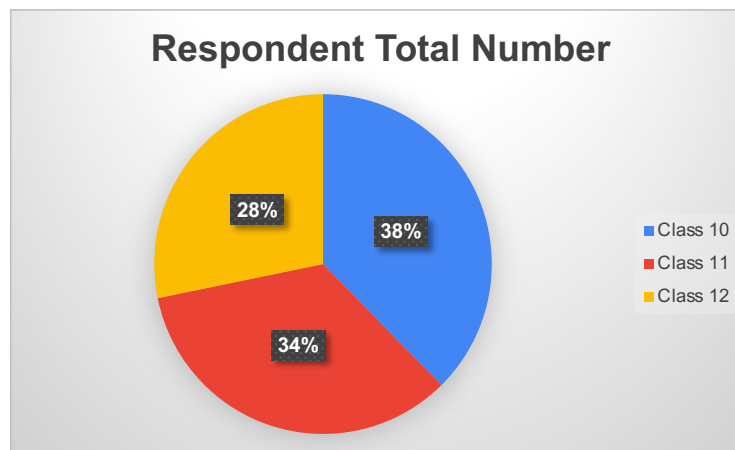


Figure 2. Percentage of Respondents based on the class

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study's findings are based on participants' responses to a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. As illustrated in Figure 1, respondents are evenly distributed across districts and cities, representing regional clusters within the province of East Kalimantan. The subsequent analysis provides an overview of high school students' knowledge inventory in East Kalimantan regarding multicultural responsiveness. Figure 1 shows that the respondents represent nine districts and cities in East Kalimantan province. This illustrates comprehensive regional representation across the province, which comprises ten regions. However, one area, Mahakam Ulu Regency, is not represented due to challenging topographical conditions that impede accessibility. This limitation is acknowledged as a weakness of the study. The Samarinda region has the highest number of respondents, which correlates with its comparatively more extensive number of students than other regions.

Indicator	Question	%	Total Score	Category
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I understand my culture and I am aware	55,07	445	Proficient
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I recognize and can explain the impact of	57,80	467	Proficient
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I am constantly looking for professional	53,09	429	Proficient
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I create a welcoming learning	57,18	462	Proficient
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I recognize and intervene in my own	53,96	436	Proficient
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I use a variety of strategies to present	58,29	471	Proficient
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I consistently and effectively use study	56,93	460	Proficient
Recognizing the Educational Impact of Cultural Diversity	I create opportunities for classmates to	55,57	449	Proficient

Figure 3. Questionnaire results from the domain of recognizing the educational impact of cultural diversity

The responses from participants in Figure 3 indicate that all individuals fall within the proficient category. The bar chart illustrates reactions to statements regarding recognizing the educational impact of cultural diversity. Each statement corresponds to an aspect of cultural awareness and its integration into learning or teaching practices, measured as a percentage. For the aspect of Self-awareness and Cultural Reflection, the selected statements, "*I understand my culture and am aware that my cultural background influences my actions*" (55.07%) and "*I recognize and can explain the impact of my culture on myself*" (57.80%), show moderately high percentages, indicating a general awareness of personal cultural influences among respondents. In another instance, regarding Professional Development and Welcoming Environments, the statement "*I am constantly looking for professional development opportunities to explore my own culture and the culture of others*" (53.09%) suggests a slightly lower focus on professional development opportunities related to cultural exploration.

Meanwhile, "*I create a welcoming learning environment that reflects my cultural background*" (57.18%) implies that respondents are moderately committed to fostering culturally inclusive environments. "*I recognize and intervene in my expectations and those of others*" (53.96%) indicates some effort to address biases or assumptions but highlights potential room for improvement. In Classroom Strategies and Success, "*I use a variety of strategies to present information to my classmates based on my knowledge of my learning style and class participation*" (58.29%) is the highest-scoring statement, showcasing active engagement in utilizing diverse strategies. Additionally, "*I consistently and effectively use study strategies that build the cultural strength of my classmates and encourage success*" (56.93%) reflects that respondents moderately apply culturally supportive study methods. Concerning Opportunities for Cultural Reflection, "*I create opportunities for classmates to reflect on their cultural backgrounds and share*" (55.57%), which indicates moderate efforts to encourage peer reflection and cultural exchange. Overall analysis suggests that respondents generally recognize the value of cultural diversity in education, with higher scores for statements related to active strategies and awareness. However, there is a slightly lower emphasis on professional development opportunities and interventions regarding expectations, highlighting areas for growth, particularly in fostering environments that emphasize deeper reflection and actionable development in cultural understanding.

Indicator	Question	%	Total Score	Category
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I regularly look at demographic	51,61	417	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I devise learning strategies that reduce	54,70	442	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I analyzed my previous academic	55,07	445	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I work closely with classmates to review	58,17	470	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I hold and consistently communicate high	53,59	433	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I show, through practice in the classroom,	58,04	469	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I get to know each classmate to	56,68	458	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I often assess my learning progress	63,24	511	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I identify resources outside of the	53,34	431	Proficient
Addressing Demographic Inequality in Achievement	I realized that I might not have learned	55,45	448	Proficient

Figure 4. Questionnaire results from domains of addressing demographic inequality in achievement

Figure 4 presents the respondents' answers, indicating that all participants are proficient. This dataset reflects responses to various practices addressing demographic inequality in achievement. It emphasizes the actions of educators in identifying, analyzing, and combating inequities in both academic and disciplinary outcomes. Each row specifies the particular practice, response counts (across different scales), total response scores, and proficiency percentages. For the General Proficiency Level, all practices are rated as "Proficient," indicating that respondents collectively reach a basic level of competency in addressing inequality but may still have room for improvement toward "Exemplary."

Regarding Assessment Practices, the practice with the highest proficiency percentage (63.24%) is "*I often assess my learning progress*," suggesting that educators mainly reflect on and evaluate their progress to mitigate demographic inequities. This illustrates an awareness of the need for ongoing self-assessment to ensure effective teaching strategies. In the Collaborative Work and Expectations category, the items "*I work closely with classmates to review work, make collective decisions about academic performance expectations, and consistently apply those expectations to all classmates*" stand at 57.17%.

Indicator	Question	%	Total Score	Category
Building Relationships Across Cultural Differences	I get to know each classmate to determine their skill level and learning needs	53,96	436	Proficient
Building Relationships Across Cultural Differences	I regularly communicate to every classmate, in various ways, my belief in their ability to achieve it	55,82	451	Proficient
Building Relationships Across Cultural Differences	I design and adapt my classroom management approach to support relationships with and among classmates	54,70	442	Proficient
Building Relationships Across Cultural Differences	I understand the importance of being with my classmates in the learning process and actively work to build strong relationships with my classmates' families	59,41	480	Proficient
Building Relationships Across Cultural Differences	I tried to learn about my family culture and the values of my classmates to build relationships that supported my studies	58,66	474	Proficient
Building Relationships Across Cultural Differences	I routinely strive to engage and communicate effectively with my family through a variety of ways and methods	59,28	479	Proficient

Figure 5. Questionnaire results from domains of building relationships across cultural differences

As Figures 5 illustrate, participant responses indicate that all individuals fall within the proficient category. This dataset focuses on practices aimed at cultivating relationships across cultural differences. It assesses various actions undertaken to understand, engage with, and support classmates and their families within an educational framework. Each row signifies a specific practice with corresponding response counts, total scores, and proficiency percentages. All practices are rated as "Proficient," reflecting satisfactory cultural sensitivity and relationship-building efforts.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement to enhance effectiveness. The statement "I understand the importance of being with my classmates in the learning process and actively working to build strong relationships with my classmates' families" received the highest rating at 59.41%, showcasing a robust commitment to fostering familial relationships as part of the learning journey. This reflects an awareness of the broader cultural and familial context within education. "*I routinely strive to engage and communicate effectively with my family in various ways*" scored 59.28%, indicating effective communication efforts with families essential for bridging cultural gaps. Moreover, "*I tried to learn about my family culture and the values of my classmates to build relationships that supported my studies*," selected by 58.66% of respondents, underscores efforts to understand cultural values and leverage that knowledge to enhance educational support. The slightly lower score suggests that more consistent or in-depth cultural learning could strengthen this practice. The statement "*I regularly communicate to each classmate, in various ways, my belief in their ability to succeed*" at 55.82% reflects moderately strong motivational communication efforts but indicates a need for improvement in making such beliefs consistently visible to all classmates. "*I get to know each classmate to determine their skill level and learning needs*" scored the lowest at 53.96%, signaling a need for greater emphasis on individual attention to classmates' skills and requirements. Personalization forms a crucial foundation for establishing trust and understanding.

Additionally, "*I design and adapt my classroom management approach to support relationships with and among classmates*" at 54.70% suggests that classroom management strategies could be further customized to foster relationships. The data reveals a strong foundation for building relationships across cultural differences, with significant strengths in family engagement and communication. The focus should be on deepening cultural understanding, improving personalized interactions, and enhancing classroom management strategies to promote a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Indicator	Question	%	Total Score	Category
Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity	The lessons in my class recognize and articulate cultural biases	55,45	448	Proficient
Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity	Learning in my classroom creates opportunities for students to bring their life experiences, culture, and language into the classroom as a cornerstone of learning	58,17	470	Proficient
Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity	Learning in my classroom integrates a variety of assessments so that students can demonstrate their respective knowledge, talents, and skills; Activating the power of students and amplifying the voice of students	59,53	481	Proficient
Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity	The teachers in my class understand historical and contemporary events and issues from the perspective of various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups	64,11	518	Proficient
Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity	In my class, teaching and learning uses examples and analogies from classmates' lives and applies content and skills to classmates' lives	60,64	490	Proficient
Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity	Learning in my classroom creates an accessible and welcoming classroom for all classmates	63,24	511	Proficient
Adapting the Curriculum to Reflect Cultural Diversity	My classroom environment reflects the cultural diversity, interests, and experiences of my classmates	65,22	527	Proficient

Figure 6. Questionnaire results from domains of adapting the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity

Figures 6 demonstrate that the respondents' answers consistently fall within the proficient category. This dataset evaluates practices that adapt the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity, emphasizing efforts to create an inclusive and representative learning environment. Each row represents a specific practice, along with corresponding response counts, total scores, and proficiency percentages. General Proficiency: All practices are rated as "Proficient," indicating a strong commitment to integrating cultural diversity into the curriculum. However, opportunities for further growth exist to achieve higher levels of inclusivity and representation. The strongest practice, *"My classroom environment reflects the cultural diversity, interests, and experiences of my classmates"* (65.22%), is the highest-scoring practice, signifying that respondents are making significant efforts to cultivate a classroom atmosphere that celebrates and represents the cultural diversity of students. *"The teachers in my class understand historical and contemporary events and issues from the perspective of various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups"* (64.11%) demonstrates strong awareness and inclusion of multiple cultural perspectives in teaching, which is fundamental to culturally responsive education. *"Learning in my classroom provides an accessible and welcoming atmosphere for all classmates"* (63.24%); this score underscores efforts to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, promoting a welcoming environment for diverse student groups. For Moderate Practices, *"Learning in my classroom integrates a variety of assessments, allowing students to demonstrate their respective knowledge, talents, and skills"* (59.53%) suggests progress in creating assessment methods that cater to diverse strengths and voices but indicates room for further innovation and inclusivity in evaluation. The overall proficiency levels across the statements range from 55.45% to 65.22%, demonstrating solid but not yet fully realized integration of cultural diversity in the curriculum. The highest proficiency is observed in reflecting cultural diversity in the classroom environment (65.22%) and understanding historical and contemporary issues (64.11%). This data implies that current practices are on the right track, but more comprehensive efforts are needed to adapt the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity better and ensure inclusivity.

The questionnaire results, as detailed in the quantitative data above, offer meaningful insights into the knowledge of high school students in East Kalimantan Province. The findings effectively indicate that all respondents in this study fall within the "advanced" classification. This classification signifies that the respondents have consistently and systematically recognized the principles of cultural awareness in education. Therefore, it can be concluded that high school students in East Kalimantan possess a comprehensive and systematic understanding of cultural awareness education. The results of interviews with three teachers (CT, TT, and YY — pseudonyms) reveal four themes: 1) awareness and understanding of cultural diversity, 2) addressing injustice in the classroom, 3) building cross-cultural communication, and 4) curriculum and cultural diversity. All three students share a similar understanding and approach to cultural diversity, emphasizing traditional activities, differentiated learning, and addressing injustices. Teacher YY provided additional insight into systemic measures such as "pressing highlighting instances of injustice" and "career development interactions reflecting diversity." From classroom practices to curriculum design, cultural diversity is integral to the educational process.

Teachers emphasized the important role of differentiated learning in promoting cultural diversity within the curriculum. Teacher CT highlighted that differentiated learning, when paired with various intercultural understanding activities at the school, significantly enhances students' understanding of cultural diversity. CT also noted that the school's teaching materials, enriched with diverse resources, further support this integration (In_CT008). Similarly, Teacher YY underscored the benefits of differentiated learning, stating that these activities play a vital role in implementing cultural diversity within the curriculum. YY elaborated that the teaching materials, filled with content related to cultural diversity, facilitate the application of learning methods that nurture teachers' awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity (In_YY005).

"Differentiated learning, supported by various intercultural understanding activities at the school, dramatically enhances the concept of cultural diversity embedded in the curriculum. Furthermore, our teaching materials, which include a wealth of resources, also contribute to this concept"(In_CT008)

"Differentiated learning supported by various intercultural understanding activities at the school is very helpful in implementing the concept of cultural diversity in the curriculum. Our teaching materials also help with this concept because we have much material about cultural diversity. We can also apply learning methods to build awareness of students' cultural diversity"(In_YY005).

Teacher YY described her approach to fostering cultural understanding and enriching the learning experience in the interview. In addition to using diverse teaching materials, YY incorporates experiential activities such as outbound learning, visits to places of worship, and exploring cultural sites. These activities are complemented by differentiated learning strategies, ensuring students engage with the material meaningfully and personally.

"In class, I typically incorporate teaching materials, experiential activities outside the classroom (outbound), visits to various places of worship, explorations of cultural sites, the implementation of differentiated learning, and more"(In_YY003).

At the same time, Teacher YY emphasized in her interview the school's commitment to fostering diversity and addressing instances of injustice in the classroom. YY explained that if any form of injustice arises during the learning process, the school promptly takes measures to ensure accountability by imposing consequences on the involved students. Furthermore, a reporting mechanism is in place to highlight and document incidents of injustice, reinforcing transparency and the school's dedication to fairness.

"Schools consistently demonstrate high regard for diversity. If there is any injustice related to learning in the classroom, the school will undoubtedly act, and students will face consequences. Furthermore, there is typically a press that highlights instances of injustice within the classroom or the school" (In_YY002)

The qualitative analysis of the interview results produced the summary Table 2, showcasing the findings of this study's qualitative analysis.

Table 2. The themes and codes based on the categories of Beginning, Intermediate, Proficient, and Exemplary to assess their engagement with cultural diversity in education

Theme	Code	Teacher CT	Teacher TT	Teacher YY
Awareness and understanding of CRP	Familiarity with the concept	Proficient: familiar with and applies concepts	Proficient: familiar with and applies concepts	Proficient: familiar with and applies concepts
Addressing injustice	Institutional Response Prevention of Injustice	Intermediate: Acknowledges responses but lacks personal reflection Proficient: Uses teacher diversity as a resource	Intermediate: Acknowledges responses but lacks personal reflection Proficient: Uses teacher diversity as a resource	Proficient: Recognizes institutional systems and societal impacts Exemplary: Reflects on curriculum adaptation and readiness to mentor peers
Cross-cultural communication among students and students	Role of Students			
Curriculum in CRP	Curriculum Design Resource Support	Proficient: Uses diverse materials consistently	Proficient: Uses diverse materials consistently	Exemplary: Reflects on using materials and adapts methods to build cultural awareness.

Table 2 provides an overview of teachers' competencies in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) across four key themes. First, all three teachers demonstrate proficiency regarding the theme of Awareness and Understanding of CRP. They are familiar with and actively apply CRP principles in their teaching practices. Secondly, in *Addressing injustice*, teachers CT and TT exhibit intermediate competency, acknowledging institutional responses to injustice but lacking deeper personal reflection. In contrast, Teacher YY displays proficiency, recognizing both institutional systems and the broader societal impacts of injustice. Thirdly, concerning the theme of *cross-cultural communication among students, teachers at CT and TT leverage teacher diversity as a resource in the classroom to achieve* proficiency. Teacher YY surpasses this, demonstrating exemplary competency by reflecting on curriculum adaptation and mentoring peers to enhance cross-cultural communication. Fourthly, regarding the theme of *Curriculum in CRP*, while teachers CT and TT proficiently utilize diverse materials to support CRP in their classrooms, Teacher YY stands out with exemplary practices. YY uses diverse materials and adapts teaching methods to foster students' cultural awareness. It thoughtfully reflects on these practices to improve outcomes.

The findings of this study highlight the significant strides made by high school students in East Kalimantan in understanding and applying culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). This demonstrates their advanced competencies in recognizing cultural diversity, adapting curricula, and fostering cross-cultural communication. These results resonate with existing literature, underscoring the transformative potential of CRP in addressing systemic inequities and promoting inclusivity in education. This aligns with previous studies that have identified logistical challenges as barriers to inclusive educational research in remote regions (OECD, 2018). The respondents' classification as "advanced" across various CRP dimensions illustrates a strong understanding of cultural awareness in education. Their responses consistently surpassed the 50% threshold, indicating proficiency in recognizing cultural diversity, building cross-cultural relationships, and adapting curricula. These results echo [Ladson-Billings \(1995\)](#), which emphasize the critical role of students' cultural competence in fostering an inclusive classroom environment. [Chang and Viesca \(2022\)](#) critique dominant research paradigms for perpetuating inequities by focusing on individual deficiencies rather than systemic barriers. By adopting a culturally responsive framework, this research reinforces the necessity of challenging traditional assumptions and addressing complex, racialized, and cultural ways of knowing to advance equity. Similarly, [Prayitno et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasize that CRP improves academic outcomes and fosters social justice by tackling systemic inequalities and nurturing cultural understanding. However, Prayitno identifies persistent challenges, such as inadequate teacher preparation and institutional support, calling for professional development programs and policy reforms to strengthen CRP implementation.

Furthermore, the findings align with [Bhatnagar and Many \(2022\)](#), who highlight the critical role of bridging the digital divide and ensuring equitable resource allocation across school districts. Bhatnagar's research stresses the need for teacher education programs and school districts to provide professional development in online technologies and culturally responsive resources, emphasizing the importance of community engagement. This study reinforces the collective understanding that, while significant progress has been achieved, systemic and institutional barriers persist. Addressing these challenges necessitates a multi-faceted approach, including enhanced professional development, equitable resource distribution, and policies prioritizing CRP. Such efforts are crucial not only for improving academic outcomes but also for promoting a more equitable and

This study's findings build on and extend prior research, offering a nuanced understanding of how teachers implement and engage with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) in their classrooms. All three teachers demonstrated proficiency in understanding and applying CRP principles, consistent with [Banks \(2013\)](#) on integrating multicultural content to enhance student engagement. Teacher YY further illustrated exemplary practices by incorporating experiential learning activities, such as visits to cultural sites and places of worship, to deepen students' appreciation of cultural diversity. These strategies support the theoretical foundations of CRP and operationalize its principles in meaningful and practical ways. While Teachers CT and TT acknowledged institutional responses to injustice, their engagement lacked deeper personal reflection, demonstrating intermediate competency.

In contrast, Teacher YY displayed proficiency by recognizing the broader societal impacts of injustice and advocating systemic measures, such as accountability mechanisms and career development interactions that reflect diversity. This aligns with [Pardo-de-Rincón \(2024\)](#), emphasizing continuous professional learning and training to foster inclusive and respectful educational environments. Teachers CT and TT utilized teacher diversity as a resource to facilitate cross-cultural communication, achieving proficiency. However, Teacher YY surpassed this by exemplifying exemplary competency, reflecting on curriculum adaptation, and mentoring peers to promote deeper cross-cultural understanding. These practices echo [Prayitno et al. \(2024\)](#) that CRP enhances academic outcomes and social justice by fostering cultural understanding. Differentiated learning and diverse teaching materials emerged as pivotal strategies for embedding cultural diversity into the curriculum. Teachers CT and TT proficiently utilized these methods, while Teacher YY demonstrated exemplary practices by adapting teaching strategies to build cultural awareness and reflecting on the outcomes to improve.

The findings of this study align with prior research on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and its role in enhancing educational outcomes. The students' practices in East Kalimantan, characterized by differentiated learning, diverse teaching materials, and experiential activities, reflect an intentional effort to integrate cultural diversity into the classroom. This approach parallels Fitriadi et al. (2024), who highlighted the significant impact of embedding cultural contexts in educational practices. Specifically, Fitriadi's review underscores the value of traditional practices, such as incorporating local cultural elements into subjects like mathematics and music, to deepen teachers' learning experiences and foster holistic development. The results of this study also parallel Syahmani et al. (2024) exploration of CWRT and its application in fostering science literacy and regional character development. Teacher YY's exemplary practices in adapting teaching methods and curriculum content to reflect cultural diversity mirror the principles of CWRT. Syahmani's development of e-modules incorporating local cultural traits, such as the Wasaka character in South Kalimantan, highlights the importance of contextualizing education to resonate with students' lived experiences and regional identities. The synthesis of this study's findings with Fitriadi et al. (2024) and Syahmani et al. (2024) underscores the vital role of cultural integration in education. Educators can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment by incorporating cultural contexts into teaching practices and curriculum design. The experiences of students in East Kalimantan and insights from previous research make a strong case for broadening the application of culturally responsive and regionally adapted teaching frameworks to enhance equity and excellence in education.

CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into understanding and applying Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) among high school students and teachers in East Kalimantan. For students, the findings indicate that all respondents in this study fall within the "advanced" classification. This classification signifies that the respondents have consistently and systematically acknowledged the principles of cultural awareness in education. Consequently, high school students in East Kalimantan possess a comprehensive and systematic understanding of cultural awareness education. Meanwhile, all teachers under study demonstrate proficiency in teaching. They are familiar with and actively implement the principles of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) in their practices, recognizing institutional responses to injustice while lacking deeper personal reflection. Teachers utilize the diversity among educators as a resource in the classroom, achieving proficiency and demonstrating exemplary competency through reflective curriculum adaptation. They also mentor peers to enhance cross-cultural communication, employing diverse materials and adapting teaching methods to foster students' cultural awareness while thoughtfully reflecting on these practices to improve outcomes. This study ultimately suggests that high school students in East Kalimantan demonstrate a strong understanding of cultural diversity, bolstered by effective pedagogical practices. It further adds to the expanding body of research on CRP, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive and regionally adapted teaching strategies in fostering inclusivity and improving educational outcomes. Moreover, the study highlights the necessity for ongoing integration of cultural contexts into educational practices, as this not only enriches students' learning experiences but also promotes the development of a fairer and more culturally aware educational system.

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