

การอนุรักษ์สังคมพหุวัฒนธรรม: การวิเคราะห์เปรียบเทียบหนังสือเรียนสังคมศึกษาและ มนุษยศาสตร์ระดับมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายในอินโดนีเซียและไทย*

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(วันที่รับบทความ: 4 ตุลาคม 2568; วันแก้ไขบทความ: 19 ธันวาคม 2568; วันตอบรับบทความ: 22 ธันวาคม 2568)

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการนำเสนอแนวคิดพหุวัฒนธรรมในหนังสือเรียนสังคมศาสตร์ระดับมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายของประเทศอินโดนีเซียและประเทศไทย โดยใช้วิธีการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาเชิงคุณภาพ ผู้วิจัยได้ตรวจสอบหนังสือเรียนที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์อย่างเป็นทางการ เพื่อพิจารณาว่าประเด็นด้านความหลากหลาย ความเท่าเทียม และความสามัคคีในสังคมถูกบูรณาการไว้ในสื่อการเรียนการสอนอย่างไร นอกจากนี้ เพื่อเสริมความชัดเจนเชิงบริบท งานวิจัยยังได้พิจารณากรอบเวลาการจัดทำหลักสูตรและการตีพิมพ์หนังสือเรียน (textbook timelines) ของทั้งสองประเทศ โดยเชื่อมโยงเนื้อหาที่วิเคราะห์กับช่วงการปฏิรูปการศึกษาและนโยบายด้านพหุวัฒนธรรมในบริบทของแต่ละประเทศ ผลการวิเคราะห์พบว่า การนำเสนอแนวคิดพหุวัฒนธรรมสามารถจำแนกออกเป็นประเด็นหลักสามประการ ได้แก่ 1) การยอมรับความแตกต่างในสังคม 2) การส่งเสริมความเท่าเทียมและการอยู่ร่วมกัน และ 3) การสร้างความกลมเกลียวผ่านค่านิยมร่วมกัน

หนังสือเรียนในอินโดนีเซียนำเสนอพหุวัฒนธรรมในฐานะหลักการพื้นฐานที่มีรากฐานจากปรัชญา ปังจุกซิล (Pancasila) และเน้นย้ำความแตกต่างทางชาติพันธุ์ ศาสนา และชนชั้นว่าเป็นแหล่งพลังของชาติ ในทางกลับกัน หนังสือเรียนในไทยก็รับรู้ถึงความหลากหลายเช่นกัน แต่เน้นหน้าที่พลเมือง ความเป็นหนึ่งเดียวของชาติ และคุณค่าทางศีลธรรมมากกว่าการมีส่วนร่วมเชิงวิพากษ์วิจารณ์ต่อความไม่เท่าเทียมเชิงโครงสร้าง การวิเคราะห์เชิงเปรียบเทียบแสดงให้เห็นว่า อินโดนีเซียมีแนวทางพหุวัฒนธรรมแบบเปลี่ยนแปลงเชิงสร้างสรรค์ (transformative multiculturalism) ขณะที่ไทยเน้นรูปแบบอนุรักษ์นิยมที่สอดคล้องกับวัตถุประสงค์การสร้างชาติ งานวิจัยนี้มีส่วนช่วยในวงการวิชาการด้านการศึกษาแบบพหุวัฒนธรรมในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ และเสนอแนะว่าผู้พัฒนาหลักสูตรควรให้ความสำคัญกับการสอนที่ครอบคลุมและเน้นการวิพากษ์วิจารณ์เชิงลึกมากขึ้น

คำสำคัญ: พหุวัฒนธรรม, การศึกษา, อินโดนีเซีย, ไทย, การวิเคราะห์หนังสือเรียนสังคมศึกษา

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Preserving Multicultural Society: A Comparative Analysis of Sociology-Humanities School Textbooks in Indonesia and Thailand*

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(Received: October 4, 2025; Revised: December 19, 2025; Accepted: December 22, 2025)

Abstract

This study investigates how multiculturalism is represented in senior high school social science textbooks in Indonesia and Thailand. Using qualitative content analysis, the researchers examined officially published textbooks to identify how themes of diversity, equality, and social cohesion are integrated into educational materials. To enhance contextual clarity, the study also examines curriculum development and textbook publication timelines in both countries, linking the analyzed textbooks to specific periods of educational reform and multicultural policy frameworks. The analysis revealed three key themes: 1) recognition of societal differences, 3) promotion of equality and inclusion, and 3) the cultivation of harmony through shared values.

Indonesian textbooks framed multiculturalism as a foundational principle rooted in Pancasila and highlighted ethnic, religious, and class differences as sources of national strength. Thai textbooks also acknowledged diversity but emphasized civic duty, national unity, and moral values over critical engagement with structural inequalities. A comparative analysis showed that Indonesia leaned toward a transformative multicultural approach, while Thailand favored a conservative model aligned with nation-building objectives. This research contributed to the discourse on multicultural education in Southeast Asia and suggested that curriculum developers should prioritize inclusive and critically engaged pedagogies.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Education, Indonesia, Thailand, Textbook Analysis Social Studies

*Research Article from Faculty of International Studies, Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus, 2025

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Introduction

In recent decades, the intersection between multiculturalism and democratization has become a critical discourse in the Asian context. Countries such as Indonesia and Thailand, despite their divergent historical trajectories, are confronting similar challenges in managing cultural pluralism within their education systems. As both nations experience shifting demographics and increasing diversity, there is a growing need to examine how educational institutions respond to multicultural realities.

Indonesia, as a vast archipelagic nation, has long been characterized by the coexistence of hundreds of ethnicities, languages, and cultural traditions. While globalization has introduced new cultural influences, Indonesia remains committed to maintaining its national identity through Pancasila, its official state philosophy. The Ministry of Education has emphasized multiculturalism through policy, curriculum, and textbook design, albeit with varying degrees of implementation across regions.

In contrast, Thailand, often known as "The Land of the Free," hosts over 30 ethnic groups, yet its approach to cultural integration has traditionally emphasized national unity through centralized policies, particularly via the Thai language and Buddhism. Although efforts toward inclusive education have emerged, there remains a strong undercurrent of cultural assimilation.

As conceptualized by Banks (2010), multicultural education is rooted in the recognition and celebration of diversity, and aims to empower students by promoting equality across race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and class. This framework has been further elaborated by Sleeter and Grant (2007), who emphasize the importance of addressing both cultural representation and structural inequity in schooling. In Indonesia, this concept was introduced by Ki Hadjar Dewantara and further expanded through various educational reforms. In Thailand, academic literature and policy discourse have increasingly addressed multicultural education in response to political decentralization and regional demands for inclusion.

Although both Indonesia and Thailand are culturally diverse societies where multicultural awareness should ideally be cultivated from early childhood, this study deliberately focuses on senior high school education due to its critical role in shaping students' civic consciousness and social responsibility. At the senior high school level, learners possess greater cognitive maturity and the capacity for abstract and critical thinking, enabling them to engage more deeply with complex issues such as cultural identity, social justice, and democratic coexistence. Moreover, national curricula in both countries explicitly emphasize citizenship education, social harmony, and awareness of cultural diversity at the upper secondary

level, particularly within social science and humanities subjects. These curricular objectives position senior high school textbooks as strategic instruments for transmitting state-sanctioned values related to multiculturalism, national integration, and global citizenship. Therefore, examining textbooks at this level provides valuable insights into how multicultural principles are formally articulated and institutionalized within each country's educational framework (Banks, 2010; Sleeter and Grant, 2007; UNESCO, 2017; Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, 2013; Ministry of Education Thailand, 2018)

Given this backdrop, the present study aims to investigate how multicultural concepts are implemented in senior high school social science textbooks in Indonesia and Thailand. It employs qualitative content analysis to examine the extent to which these textbooks present themes of diversity, inclusion, and social harmony. Textbooks serve as both educational tools and ideological instruments, shaping students' perceptions of cultural identity and coexistence

Research Objectives

1. To conduct a comparative analysis of senior high school social science textbooks in Indonesia and Thailand.
2. To document how multicultural values and principles are represented in the textbooks.
3. To explore the potential of textbooks as instruments of inclusive education and regional collaboration.

Through this investigation, the study aims to contribute to scholarly discourse on multicultural education and provide insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators across Southeast Asia.

Scope of the Study

This study is situated within the framework of multicultural education and comparative education. It draws upon theories of multiculturalism as articulated by Banks (2010) and Sleeter & Grant (2007), which emphasize the need to recognize, respect, and integrate cultural diversity into the educational system. The research focuses on examining official high school social science textbooks as ideological and pedagogical instruments that both reflect and shape the national identity and multicultural values of Indonesia and Thailand.

The conceptual scope includes:

1. Thematic focus: Cultural diversity, equality, inclusion, and national unity.
2. Analytical level: Manifest content (textual and visual representation) and latent content (ideological assumptions).
3. Comparative dimension: Cross-national analysis between Indonesia and Thailand.
4. Educational context: Senior high school level (Grades X–XII) with emphasis on subjects related to society, culture, and citizenship education.

The study does not aim to evaluate the effectiveness of textbook implementation in classrooms but rather to analyze the narratives and discourses embedded in the texts. It is also limited to the materials officially approved and used by the Ministries of Education in each country as of 2020–2024.

Literature Review

This study is grounded in two key theoretical pillars: the concept of multiculturalism as a mode of social and political integration, and multicultural education as a critical pedagogical tool. The following literature review synthesizes foundational and contemporary scholarship to establish the theoretical framework for our comparative analysis of school textbooks in Indonesia and Thailand.

A. Multiculturalism: A Framework for Social Integration

Multiculturalism is a political and philosophical idea that emerged as a direct response to historical assimilation policies, particularly those prevalent in Western nations such as the U.S., Canada, and Australia (Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 2002). Unlike assimilation, which demanded that minority groups abandon their cultural identities to integrate into a dominant "mainstream" society, multiculturalism advocates for the recognition and celebration of cultural differences. The core tenet is that societal integration can be achieved without forcing individuals to sacrifice their distinct cultural heritage. This perspective gained traction in Europe with the arrival of diverse populations from former colonies, leading to scholarly and political debates on the rights of immigrant communities (Modood, Triandafyllidou, and Zapata-Barrero, 2006).

Beyond its role as a political project, multiculturalism serves as a crucial theoretical lens for examining cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity in an increasingly globalized world (Parekh, 2001). This framework is particularly relevant for diverse societies in Asia, including Southeast Asia, where cultural pluralism is an inherent and foundational part of the social fabric rather than a result of recent

immigration (Hefner, 2001). The idea of multiculturalism, therefore, provides a valuable model for fostering social cohesion and integration in nations like Indonesia and Thailand, which have long been defined by their internal diversity.

B. Multicultural Education: Concepts, Dimensions, and Debates

Multicultural education is a complex and multifaceted field with a wide range of interpretations. It can be broadly defined as an approach to teaching and learning that acknowledges and values cultural diversity, with the goal of developing students' respect for different backgrounds (Gollnick and Chinn, 2017). Scholars debate whether its primary function is to simply teach about diversity or to actively transform students' attitudes and the educational system itself (Sloan et al., 2018; Banks, 2010).

One of the most influential frameworks in the field is presented by James Banks (2010), who outlines five core dimensions of multicultural education:

1. Content Integration

The inclusion of diverse cultures and groups to illustrate concepts, generalizations, and theories within a subject.

2. Knowledge Construction Process

Guiding students to understand how a subject is influenced by the cultural perspectives of its creators.

3. Equity Pedagogy

Adjusting teaching methods to accommodate the learning styles of students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

4. Prejudice Reduction

Developing teaching strategies and materials to help students acquire democratic values and reduce prejudice.

5. Empowering School Structure and Social Culture

Restructuring the school environment to enable students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups to experience educational equity and cultural empowerment.

In the Southeast Asian context, multicultural education is often framed within specific national narratives. In Indonesia, scholars like Tilaar (2004) and Semiawan (2004) conceptualize multicultural education as a means to foster respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, while also ensuring equal educational opportunities for all citizens to contribute to the nation. This approach is often rooted in

Indonesia's state philosophy, Pancasila, which emphasizes unity in diversity. However, some researchers, such as Rosyada (2014), argue that the practical implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia remains underdeveloped, with a notable absence of empirical research on its effectiveness.

Similarly, Kymlicka's (2002) work on multicultural citizenship provides an important lens for evaluating multicultural education. His framework emphasizes the importance of minority rights, including the right to develop one's culture, language, and social institutions. It highlights the need for a guarantee for minority groups to have political representation and express their aspirations, even in political systems where they may be marginalized. This perspective adds a critical dimension to the analysis of educational materials, as it raises questions about whether textbooks simply acknowledge diversity or actively advocate for justice and the rights of minority groups.

This review of the literature on multiculturalism and multicultural education provides a solid theoretical foundation for our comparative analysis. It allows us to examine not only what is presented in the textbooks but also the underlying ideologies and pedagogical approaches that shape the educational content.

Methodology

This research utilized a qualitative content analysis approach, drawing on established methodologies by Krippendorff (2013) and Neuendorf & Kumar (2015). This method was chosen for its ability to systematically interpret textual data, thereby revealing underlying patterns, meanings, and themes relevant to the educational context. It provided a robust framework for examining how multicultural values are embedded within the structure and content of school textbooks.

The data sources consisted of officially published, government-accredited senior high school social science textbooks from both Indonesia and Thailand. The Indonesian sample included eight textbooks for Grades X–XII, published by Yrama Widya, Cempaka Putih, Platinum, and Grafindo. The Thai sample comprised a single textbook titled Duties of Citizens, Culture, and Way of Life in Society, which is officially used for Mathayom 4-6 (Grades X–XII) and published by the Ministry of Education of Thailand.

The data collection and analysis procedure followed five key steps:

1. Document Identification we selected textbooks officially approved for use in public high schools by the national education ministries of each country.

2. Sampling we purposefully selected textbooks that explicitly included themes of culture, identity, and citizenship.

3. Development of a Coding Framework we constructed a coding matrix based on multicultural dimensions, such as ethnic diversity, social class, religion, and values of inclusion.

4. Analytical Procedure we performed a thematic content analysis of both textual and visual materials using inductive techniques to identify emerging themes.

5. Interpretation we synthesized the key themes, conducted cross-national comparisons, and aligned the findings with relevant theoretical frameworks.

The analytical framework was designed to assess both manifest content (explicit messages in the text and visuals) and latent content (underlying ideologies and cultural assumptions). This dual-level approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of how multicultural education is articulated and conveyed to students in both national contexts.

Findings and Discussion

The content analysis of senior high school social science textbooks from Indonesia and Thailand reveals that both nations, despite their distinct socio-political contexts, incorporate multicultural principles. However, their approaches differ significantly in depth, tone, and thematic focus. The analysis of eight Indonesian textbooks and one Thai textbook covering Grades X-XII yielded three overarching themes, which we discuss below in relation to established academic frameworks.

1. Recognition of Societal Differences

Both Indonesian and Thai textbooks acknowledge the diversity of ethnicity, religion, and social class, but their approach to this topic is fundamentally different. Indonesian textbooks present a detailed and explicit discussion of societal stratification, often including specific references to ethnic minorities like the Chinese-Indonesian community and their socioeconomic roles. This aligns with the "knowledge construction process" dimension of multicultural education, as described by Banks (2010), which helps students understand how diverse groups have contributed to society's structure. This approach is consistent with the country's national philosophy of Pancasila, which frames diversity as a source of national strength.

In contrast, the Thai textbook presents diversity as an aspect of national heritage, with a strong emphasis on unity and social responsibilities. This treatment tends to generalize different ethnic groups rather than exploring their unique identities, which, as Arphattananon (2018) found, is often a feature of

Thai multicultural education. The focus remains on national unity, which can limit students' critical engagement with the complexities of diversity.

2. Promoting Equality and Inclusion

The promotion of equality and inclusion is a key theme in both countries, but it is framed differently. Indonesian textbooks explicitly stress pluralism and multiculturalism as core educational goals rooted in the country's philosophical and religious values. This proactive approach to promoting inclusion through formal education aligns with the concept of equity pedagogy, where the curriculum is designed to foster a sense of shared citizenship and equal opportunity for all. This is consistent with studies by Setyono and Widodo (2019), who noted Indonesia's affirmative effort to embed multicultural values in its national curriculum.

3. Fostering Harmony through Shared Values

Both sets of textbooks advocate for national unity and social cohesion, but the values they promote to achieve this harmony are distinct. Indonesian books promote unity through constitutional values, shared language, and cultural understanding, reflecting the nation's motto of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity). This aligns with the "content integration" dimension of Banks's framework, as it integrates shared constitutional and cultural elements into the curriculum.

Thai textbooks, on the other hand, emphasize loyalty to the monarchy and civic conduct as the primary foundations for harmony. This narrative, as suggested by Arphattananon (2018), aligns with a more conservative nation-building model that prioritizes a centralized, top-down view of unity. This approach may not fully reflect the "prejudice reduction" or "empowering school structure" dimensions of multicultural education, as it relies on assimilation into a singular national identity rather than fostering critical awareness and empathy for diverse cultural groups.

These themes collectively demonstrate how textbook content serves as a reflection of each nation's identity, educational philosophy, and socio-political context. The contrasting approaches highlight Indonesia's move towards a more transformative multicultural model, while Thailand appears to favor a more conservative, nation-centric one.

Conversely, the Thai textbook emphasizes equality more implicitly, often focusing on cultural harmony and national integration through civic duties and moral education. As noted by Daraha (2017), policies in the Thai education system often prioritize the "duties of citizens" and conformity to national

norms, which can inadvertently overshadow the celebration of cultural differences. This approach, while promoting harmony, may not sufficiently address the underlying issues of structural inequality.

The findings of this study underscore that both Indonesia and Thailand approach multicultural education with a strong emphasis on social cohesion, yet they reflect differing national ideologies and historical narratives. This is consistent with Arphattananon (2018), who found that multicultural education in Thailand is often framed to support national unity rather than to critically address structural inequalities.

The following table synthesizes the key differences and similarities identified in our analysis, providing a clear visual summary of the comparative approaches.

Table 1: Comparison of Multicultural Education in Indonesia and Thailand

Aspect	Indonesia	Thailand
Educational Philosophy	Rooted in Pancasila and pluralism	Focus on unity and loyalty to the monarchy
Multicultural Terminology	Explicit: multiculturalism, diversity	Implicit: harmony, civic duty
Ethnic Diversity	Detailed discussion of various groups	Brief and generalized
Religious Representation	Multi-faith focus	Primarily Buddhist
Social Stratification	Discussed explicitly	Rarely addressed
Role of the State	Facilitator of diversity	Central cultural unifier
Visual Representation	Cultural imagery and symbols	National symbols and ideals
Language Policy	Supports local languages	Standard Thai only
Educational Goals	Promote inclusion and justice	Promote civic responsibility
Overall Orientation	Transformative multiculturalism	Conservative multiculturalism

Table 1 shows key similarities and differences in the representation of multicultural education in Indonesian and Thai social science textbooks. Both countries emphasize social cohesion; however, their approaches reflect different national ideologies.

Indonesian textbooks illustrate multiculturalism explicitly, grounded in Pancasila and pluralism, with detailed discussions of ethnic and religious diversity, social stratification, and the role of the state as

a facilitator of inclusion. This approach aligns with transformative multiculturalism, which promotes recognition of diversity alongside social justice.

In contrast, Thai textbooks emphasize national unity, civic duty, and moral values, with multiculturalism conveyed implicitly through concepts of harmony rather than explicit terminology. Discussions of diversity and inequality are limited in Thai textbooks, which reflect a conservative multicultural orientation that prioritizes social order and nation-building.

The overall comparison of textbooks in both countries demonstrates how multicultural education is shaped by distinct sociopolitical contexts and educational goals.

Conclusions

This study reveals that both Indonesia and Thailand incorporate multicultural principles into their senior high school social science textbooks, albeit through different ideological lenses and pedagogical approaches. While both countries acknowledge diversity as an intrinsic part of their societies, their strategies for integrating this diversity into educational content reflect contrasting national narratives and priorities.

Indonesian textbooks emphasize pluralism and explicitly address ethnic, religious, and social differences. They frame diversity as a national asset and align educational content with inclusive values rooted in Pancasila. In contrast, Thai textbooks present a more centralized vision of cultural harmony, emphasizing national unity, civic duties, and moral education, often through a lens of soft assimilation.

The study highlights the dual role of textbooks as both pedagogical tools and ideological instruments. They do not merely convey knowledge but also shape how young citizens perceive their identities, cultural differences, and national belonging. Furthermore, the analysis of textbook timelines demonstrates that shifts in multicultural representation are closely linked to periods of educational reform and national policy agendas in both countries, which reinforce the dynamic relationship between curriculum development and sociopolitical contexts.

This conclusion aligns with previous regional studies. For Thailand, scholars such as Arphattananon (2018) have underscored the constraints of multicultural policy under national integration frameworks, which tend to emphasize loyalty and uniformity over critical cultural engagement. On the other hand, the Indonesian context—as demonstrated by Setyono and Widodo (2019)—reveals a more explicit and affirmative effort to embed multicultural values through national curriculum frameworks. This includes the promotion of diversity as a strength and the acknowledgement of inequality as a social concern.

Thus, the comparative findings suggest that multicultural education in Southeast Asia cannot be understood in isolation from broader nation-building projects and ideological foundations. Moving forward, educational policymakers and curriculum developers in both countries should consider enhancing the critical engagement of students with multicultural issues. Promoting a deeper understanding of structural inequality, cultural pluralism, and inclusive citizenship will better prepare students for the complexities of increasingly diverse societies in Southeast Asia. This approach may also foster regional dialogue and cooperation in curriculum development, and it may contribute to a more inclusive and critically informed model of multicultural education across ASEAN contexts.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, this study recommends that textbook developers and policymakers in both Indonesia and Thailand prioritize the integration of multicultural principles into school curricula in a more explicit and critical manner. It is recommended that textbooks reflect real-world social issues, such as structural inequality, ethnic marginalization, and religious pluralism, to prepare students for diverse and democratic societies. Teacher training programs should also include components of multicultural pedagogy to ensure effective classroom delivery. Additionally, fostering cross-cultural dialogues among students can further enrich understanding and mutual respect.

First, the findings of this study offer practical implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in multicultural societies. First, textbook authors should be encouraged to incorporate more inclusive and critical perspectives on diversity, emphasizing not only cultural harmony but also structural inequalities and minority voices. This approach will help students develop critical awareness and empathy toward different cultural and social backgrounds.

Second, teacher training programs should integrate multicultural education as a core component. Educators need to be equipped with pedagogical strategies that foster intercultural understanding and classroom inclusivity. Training modules should focus on both content knowledge and teaching methods that challenge stereotypes and promote respect for diversity.

Third, policymakers should revise curriculum standards to ensure that multicultural education is not treated as a marginal topic but rather as a foundational principle embedded across subjects. By doing so, educational institutions can contribute to building socially cohesive and culturally sensitive communities, particularly in diverse regions such as Southeast Asia.

Finally, regional cooperation between ASEAN member states could support the exchange of best practices in multicultural curriculum development. Collaborative textbook projects or inter-country education forums may promote shared values while respecting local cultural specificities.

Suggestions for further studies

Future research may explore the integration of multicultural values in other educational subjects beyond social studies, such as language, literature, or science, to assess whether inclusivity and diversity are promoted consistently across disciplines. Additionally, a longitudinal study involving students and teachers could offer insights into how textbook content influences students' attitudes toward diversity and social cohesion over time.

Comparative studies across other ASEAN countries, such as Malaysia, the Philippines, or Vietnam, could further enrich regional understanding of multicultural education in Southeast Asia. Researchers may also consider incorporating perspectives from minority students and educators to capture lived experiences and assess the practical impact of multicultural curricula at the classroom level.

Lastly, future studies may analyze the role of digital learning materials and online platforms in promoting or hindering multicultural perspectives in the era of educational technology.

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