

Multicultural awareness and citizenship identity formation in higher education: A phenomenological study of civic education students

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Received: 27 March 2026 **Revised 1:** 16 April 2026 **Revised 2:** 27 April 2026 **Accepted:** 28 April 2026

ABSTRACT

Purpose - This study aims to phenomenologically explore the experiences of Civic Education students regarding multicultural awareness in the university setting, as well as the complex processes involved in the formation of their civic identity.

Method - This study uses a phenomenological approach with qualitative methods that aim to describe the construction of student identity and multicultural awareness. The type of phenomenology employed is social phenomenology based on Alfred Schutz's perspective. This approach was chosen to examine how individuals subjectively construct meaning within the lifeworld. The primary focus of this study is on the aspect of intersubjectivity—specifically, how interpretations of citizenship identity and multicultural awareness are formed through interactions and typification schemes prevalent within specific social groups. The data collection methods in this study are observation and in-depth interviews.

Findings - The results show that the construction of student citizenship identity is demonstrated through several stages, namely externalization, objectification, and internalization. Meanwhile, the multicultural awareness of students in the Civic Education Study Program, based on Robert Harvey's cross-cultural awareness theory, has reached the stage of the intellectual & empathy stage. They are able to critically examine their own culture and view the world from others' perspectives (cross-cultural empathy) as the essence of civic maturity. This understanding arises from habits and experiences when interacting with students from different cultures.

Keywords: citizenship; construction; multicultural awareness; university student

How to cite:

Permatasari, F., Mutmainnah, F., Sugara, H., Iswahyudi, E., Mustaghfiroh, S., (2026). Multicultural awareness and citizenship identity formation in higher education: A phenomenological study of civic education students. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Management and Leadership*. 4(1). 90-111. <https://doi.org/10.51214/ijemal.v4i1.1879>

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INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, the increasing intensity of interactions between individuals and groups from diverse cultural backgrounds has become an integral part of modern social life (Croucher et al., 2015). Higher population mobility, whether due to economic, educational, or urbanization factors, has shifted the pattern of society from a homogeneous one to an increasingly heterogeneous social configuration (Maulana & Ferdian 2024). Population movements across regions and even across countries have turned social spaces—such as residential neighbourhoods, educational institutions, the workplace, and public spaces—into arenas where cultural identities that were previously separated

geographically now meet. The development of information and communication technology has strengthened the intensity of these interactions (Fajriah, T., & Ningsih, E. R. 2024). Social media, digital platforms, and global communication networks enable individuals to interact simultaneously without being limited by space and time. Intercultural interactions are no longer direct and physical, but also take place in virtual spaces that often lack social control (Fransisca et al., 2023). This condition accelerates the exchange of cultural values, symbols, and practices, while also opening up opportunities for misunderstandings, distortions of meaning, and conflicts based on cultural identity (Babina et al., 2024)

The openness of public spaces in democratic societies encourages stronger expressions of cultural identity in various spheres of social life. Ethnic, religious, and cultural identities are not only present as personal backgrounds, but also appear as social and political symbols that influence intergroup relations (Quang et al., 2023). In this context, cultural diversity has become increasingly visible, but this has not always been accompanied by the readiness of individuals and groups to manage differences constructively. These facts show that increased intensity of intercultural interaction does not automatically result in harmonious social relations (Li et al., 2023). In various social contexts, cultural encounters actually give rise to tensions, prejudices, stereotypes, and exclusive attitudes rooted in differences in values, norms, and perspectives. This indicates a gap between the reality of diversity and its acceptance (Abduvokhobovich, 2023; Mikhaylova, 2023). The challenges to social cohesion and national identity has also have emerged (Yermolenko, 2022). The increasingly unstoppable flow of information has enabled ideological polarization and the rise of primordialism sentiments that threaten the unity and integrity of the nation (Agung, 2017). Ideological polarization and primordialism sentiments can be seen in several cases in Indonesia, such as the polarization during the 2024 elections. The massive flow of information on social media is used to spread narratives that favour one of the candidate pairs, often accompanied by hoaxes, misinformation, and hate speech against political opponents. Various types of content have emerged that undermine the character, background, and beliefs of opponents.

Amidst the complexity and interconnectedness of the modern world, the ability to understand and navigate diverse societies is a necessity. Multicultural awareness is a vital foundation for effective communication and interaction, requiring individuals to appreciate and respect individuals and groups from different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Failure to develop this awareness can lead to harmful prejudice and conflict, as seen in various social disputes around the world (Choompunuch et al., 2024).

Based on research data related to hate speech against vulnerable groups in 2024 by Monash University in collaboration with the Independent Journalists Alliance, out of 1,450,000 text data from social media X, Facebook, and Instagram, it was found that 200,000 texts (13.82%) contained hate speech. Hate speech appeared most frequently on Twitter at 51.2%, Facebook at 45.15%, and Instagram at 3.34% (Idris et al., 2024).

In addition, primordialism, which is a view that binds a person to traditional ties such as origin, ethnicity, and religion, is often used as a basis for distinguishing oneself from others and is still common (Agung, 2017). Social media has become a stage for cases that

trigger primordialism sentiments, which are sometimes not physical conflicts but have a devastating impact on tolerance, such as the spread of content that degrades or mocks certain ethnic or religious groups. Such content can be in the form of memes, videos, or narratives deliberately created to provoke anger and create tension with other groups. Based on data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Research and Development Agency, the Religious Harmony Index (KUB Index) was 76.02 in 2023 and 76.47 in 2024. This data shows a positive trend of increasing tolerance among religious communities by 0.45 points compared to the previous year. Despite this positive trend, there are still cases of intolerance in some areas and some religious communities that are not yet moderate. Cultural identity differences are still often used to justify intolerance and marginalization of certain groups. This phenomenon not only occurs on a large scale in the form of communal conflicts, but also in more subtle forms, such as stereotypes, prejudices, and cultural biases in daily interactions and social institutions (Seo et al., 2025). This fact indicates that cultural diversity is not yet fully understood and interpreted as a constructive social potential.

This situation leads to a fundamental problem, namely low multicultural awareness among some individuals and community groups. Multicultural awareness is not merely related to knowledge about diversity, but also includes attitudes, values, and moral dispositions to respect differences and the ability to interact fairly and empathetically with others (Nasution, S. I., & Fauzan, A., 2025). When multicultural awareness does not develop optimally, diversity has the potential to become a source of ongoing social tension.

Although many studies on multiculturalism have been conducted, some research still focuses on normative and conceptual aspects, while in-depth studies on the construction, dynamics, and factors that influence multicultural awareness in specific social contexts are still relatively limited. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive conceptual model that can explain how multicultural awareness is formed, developed, and manifested in everyday social practices. One of the major challenges is the lack of multicultural awareness that needs to be addressed immediately, including the lack of recognition of rights and protection for minority groups, such as ethnic minorities or religious minorities (Wandini et al., 2024). This is a fundamental aspect for us to understand citizenship identity and multicultural awareness, especially among university students. Students are in a buffer zone with a highly multicultural environment with various backgrounds. Identity is a dynamic construct influenced by various factors, including culture, social experiences, and education (Rahmayanti & Fauzi, 2021). On multicultural campuses, students come from diverse backgrounds, whether cultural, ethnic, religious, or geographical. Interactions between individuals with different backgrounds have the potential to enrich academic and social experiences but can also pose challenges in terms of understanding and acceptance of differences.

In the world of education, interactions between interfaith and intercultural groups occur frequently, especially in higher education. Social interactions between students play an important role in cultural understanding. The phenomenon of intercultural interaction in higher education requires a deep understanding of how individual identities are formed and

developed in a multicultural context and how awareness of cultural diversity influences social interaction in higher education (Rezeki et al., 2023).

Civic education, in this context, plays a crucial role in shaping individuals who are aware of their rights and obligations as citizens and can appreciate and interact positively with individuals from different backgrounds. In higher education, civic education serves as a strategic vehicle for instilling the values of democracy, nationality, and multiculturalism. The Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) study program has a major responsibility in producing educators and change agents who are competent in civic issues. Therefore, it is important to understand how PPKn students, as the future frontline in civic education, construct their citizenship identity and develop multicultural awareness.

Unlike previous studies, which have predominantly used quantitative approaches to measure levels of multicultural awareness, this study offers a novel perspective through a phenomenological approach that reveals students' structures of consciousness and life experiences from a subjective standpoint—aspects that have often been overlooked in statistical data. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on students of Civic Education (PPKn). As future educators of values, the way they construct their civic identity within the multicultural environment of higher education offers a unique perspective that has not yet been extensively explored in the literature on the formation of global citizenship identity.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative study using a phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research aims to understand the phenomena of behavior, perception, motivation, and actions of research subjects by using descriptions in sentences and language. According to Creswell, phenomenological research is a research approach in which researchers identify human experiences of certain phenomena that are consciously experienced (Creswell, J. W., 2018). The type of phenomenology employed is social phenomenology based on Alfred Schutz's perspective. This approach was chosen to examine how individuals subjectively construct meaning within the lifeworld. The primary focus of this study is on the aspect of intersubjectivity—specifically, how interpretations of citizenship identity and multicultural awareness are formed through interactions and typification schemes prevalent within specific social groups (Nindito, 2005).

The data sources for this study are students of the Civic Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Kahuripan University, Kediri. Qualitative research is research based on the stages of understanding the object by exploring it in depth and interpreting it according to the research context (Harahap, 2020). The research subjects were selected based on specific criteria using purposive sampling techniques (Sugiyono, 2020). The selection of Civic Education Study Program students as the subjects of this research was based on their strategic position as prospective educators who bear moral responsibility in transmitting civic values.

This study employed a purposive sampling technique using a criterion sampling strategy. Informants were selected based on the following criteria: 1) students in the Civic Education program enrolled in multicultural classes; 2) those capable of communicating

their experiences in a reflective and clear manner; and 3) those willing to participate voluntarily without coercion. This aims to ensure that participants possess in-depth knowledge and are able to provide rich descriptions of their life experiences related to the research topic. The number of participants in this study was not rigidly fixed from the outset but followed the principle of data saturation. Data collection continued until a point was reached where no new themes or information emerged from interviews with additional participants.

As a group that studies multiculturalism in depth in their curriculum, Civic Education students are expected to have achieved a mature level of cross-cultural awareness. Researchers considered selecting students from different regions and ethnicities, namely East Java, Central Java, Madura, Riau, West Java, Papua, and NTT, to obtain data relevant to the research objectives.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Profile

Variable Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Semester	Semester 2	17	32,1%
	Semester 4	11	20,8%
	Semester 6	12	22,6%
	Semester 8	13	24,5%
Gender	Male	24	45,3%
	Female	29	54,7%
Variable Category Semester	Java Island (East Java, Central Java, West Java, Jakarta)	38	71,7%
	Outside Java Island (Papua, Riau, East Nusa Tenggara)	15	28,3%
	Islam	38	71,7%
Agama	Christian	8	15,1%
	Catholic	7	13,2%
Total		53	100%

The data collection technique in this study used interviews to understand the views and experiences of students in forming their citizenship identity and multicultural awareness. In addition, the researcher used Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to explore collective views and group dynamics related to multiculturalism and observation to observe campus interactions and activities related to multiculturalism. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured phenomenological approach. The researcher used an interview guide focused on open-ended questions to elicit participants' life narratives. FGDs were conducted to identify intersubjectivity and patterns of collective meaning-making regarding citizenship identity construction and multicultural awareness. Discussion groups consisted of 6–8 people to ensure effective interaction. The researcher acted as a moderator who facilitated the dialogue, ensuring that each member shared their perspective without any

one person dominating the discussion. This process aimed to enrich individual data through group dynamics, in which participants could reflect on each other's experiences.

Meanwhile, the data analysis technique used Miles, Huberman and Saldana's data analysis, namely data 1) condensation & coding, 2) data presentation and theme generalization, and 3) conclusion drawing & verification (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). The initial stage is data condensation, in which the researcher sorts, focuses, and simplifies the raw data from interview transcripts and field notes. The coding process is carried out in stages first-cycle coding using in-vivo coding (participants' original words) and descriptive coding to identify basic units of meaning and second-cycle coding that is initial codes are grouped into larger categories to identify emerging patterns. After coding, the data is presented in the form of categorization matrices or networks. The final stage involves drawing conclusions through an iterative process. Researchers conduct verification throughout the study to ensure that the conclusions drawn are firmly grounded in empirical data.

To ensure the quality of qualitative research, the researcher uses the framework developed by Lincoln and Guba they are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility is ensured through methodological triangulation (interviews, observations, and focus group discussions) and member checking, in which the transcripts are reviewed with the participants to ensure data accuracy. Transferability is achieved by providing a detailed description of the research context and participant characteristics, so that readers can assess the potential for applying the findings in other contexts. Reliability is ensured through an audit trail that chronologically documents the entire research process, from the collection of raw data to the final analysis results. Confirmability is ensured by verifying that the findings truly stem from the data, rather than researcher bias. Researchers engage in critical reflection and bracketing throughout the analysis process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of how students in the Civic Education Study Program construct their citizenship identity and multicultural awareness. Students in the Civic Education Study Program at Kahuripan University in Kediri are a heterogeneous group from various provinces in Indonesia, including East Java, Jakarta, Central Java, Riau, West Java, Papua, and NTT. As students in an environment with diverse cultures and religion, they are inevitably involved in interactions between individuals and groups from different regions.

RESULT

Citizenship Construction Identity

Based on in-depth interviews with the students from all grades in the Civic Education Study Program who come from different regions, the construction of the citizenship identity of Civic Education Study Program students is a dialectical process that occurs gradually and can be divided into three moments, namely externalization, objectification, and internalization. These moments do not always occur at the same time, but the citizenship

identity of students is characterized by these three moments and becomes part of themselves.

Externalization

Based on in-depth interviews with informants, it was found that the construction of their citizenship was greatly influenced by their experiences, family, and environment. This externalization effort is carried out continuously by interacting with the social environment and experiencing meaningful experiences so that the meanings felt become routine in their knowledge.

The majority of informants experienced the process of externalization through the instillation of values and beliefs held by their families and schools. Families play a major role in instilling values through verbal advice and setting examples in daily activities. Human identity is constructed through the social environment through interactions that lead to habituation.

What's important is to be honest, fair to others, and empathetic—that's what my parents always taught me, and I try to put it into practice in my social circles and on campus. (Inf.10/CI/E)

My family played a huge role in raising me—for example, by teaching me to help others, to be honest, and to obey the law. (Inf.37/CI/E)

The examples my family usually gives are things like community service, building houses, helping out at neighbours' celebrations, and cleaning up the village—all of which help strengthen our bonds and bring us closer together. At college, it's about being a good student and following campus rules (Inf.3/CI/E)

In addition, the process of externalizing the construction of citizenship identity also takes place on campus through various discussions with instructors during classes, given that the courses taken by students in the Civic Education program are primarily focused on civic education. Therefore, the process of self-adjustment occurs through the materials provided by lecturer in each course.

In our Civic Education program, we're taught how to be good citizens, since we'll eventually have to teach moral values as future teachers (Inf.46/CI/E)

It just so happens that we often have discussions with our professors in class, so there's a lot to gain from that (Inf.1/CI/E)

Objectivation

Student interactions within the intersubjective world mark the beginning of students' journey to build and learn to build their identities. Most students learn to construct their identities through various activities in their local communities and on campus. As stated by one of the informants, who claimed to be an active member of the Sunday school at a church in his area. This was done as an effort to put into practice what his parents had taught him.

In my hometown, I usually attend Sunday school at the church. My parents have taught me about religion since I was a child. So to this day, I try to live by what my parents taught me. (Inf 24/CI/O)

One of the ways to fulfill one's civic duty as a good citizen is by participating in legislative and presidential elections. According to one informant, casting a vote in elections is very important because it is a way to fulfill one's civic duty. In addition, this informant is an active member of the youth organization in their community. Being part of the youth organization provides an opportunity to learn social skills and organizational skills.

Last year's presidential and legislative elections were my first experience with them. At my hometown, I'm a member of the youth group in my village. We usually organize activities in our neighbourhoods on special occasions. I learned a lot from that group how to organize and how to work with others. (Inf 35/CI/O).

The process of objectification was also carried out by an informant from Bandung, West Java, through participation in the Public Speaking Club and the Student Executive Board on campus. The reason for joining these organizations was to gain experience in campus organizations.

At my university, I joined the BEM and student clubs, hoping to learn a lot from the experience (Inf 47/CI/O)

Internalization

Based on the results of interviews with informants, the internalization process undertaken by students is demonstrated by presenting themselves as students with positive behavior, such as becoming committee members during elections and performing charity work by providing free private education to underprivileged children. This shows that the informant has instilled an attitude of devotion to the nation and state by providing assistance to those in need. This attitude has become a permanent value within the informant, which is implemented by providing education to the surrounding community.

I've served as a member of the KPPS several times" (Inf 6/CI/I)

Students identify themselves within society as people who are useful to the nation. One example of this is their participation in election committees. An informant from Kediri stated that, from junior high school until now, he has been doing community service for residents in his neighborhood—especially children—by providing free tutoring. He has been doing this for several years alongside his younger sibling.

To this day, I tutor young children for free, and I've been doing this since junior high; usually, I teach kindergarteners to read and write with my younger sibling (Inf 19/CI/I)

A student from Tegal, Central Java, spoke about the process of internalizing a sense of citizenship by working together to clean sacred sites of other religions as an act of solidarity and community service for others.

In my village, community activities are still frequent, and the sense of community is still strong. I also help out, for example, during community service events; I've even

helped clean a place of worship—even though it wasn't an Islamic place of worship (Inf 46/CI/I)

Multicultural Awareness

Awareness of superficial/visible cultural traits

Based on the statements of informants from Kediri, having friends from other provinces is something new because in their previous schools they only had local friends. This is something special because it is a new experience to interact with friends from other provinces whom they previously only saw on TV or in books. The informant stated that they understood Papuan culture based on what they saw on TV or in books, which means that their understanding is still superficial and simplistic.

I usually only knew about Papuans from TV or books. Now that I can be friends with Papuans, I'm really happy (Inf.3/MA/1)

Before getting to know them, I felt a bit awkward. I actually wanted to say hello, but I was afraid they wouldn't understand my language (Inf.9/MA/1)

The informant stated that there was a desire to get to know students from other provinces, but there was a sense of awkwardness due to fear of problems arising from different languages. This awkwardness arose from the informant's assumptions based on limited and potentially inaccurate information.

Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that others are different and therefore problematic

At this stage, students begin to notice many differences among their peers. The most obvious difference is in language. Students from outside East Java speak Indonesian with their own dialects. They often switch between Indonesian and their native languages. At this stage, minor issues frequently arise, particularly regarding comprehension during conversations. A critical phase in which students begin to recognize these differences but have not yet developed a mature perspective to accept them. Not being accustomed to hearing Javanese terms makes students from outside East Java feel a bit of difficulty when listening to their peers speak.

They talk and sometimes joke around in Javanese. So I don't understand (Inf.31/MA/2)

I never used to speak Indonesian in my daily conversations, ma'am. Now I have to speak Indonesian all the time (Inf.23/MA/2)

In class now, everything has to be translated first—that's the only thing that's a bit of a hassle (Inf.29/MA/2)

Based on statements from informants from NTT, there is a sense of annoyance because when joking around, Javanese friends in class sometimes use the Javanese language. This is not intentional on the part of Javanese students, who are accustomed to using Javanese in their daily lives. However, this causes students from outside Java to feel that they do not understand what is being said.

One student said that there has been a change in the language used daily, from Javanese to Indonesian in class. This is because Indonesian is a language that all students understand and to avoid misunderstandings when interacting. Language is a major issue in students' adjustment to friends from different cultures. Repeating what is said in Indonesian is considered a bit troublesome by students from Kediri. Cultural clashes are possible because individuals' understanding is not yet very deep and there is a tendency to compare one culture with another.

Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that others are believable in an intellectual way

Based on the interview results, students from outside East Java are becoming accustomed to hearing Javanese dialects, even though they do not yet fully understand their meanings. Gradually, they are beginning to accept cultural and linguistic differences. These differences are becoming more acceptable because they have grown accustomed to them and encounter them almost every day. Differences that previously caused minor misunderstandings are now being anticipated and resolved.

Yes, I got to know them because we often met (Inf.48/MA/3)

We often had group assignments where I sometimes had to discuss things with classmates from other regions, so I eventually got to know everyone (Inf.2/MA/3)

As for Niko, he often talks about Papuan culture. When he meets other Papuans, he has a different way of shaking hands than we do. Like this, ma'am (bends the middle and index fingers and hooks them together) (Inf. 11/MA/3)

What's changed since I've been here is that I've developed a thick accent (Inf. 19/MA/3)

A student from Papua named Niko once told a student from Bandung about a unique custom when greeting fellow Papuan students. There is a unique greeting that Papuans commonly use, which is shaking hands using the index finger and middle finger. This unique greeting is a gesture of solidarity that shows cultural identity among fellow Papuan students. This kind of thing has become a culture that is understood and accepted by other students in the Civic Education Study Program. Differences are not a trigger for competition, but rather a medium for mutual tolerance.

Awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider

The statement from the informant from Papua indicates that respecting others is a behavior applied in class if they expect the same in return. This means the informant is able to understand the consequences of not respecting others, how to treat others, and how to put themselves in someone else's shoes when treated unfairly. At this stage, the informant no longer views the behavior or habits of other students as strange; in fact, they have begun to feel empathy toward classmates from different regions.

If we want to be respected, we also have to respect our friends here (Inf. 4/MA/1)

We already know, Ma'am, what the students in this class are like. At first we thought people from the East were different from Javanese people, but actually they're the same. (Inf. 11/MA/4)

I've often wondered what it's like for the students who study here and live far away from their parents. I'm sure it's very difficult. (Inf. 40/MA/4)

The statement from the student from Kediri below expresses their opinion about the lives of their friends who study far from their parents as migrants. The informant can feel and understand the difficulties faced by their classmates who live far from their hometowns. This understanding arises from the habit of exchanging experiences and frequent interaction among students, enabling them to empathize with the difficulties faced.

DISCUSSION

Citizenship Identity Construction

Peter L Berger, in his book "The Social Construction of Reality," argues that our reality and identity are not something that exists from birth but are socially created or constructed. This social reality process is formed in three interrelated and repetitive stages, namely externalization, objectification, and internalization. Externalization is the stage when individuals express meaning, ideas, and actions to the outside world through repeated habits. Objectification is the result of externalization, which becomes something real and seems to have its own existence. Meanwhile, internalization is the stage where individuals reabsorb the objectified reality by learning the roles, norms, and values that exist in society, which ultimately becomes part of their consciousness and identity (Berger, 1991).

The process of constructing social reality takes place through three interrelated dialectical moments, namely externalization, objectification, and internalization. Externalization is the initial stage when individuals express their subjective ideas, values, meanings, and orientations into the social world through repeated actions and habit (Asrita, 2023). Through this process, humans put themselves out into the world, creating patterns of behavior, symbols, and social institutions that become the means of organizing communal life. Actions that were initially subjective and situational gradually stabilize and become collectively accepted social practices (Berger, as cited in Purnomo & Kurniawan, 2025).

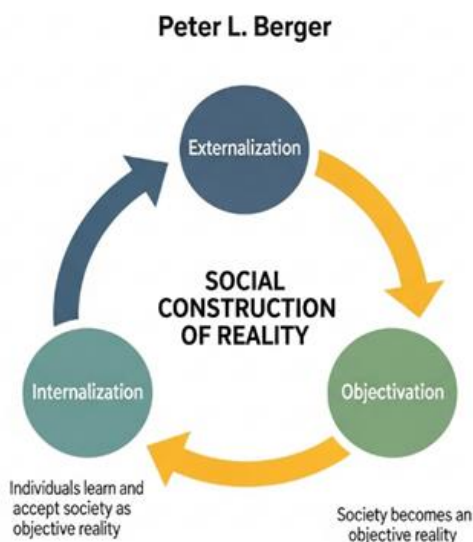
The next stage is objectification, which is the process whereby the results of this externalization appear as an objective reality, independent of the individuals who created them (Mawikere & Hura, 2022). At this stage, social institutions, norms, values, and social structures are perceived as something that "exists by itself," has binding power, and is beyond the control of individuals. Objectified social realities are often viewed as natural and taken for granted, so their existence is rarely questioned. It is this objectification that allows social realities to survive across generations and form order in society.

Internalization is the stage at which individuals reabsorb this objectified social reality into their consciousness. Through the process of socialization, individuals learn the social roles, norms, values, and systems of meaning that apply in society, then make them part of

their consciousness and identity (Tarumingkeng, 2025). At this stage, social reality is no longer perceived as something purely external, but rather becomes a subjective frame of reference that guides the way individuals think, behave, and act in their daily lives. Thus, individual identity is formed as a result of a process of internalization that continues alongside the dynamics of social interaction.

Figure 1.

Peter L Berger's Identity Construction Chart



Through this dialectical framework, Berger asserts that social reality is dynamic and constantly in the process of "becoming." Reality not only shapes individuals but is also continuously reshaped by individuals through their social actions. This perspective provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding how values, norms, and consciousness—including multicultural consciousness—are formed, maintained, and potentially transformed in the context of a pluralistic society.

The results of the study on the construction of citizenship identity can be summarized in the table 2.

The first moment that becomes the initial stage of constructing citizenship identity is externalization or striving for stability in relationships with the social environment (Berger, 1991). Externalization is the initial stage in which humans perceive social reality, which is then understood based on their subjectivity or adjusted to the sociocultural world as a human product (Pangestuti, 2022).

Humans are born with knowledge that is influenced by understanding, habits, and experiences (Berger, 1991). The longer the informants normalize these values as a habit, the more they try to identify themselves as part of that habit. In addition, the moral standards that exist in society then become a reference for their actions and attitudes.

Table 2.

Construction of Citizenship identity among Students in the Civic Education Study Program

No	Aspect	Explanation of Berger's Theory	Analysis
1.	Concept	Concept Reality and identity are not objective, but rather the result of social construction processes or interactions with the existing social world and institutions.	The crucial role of social interaction in the family, school/campus, community and media social shapes the identity of students in the Civic Education Study Program. The family plays the most dominant role among all of these.
2.	Main Processes	The three key processes in Berger's theory are externalization, objectification, and internalization.	The process of social construction of PPKn students occurs in a clear and logical manner, starting from interactions with micro-institutions such as learning language, norms, and customs in the family environment to macro-institutions such as schools, society, and the state. This construction process takes place continuously and simultaneously.
3.	The role of institution	Institutions such as the family, school, and state play a central role in the internalization process. Institutions become agents of socialization that pass on objectified realities to individuals. An individual's official identity is often determined by their role and status in these institutions.	Social roles with structural power play a crucial role in shaping the identity of PPKn students, such as parents, teachers, village heads, and others.
4.	Primary & Secondary Socialization	Primary socialization occurs in childhood, where individuals acquire fundamental identities and realities. Meanwhile, secondary socialization usually occurs later in life when individuals are in certain institutions that are more easily changed.	Primary socialization of PPKn students occurs within the family institution, while secondary socialization begins to occur in school, community, and state institutions.
5.	The Dynamics of Identity Change	Identity is not static and can change, especially through a process of alternation when individuals enter a new reality and adopt a different identity from before.	The identity of PPKn students tends to be fluid and flexible. They have a tendency to easily adapt to new and different environments.

The behavior of helping others, being honest, and obeying applicable rules and laws are important values that are always instilled by families. This has an impact on the necessity to apply these behaviors and habits wherever one is. As part of society, informants view the

culture and traditions practiced by the community in their area as one of the factors that shape their national identity. Many traditions demonstrate the existence of culture and the character of each region. The customs they encounter lead them to have distinctive characteristics that are expressed through specific patterns of behavior in interacting with other individuals (Safitri & Ridwan, 2024).

Objectification occurs through self-interaction in the socio-cultural world. This stage involves the process of transforming social constructs into reality and acceptance by the wider community. In the objectification process, there is an agreement on meaning as a result of the distribution of knowledge in social interaction (institutionalization). All human activities at the externalization stage undergo institutionalization in the objectification process. Every habit that is frequently performed will form a pattern that will be repeated in the future. The objectification process that occurs in students of the Civic Education Study Program at Kahuripan University Kediri is a process of absorbing the language, customs, and habits of the environment through discussion activities or the formation of social groups that produce new understanding.

According to Berger's view, at the objectification stage, a person is trained and slightly forced to follow habits so that they become accustomed to them and are able to carry them out later without coercion. In the informant's statement, they conveyed that there was a little coercion in participating in the independence anniversary celebrations, namely being "told" by their parents to participate. In the objectification stage, language plays an important role as the main instrument for giving significance to the values that are instilled. According to (Indriyani, 2019), to be a good citizen, one must have at least three criteria, namely 1) civic knowledge; 2) civic skills; and 3) civic responsibility.

The internalization stage is the moment when a person begins to integrate with values or undergoes a process of adjusting their beliefs, attitudes, and values to themselves. The understanding of values obtained through the previous process can be realized in behavior. Internalization is also said to be the process of instilling values as part of oneself. In other words, internalization has a permanent and lasting nature within a person.

Based on the findings of this study, the process of constructing citizenship identity among second-semester students shows an influence in the objectification stage as formulated by Peter L. Berger. In his original theory, Berger assumes that individuals internalize a single "objective reality" that is established and collectively agreed upon by society. However, in the context of the flow of information in today's digital age, this objective reality has become blurred and fragmented. In addition, the echo chamber phenomenon on social media means that individuals are no longer confronted with a single narrative about national identity, but rather with various versions of "truth" that are often contradictory. As a result, a dual reality emerges that no longer produces a solid social consensus. Individuals are caught between the multicultural reality taught in academic environments (such as Civic Education courses) and the primordial reality that is massively constructed in the digital space through hoaxes and political polarization.

This echo chamber phenomenon is indeed a threat, but it is not significant because students are still able to establish good relationships with classmates of different ethnicities.

This is demonstrated by the strong internalization process instilled by their families and previous environments, so that even though they are greatly influenced by social media, they are still in a reasonable state.

Multicultural Awareness

Cultural understanding plays a very important role in various aspects of human life, including education, economics, law, religion, politics, and social-cultural life in general. In each of these fields, culture not only functions as a background for values, but also as a frame of reference that shapes the way individuals and groups think, behave, and act. Therefore, in living a sustainable life at the community, national, and state levels, the management and recognition of cultural diversity must be prioritized. Diversity is not merely a social reality, but also an important foundation for building fair, inclusive, and harmonious social relations.

Cultural awareness refers to an individual's ability to transcend their own perspective and reflectively recognize the existence of diverse cultural values, norms, and practices in social life (Amerson, 2018). This awareness requires individuals to understand that perspectives and behaviors that are considered normal or correct are not universal but are shaped by specific cultural contexts. Thus, cultural awareness enables individuals to develop openness, empathy, and appreciation for differences, while reducing the tendency toward ethnocentrism in interactions with others.

In line with this view, Wunderle asserts that culture is the ability to understand and recognize the extent to which cultural factors influence human behavior. This perspective places culture as an important element in individual cognitive processes and decision-making. In various social situations, humans consciously or unconsciously use cultural frameworks as a basis for interpreting reality, evaluating actions, and determining appropriate responses. As a result, differences in cultural backgrounds often result in differences in perspectives and behavior patterns when dealing with the same issues.

Thus, cultural awareness is a key competency in an increasingly diverse society. Without adequate cultural awareness, differences in values and perspectives have the potential to give rise to misunderstandings, conflicts, and social tensions. Conversely, individuals with a high level of cultural awareness tend to be able to interact in a more adaptive and constructive manner, as well as contribute to the creation of a sustainable and equitable social life amid diversity.

There are four levels of cross-cultural awareness according to Robert Hanvey, namely: 1) Awareness of superficial or visible cultural traits, which is an individual's understanding limited to visible characteristics that are stereotyped against cultures that are not truly understood; 2) Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that others are different and therefore problematic, which is an individual's understanding of the significance and characteristics of cultures that are different from their own; 3) Awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that others are believable in an intellectual way, which is a deep understanding between one's own culture and other cultures and the ability to accept other cultures as a whole; 4) Awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the

insider, which is understanding the feelings of other cultures through habits and experiences when interacting with other cultures.

The Civic Education Study Program is one of the study programs at Kahuripan University Kediri with diverse students from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, students of the Civic Education Study Program at Kahuripan University Kediri are required to understand multicultural concepts to avoid conflicts when interacting with other students.

The first stage of cross-cultural awareness is an individual's understanding of other cultures based solely on visible characteristics, which are then stereotyped into cultures that are not truly understood. At this level, individuals' understanding of other cultures is still superficial, overly simplistic, and often inaccurate. Individuals' understanding of other cultures is still based on assumptions and generalizations that may not be true, which affects their perspective on other cultures (Bardo, 2018).

At the beginning of the course, students are still in the first stage, which is prone to essentialism, i.e., viewing cultural groups as static and represented by certain physical characteristics. This view assumes that other cultures are exotic/strange/interesting according to initial stereotypes, thus tending to create psychological distance. Other cultures are seen as something to be studied, like objects in a museum, rather than as equal cultures. At this stage, individuals are only able to see the surface aspects of other cultures but are unable to see deeper aspects such as norms and values in other cultures, resulting in a shallow multicultural awareness. Multicultural awareness at this stage takes the form of superficial aesthetics, where only the physical diversity of other students is recognized, without touching on the essence of justice and deep empathy.

At the second stage, individuals begin to understand the significance and characteristics of cultures that are different from their own. However, their understanding is still not deep because individuals tend to compare one culture with another (Bardo, 2018). This understanding sometimes causes conflict within individuals because of these comparisons. At this stage, students begin to understand significant differences such as differences in values, norms, mindsets, and behaviors. Multicultural awareness at this stage is often judgmental. Individuals use their own cultural standards to judge other cultures as wrong or uncivilized. This is a form of hidden ethnocentrism wrapped in the term cultural awareness. Sometimes people assume and get caught up in the perception that diversity is a problem because they do not yet fully possess the empathy and intellectual ability to process these differences.

The third stage of multicultural awareness according to Robert Hanvey is a deep understanding between one's own culture and other cultures, as well as the ability to accept other cultures in their entirety. Individuals already understand the significant differences between their own culture and other cultures and begin to consider other cultures as valid (Hanvey, 1982).

Table 3.

Multicultural Awareness Levels of Students in the Civic Education Study Program at Kahuripan University, Kediri

No.	Aspect	Multicultural Awareness	Analysis
1.	Concept	Cross-cultural awareness is the ability to understand other cultures from one's own perspective through a gradual process, starting from learning facts to experiencing life interacting with other cultures.	The cross-cultural awareness of PPKn students through a gradual process, from initially having only superficial knowledge, then changing into students who are aware of diversity and able to see their own society from the perspective of others.
2.	Four Levels of Cross-Cultural Awareness	Stage 1 Awareness of superficial cultural characteristics. Stage 2 Awareness of significant cultural characteristics that contrast with one's own culture. Stage 3 Awareness of significant characteristics of other cultures that can be accepted intellectually. Stage 4 Awareness and understanding of how to become part of another culture, achieved through experience.	The fourth level is limited and can only be accessed by some people who have experience as "insiders" in other cultures. PPKn students strive to reach this stage, but only after going through several previous phases. Efforts to reach this phase are made through gaining authentic cross-cultural experiences, developing critical thinking skills to overcome stereotypes, and developing deeper empathy.

Students begin to get used to experiences such as hearing new vocabulary, styles of speaking, and seeing different customs, which become a routine that they can begin to accept. According to Hanvey (1982) at this third stage, individuals begin to involve intellectual aspects with culture and develop a high level of curiosity about the similarities and differences between cultures. This stage refers to one of the core elements of Cultural Intelligence (CQ), specifically in the cognitive dimension. Based on this stage, understanding culture is not just about memorizing or knowing what other cultures do, but understanding why it makes sense. This process of understanding becomes a process of deconstructing prejudices, where people no longer use personal moral standards or logic as a standard for measuring the behavior of others. This stage becomes a moment when the brain stops labeling differences as shortcomings, begins to see them as functions and uses universal standards of truth. This concept becomes a bridge to cognitive empathy as the ability to map other people's mental maps so that individuals can recognize that their universe of values is the most rational choice.

Table 4.
The Stages of Cultural Perception

Stage	Reaction To Difference	Perspective
Ethnocentric	It's not true/weard	Using universal standard
Tolerance	It's strage, but i will let it be	Even if I disagree, I refrain from judging
Intellectually Believable	It makes sense	I understand the value that produces the behavior

Cross-cultural communication becomes disruptive if differences are always highlighted, so effective interaction strategies are needed to reduce those differences. This way, individuals no longer try to change others to fit their own cultural logic but rather adjust their interactions to align with other cultural logics.

At the last stage, individuals begin to understand the feelings of other cultures through familiarization and experiences gained when interacting with other cultures. This stage is the highest stage of cross-cultural awareness theory. Individuals feel that they have their own views of other cultures, as if they are directly experiencing certain situations and cultures (Gui, 2019). At this stage, it is referred to as the emic perspective, which is the ability to not only observe culture as an observer but also to experience it as a participant. Individuals see things from the perspective of insiders. The emic perspective is an attempt to understand behavior based on the values and categories held by members of that culture. Awareness of other cultures' feelings from an insider's perspective is not ordinary empathy, but rather existential intelligence that involves a total paradigm shift, also known as cultural empathy/emic perspective. However, the intensity of an insider's perspective on the same thing can vary from person to person because culture is not a diverse aspect but depends on each individual based on their experiences. These differences are caused by several factors, namely generation, economic and social status, and gender.

CONCLUSION

The construction of citizenship identity among students majoring in Civic Education at Kahuripan University Kediri, according to Berger & Luckman's theory, shows that Kahuripan University Kediri Civic Education students build their citizenship identity dynamically through the complex interaction of various factors and several stages, namely externalization, objectification, and internalization. Academic experiences and family education play an important role in broadening their understanding of the issues and responsibilities of being a citizen. In addition, interactions inside and outside the classroom between individuals from different backgrounds have proven to be a powerful catalyst in fostering multicultural awareness. The exchange of ideas, experiences, and joint problem-solving in the campus environment can foster attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences.

This study shows that bridging Identity among college students is not merely passive tolerance, but rather an active process in which the academic environment serves as a social

laboratory that accelerates the transition from superficial awareness to deep cultural empathy.

As a recommendation for researchers who wish to conduct further studies related to the construction of citizenship identity and multicultural awareness, there are several areas that still have potential to be explored further to enrich understanding, strengthen empirical evidence, and support the practical implementation of citizenship identity construction and multicultural awareness. Potential topics include 1) Development of the multicultural campus climate audit instrument to evaluate university institutional policies in support of inclusivity.; 2) Research and Development (R&D) or action research to develop Civic Education curriculum based on digital citizenship, specifically designed to mitigate identity polarization.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contribution

Permatasari, F., Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft; **Mutmmainnah, F.**, Writing – Review & Editing, Visualization, Project Administration; **Sugara, H.**, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Writing–Review & Editing, Supervision; **Iswahyudi, E.**, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Review & Editing, Validation; **Mustaghfiroh, S.**, Supervision, Validation, Writing Review & Editing.

Funding Statement

This research received no external funding

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration of AI Use

AI was used by the authors to assist in improving language clarity, translation, and structure under the supervision and control of the authors.

Additional Information

Not applicable

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