

The Experience of SMA Negeri 1 Babat Students Using DeepSeek to Form Multicultural Character: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract: This study aims to understand the experiences of students at SMA Negeri 1 Babat in utilizing the AI platform DeepSeek as a learning medium to develop multicultural character. The research employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study design to interpret students' learning experiences in depth. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and reflections on students' learning experiences while using DeepSeek in educational activities. Data analysis was conducted using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach to identify emerging themes from participants' narratives. The results indicate that DeepSeek functions as a medium for self-reflection, a tool to broaden cultural insights, and a space for simulating cross-perspective dialogue that fosters tolerance, empathy, and openness among students toward diversity within the school environment, as well as strengthening multicultural awareness in students' social interactions. Therefore, the use of DeepSeek as an AI-based learning medium is proven to support the development of students' multicultural character in a reflective and contextual manner.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Deepseek; Multicultural Character; Digital Learning.

Abstract: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami pengalaman siswa SMA Negeri 1 Babat dalam memanfaatkan platform AI DeepSeek sebagai media pembelajaran untuk membentuk karakter multikultural. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi fenomenologi untuk menafsirkan pengalaman belajar siswa secara mendalam. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, serta refleksi pengalaman belajar siswa selama menggunakan DeepSeek dalam

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kegiatan pembelajaran. Analisis data dilakukan dengan pendekatan Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema pengalaman yang muncul dari narasi partisipan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa DeepSeek berperan sebagai media refleksi diri, sarana memperluas wawasan budaya, serta ruang simulasi dialog lintas perspektif yang mendorong sikap toleransi, empati, dan keterbukaan siswa terhadap keberagaman dalam lingkungan sekolah serta memperkuat kesadaran multikultural dalam interaksi sosial siswa. Dengan demikian, pemanfaatan DeepSeek sebagai media pembelajaran berbasis AI terbukti mampu mendorong pembentukan karakter multikultural siswa secara reflektif dan kontekstual.

Kata Kunci: Artificial Intelligence; Deepseek; Karakter Multicultural; Pembelajaran Digital.

A. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic position in the education system because it plays a role in fostering the spiritual, moral, and intellectual aspects of students. In the context of a multicultural Indonesian society, PAI not only functions as a means of religious knowledge transfer, but also as a medium for character formation that instills the values of tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity. The diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and religions in Indonesia on the one hand is the wealth of the nation, but on the other hand it has the potential to cause social conflicts if not managed through proper education (Muhammad Najmi Hayat et al., 2024). Therefore, learning innovations that are able to integrate multicultural values contextually are needed. In this case, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, such as the DeepSeek platform, is a strategic alternative in creating a learning experience that is reflective, dialogical, and adaptive to diversity, thereby supporting the formation of students' multicultural character more effectively. Previous research has shown that multicultural education in school contexts plays an important role in shaping students' character of tolerance, empathy, and inclusive attitudes through curriculum approaches and contextual learning practices (Dalimunthe et al., 2025). Meanwhile, studies on Artificial

Intelligence (AI) in education emphasize more on improving cognitive learning, personalizing learning, and system efficiency. Other research also shows that AI has the potential to increase cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, but it still focuses on literature review and has not touched on the direct experiences of learners. On the other hand, recent studies confirm that the integration of AI in character education is still general and has not specifically examined the formation of multicultural characters in the context of real learning (*Warlim W, Effendi R., et al 2025*).

Thus, there is a research gap in the aspect of contextual use of AI in Islamic Religious Education learning, especially in understanding students' subjective experiences in forming multicultural characters. Therefore, this research is here to fill this gap through a phenomenological exploration of the use of the DeepSeek platform as a reflective and dialogical learning medium.

Even so, Indonesia has also experienced rapid development in the field of technology. Which until now has been a big factor in Indonesia's change, especially in its multicultural character. The development of digital technology and globalization has changed the landscape of Indonesian studies, so that schools not only function as a space for knowledge transfer, but also as a vehicle for adaptive character formation. In the context of a pluralistic Indonesian society, multicultural education is an urgent need to form an attitude of tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect among the younger generation. However, challenges arise when the digital space is also a medium for the dissemination of provocative content and less relevant news in education that can erode the values of diversity (*Moheyeldine et al., 2022*).

Schools as a micro-cosmos of society have a strategic responsibility in responding to this dynamic. Conventional learning often clashes with limitations of time, resources, and methods in presenting the complexity of multicultural issues in depth. This is where educational technology is expected to play an enabler, creating an immersive and personalized learning experience. However, the use of this technology is often still limited to the cognitive aspect, not yet touching the active realm and character formation holistically (*Chen et al., 2020*).

The development of generative AI artificial intelligence opens up a new paradigm in learning interactions. AI like DeepSeek offers dialogical capabilities that allow students to explore different perspectives and safely simulate learning situations. Research shows an increase in teachers' knowledge and practical skills, including an 8.66% increase in the use of DeepSeek. The platform also has the potential to be a learning partner that encourages value reflection, allowing students to test understanding, explore different points of view, and build multicultural understanding independently (Lahby, 2025). This potential is still rarely studied, especially in the context of multicultural character education in Indonesia (Solehuddin et al., 2025).

There is a research gap between the use of AI for instructional purposes and its potential as a pedagogical tool in the development of attitudes and values. Most studies of artificial intelligence in education still focus on cognitive aspects, such as academic achievement, learning efficiency, and critical thinking skills. Research examining the contribution of AI-based interactions to multicultural character formation and value internalization is still limited. In addition, phenomenological approaches that examine students' experiences when interacting with AI in a multicultural context are also rarely studied, especially at the secondary education level in Indonesia (Chen et al., 2020).

The research location at SMAN 1 Babat was chosen with various specific contextual considerations. Especially public schools in districts with social heterogeneity, this school applies miniature states. Strengthening the multicultural character in these places is not only relevant, but also important in preventing small radicalization and upgrading social defenses. This research serves to fill the void between the potential of mukhtahir technology and the need for contextual character education at the secondary school level (Ependi et al., 2023).

Based on the recorded background, this study is recapped to further explore and understand the use of the DeepSeek AI platform, especially the formation of students' multicultural characters. With phenomenological studies, this research is not just an outcome measurement, but a dive into the meaning of lived experience for students (students), such as how they use AI wisely in shaping multicultural characters. In the context of education, AI has a significant role to play in enhancing a personalized and

culturally relevant learning experience for every student. From observations at SMA Negeri 1 Babat, it gave good results to students who have applied AI DeepSeek in responding to the phenomenon of female students at school, such as religious differences and group discussions to solve a problem (Archer Caballero, 2023).

The synthesis of this research covers various theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, the research findings are expected to enrich the treasures of technoadegogy and educational psychology, especially regarding the mechanism of internalizing values through human-AI chat. In theory, constructivism views that knowledge is formed through social interaction as well as direct experience. When participatory uses DeepSeek to explore issues of diversity, the process of dialogue and interpretation becomes an important part of the formation of multicultural understanding. This research can be in the form of a reference to educators and policymakers in designing ethical and transformative AI integrity in the curriculum, especially for learning maps that carry value content such as Islamic Religious Education.

Therefore, the exploitation of DeepSeek's Artificial Intelligence (AI) for students and teachers has a superior importance in the context of secondary education which emphasizes mechanisms and innovations. In this digital era, the skill to convey information effectively and attractively is a superior skill that must be mastered by students.

B. Research Methods

This research is built within the framework of a phenomenological qualitative method to understand students in interacting with artificial intelligence technology during the study process. The study focused on the learning experience of students at SMA Negeri 1 Babat by involving 12 students as phenomenological interview participants, who used DeepSeek as a means of material analysis and a medium of academic reflection. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine the meaning of learning skills in depth, not just measure quantitative learning outcomes. In the context of digital education, this approach is

considered relevant to reveal how students interpret the use of AI in learning activities and how the experience shapes their way of thinking, and academic awareness.

Research on students' experiences using AI in learning shows that phenomenological approaches are able to identify the subjective meaning of technology use, including perceptions of learning efficiency and critical reflection on technology itself (Rabuandika, 2025).

The initial stage of the research began by determining the phenomenon studied, namely students' experiences in utilizing AI as a tool for academic learning and discussion. This phenomenon was chosen because the development of AI has influenced the way students acquire and process knowledge in the educational environment. In practice, AI is no longer just a source of digital information, but also acts as a cognitive partner that helps students formulate ideas, formulate arguments, and understand learning concepts in a more structured way. Recent studies have also shown that the integration of AI in learning can increase learning motivation while forming new patterns of interaction between students and digital knowledge sources (Pitra Satya Purnama et al., 2024).

Participants were purposively selected from among the students who directly participated in the steps of AI-based learning activities in the classroom. The selection of participants in phenomenological research does not aim to obtain a large number of respondents, but rather to present individuals who have real experience with the phenomenon being studied. Thus, each participant is positioned as a source of experiential narratives that are able to explain what the learning process is like from their own perspective. This approach is in line with phenomenological research practices in education that emphasize the importance of participants' hands-on experience as a basis for understanding the dynamics of learning in digital contexts (Pamungkas et al., 2025).

The process of *bracketing* or suspending the researcher's assumptions. At this stage, the researcher consciously places personal views, academic experiences, and normative assumptions outside the data interpretation process so that the students' experiences can emerge authentically. This implementation is an important principle in

phenomenological research because the main purpose of research is not to assess phenomena, but to understand the meaning of experiences as perceived by participants. In the phenomenological study of digital competencies in the era of education 4.0, this approach is used to ensure that the researcher's interpretation does not dominate the narrative of experience conveyed by the research subject.

Data collection is carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and reflection on students' learning experiences while using AI in learning. In practice, students are engaged in collaborative learning activities where they use AI to summarize material, draft presentations, and develop analysis-based conclusions. This activity is carried out in small groups to create a dialogue space that allows students to exchange ideas and perspectives. This kind of collaborative approach is considered effective in upgrading reflective learning experiences.

The process of assessing the data that has accumulated in this study is applied applying the *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) which aims to deepen the meaning of the participant's experience in depth (Smith et al., 2021). The analysis process adopts 5 stages that begin with the *reading and re-reading*, i.e. read interview transcripts repeatedly to build a thorough understanding of the flow of the experience and the context of the participants' narratives. After that, the stage is carried out *initial noting*, where make detailed analytical notes on the interview text that include descriptive, linguistic, and interpretive aspects. The initial notes are then developed at the *developing themes*, that is, formulate themes that represent the core of the participant's experience and reflect the researcher's interpretation process of the meaning in the narrative (Smith et al., 2021).

The next stage is *clustering themes*, which is grouping themes that have related meanings to form the main theme (superordinate themes) along with interconnected subthemes. This process is followed by *cross-case analysis*, which is comparing the themes that arise in each participant to identify patterns of collective experiences while looking at the variations of experiences that arise. Through this analysis stage, this study succeeded in identifying three main themes in the phenomenon of students using DeepSeek.

This stage focuses on the preparation of phenomenological descriptions that describe students' learning experiences in the context of the learning they are undergoing. The researchers summarized narratives that connect students' individual experiences to classroom learning dynamics, while showing how they interpret interactions with technology and how those experiences affect their understanding of learning. In the study of multicultural education, learning experiences based on dialogue and collaboration are known to strengthen attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and appreciation for diversity of perspectives (Noviyanti, 2025).

The final step of this research focuses on discovering the essence of the phenomenon. Through the synthesis of various themes from the participants' experiences, the researcher formulated the main meaning of how the integration of AI technology in learning affects student learning dynamics. The findings show that the use of AI is not only related to academic efficiency, but also opens up a space for reflection that strengthens social interaction and understanding of diverse perspectives. In the context of multicultural education, the use of digital technology has the potential to support the development of the value of tolerance and cooperation among students (Scott, Scott, & Scott, 2026).

In table 1, this discovery is related to Edmund Husserl's phenomenological theory, which covers various aspects such as interaction experience, value understanding, awareness of change, emotion and reflection (Nugraheni et al., 2023).

Table 1: Phenomenological Aspects and Research Questions

Phenomenological Aspects	Research Papers
Interaction Experience	How do SMAN 1 BABAT students experience a dialogue process with DeepSeek about a diversity theme?
Understanding Values	What does "tolerance" or "respect for differences" mean for students after a discussion with AI?
Awareness of Change	How do students use DeepSeek to change their perception of other cultures?
Emotions and Reflection	What feeling is present when AI provides a different perspective? And how do they reflect on that?

The results of the study show that phenomenological studies are an important approach for researchers and educators because they are able to provide a deeper understanding in designing learning research. Interviews were used to gain students' first-hand experience of the ease of use of DeepSeek AI and its impact on the quality of their learning and understanding. In addition, students' learning outcomes and presentations before and after the use of technology were analyzed to see developments in aspects of material understanding, learning effectiveness, and multicultural character formation. Through a phenomenological qualitative approach, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive picture of how the use of DeepSeek can support the improvement of learning understanding while strengthening students' multicultural character.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

This study involved 12 participants in grades XI-8 of SMA Negeri 1 Babat which were determined through purposive sampling techniques. The selection of participants is based on three main considerations: First, they have used the DeepSeek platform for at least one month or more consistently; second, being active in school organizations that often interact across cultural backgrounds; and third, have a commitment to follow all stages of research until completion. The information accumulation approach combines semi-structured interviews, participatory observation during organizational activities, and also analysis of daily digital journals written by participants.

These findings suggest that AI-mediated interactions can serve as reflective pedagogical tools that encourage metacognitive awareness in students. In a phenomenological perspective, the interaction with DeepSeek acts as a reflective mirror that uncovers implicit cultural assumptions embedded in students' everyday perspectives.

Based on the data study applied through the *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) approach with 5 stages as formulated by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, which aims to understand how participants study their experiences when utilizing

DeepSeek's AI technology in the study. So the findings focus on the subjective meanings of participants' experiences, and produce three main themes that represent the patterns of collective experience. In the discovery of the three main themes, they were arranged using a table, along with the subthemes of each of the three main themes as follows:

Table 2: Main Themes and Distribution of Participants

Source: Primary Data from 2026 observations

Main Theme	Subtheme	Short Description
AI as a Reflective Mirror	Awareness of personal bias	Students are aware of their own prejudices or assumptions after receiving a response from AI
	Identification of hidden stereotypes	Students are able to identify stereotypes that were not previously realized in the way they manage their thinking
AI as a Cultural Window	Culture exploration without anxiety	Students feel comfortable and safe understanding other cultures/beliefs through AI without fear of being wrong
	Understanding of socio-historical context	Students gain a deeper understanding of the background of a cultural group
AI as a Simulative Space	Interfaith dialogue exercises	Students use AI to dialogue as if from another religious/cultural perspective
	Strengthening communication strategies	Students test and craft more empathetic responses before interacting in the real world

Theme 1: DeepSeek as a Reflective Mirror

Most participants revealed that their interactions with DeepSeek were not only informative, but also reflective. System responses that often return questions or provide alternative perspectives encourage students to revisit personal assumptions that were previously considered reasonable. At this point, technology serves as a medium of self-

reflection, not just a source of knowledge (*Observation, Phenomenological Studies 2026, n.d.*). One of the participants said that when he asked questions about certain ethnic groups in Babat, the response he received actually triggered an evaluation of his own motives and prejudices. Similar experiences were also conveyed by other participants who realized that it helped to recognize stereotypes that they had not been aware of. This phenomenon gave rise to a new awareness of the existence of implicit biases in the way he thought.

Topic 2: DeepSeek as a Cultural Window

All participants (12 out of 12) stated that DeepSeek provides access to cross-cultural knowledge in a more secure and convenient way. Compared to asking friends directly from different religious or ethnic backgrounds, the use of AI is perceived to reduce awkwardness and worries about speech errors. This platform creates a freer "window" to see the wider world and avoid social pressures (*Observation, Phenomenological Studies 2026, n.d.*). A participant (P2, Female) admitted that she felt awkward when she had to chat about the discussion of their worship in detail with her friend who was of different religions. DeepSeek is a bridge to this awkwardness or discomfort.

“If you ask directly to your friends, you are afraid of misunderstanding and feeling offended. So ask Deepseek is better, free. I can ask details about their worship and holidays, how they worship. Deepseek explained in a neutral and long manner like chatting within yourself first and then expressed again. After I understood the context, I felt more confident in dori to have a casual chat with my friends (Wawancara 2026, n.d.).”

More than just facts, participants also gain an understanding of the socio-historical context. P7 (male) said how DeepSeek helped him understand the reason behind a difference. With the beginning, DeepSeek has a role as an initial mediator that expands students' cultural literacy.

Item 3: Deepseek as a Dialogue Simulation Room

A total of 12 participants used DeepSeek to simulate conversations from different perspectives than themselves. This feature is used as a practice before dealing with

actual situations, especially in organizational discussions involving sensitive issues. The simulation helps students understand the variety of viewpoints as well as test the responses to be delivered. P3 (male), a student council administrator, shared how he used DeepSeek to prepare himself to lead discussions involving sensitive issues.

"In the Student Council, his friends are different. I am often worried if I discuss topics that are a bit hot or sensitive, for fear of misunderstanding. I try to use DeepSeek to be my friend who is from X's background. I try to talk to DeepSeek by imitating the person's style, I learn how to compose good sentences and be careful so that it is not easy to offend him." (Wawancara 2026, n.d.).

Thus, AI serves as a social communication laboratory that allows for discourse experiments in a relatively safe environment. Students can experiment with discourse and give their responses in a realistic environment safe from social consequences, so that when exposed to real situations, they can be better prepared and strategic in communicating.

In general, students' experiences in utilizing DeepSeek to support multicultural character formation can be understood through several key meanings. For students, DeepSeek is not only seen as a technology, but also as a space for reflection that encourages them to revisit personal assumptions about cultural differences. In addition, the platform is considered a source of knowledge that helps expand understanding of the diversity of values, traditions, and social practices in society. Interaction with DeepSeek also provides an opportunity for students to practice cross-perspective dialogue in a more open manner before facing real-world situations in the school environment. The whole experience shows the emergence of new awareness expressed directly by the participants and becomes the basis for a more in-depth analysis in the research discussion section.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the phenomenon of SMA Negeri 1 Babat students in utilizing DeepSeek exceeds the function of technology and not just as a learning tool. Taking a phenomenological approach, this study finds three main patterns of phenomena—DeepSeek as a reflective mirror, a cultural window, and a dialogue simulation space—revealing how interaction with artificial intelligence can facilitate the

process of developing students' multicultural awareness. Therefore, in this part of the discussion, we will interpret each theme in depth by referring to relevant theoretical frameworks and previous research.

The research findings show that students' interactions with DeepSeek not only serve as an information-seeking tool, but also as a space for reflection that helps them realize previously unconscious personal biases. In students' experiences, the answers given by AI often present different points of view, prompting them to revisit assumptions or stereotypes that have been considered reasonable. This process shows the existence of metacognitive reflection, in which students begin to rethink the way they understand social and cultural realities. In multicultural education, awareness of personal prejudice is an important step to foster an open attitude towards diversity. Recent research also shows that reflective interaction with AI systems can encourage self-awareness and re-evaluation of users' social views, so that the use of DeepSeek by students at SMA Negeri 1 Babat is not only related to technological skills, but also shows changes in the way they interpret knowledge and different perspectives in the learning process (Holmes & Tuomi, 2022; Kasneci et al., 2023).

Apart from being a space for reflection, DeepSeek is also understood by students as a source of information that helps broaden insights about diverse cultures, religions, and social practices. Some students use this technology to understand the background of religious traditions or practices that differ from their own experiences. Awareness in utilizing DeepSeek does not arise directly as a technical ability, but develops through a reflective process as students interact repeatedly with the AI system. In interviews, students revealed that the use of DeepSeek makes them more cautious in receiving information because the answers given often present other possible interpretations that they did not previously think of (Chiu, 2026). In addition, the ease of asking questions without awkwardness makes them more free to explore cross-cultural issues that were previously difficult to talk about directly. This condition suggests that technology can create a more neutral space for dialogue, thus helping to reduce anxiety in intercultural communication. Recent research has also shown that generative AI can support learners

in discussing sensitive topics more safely while expanding cross-cultural understanding through a variety of available perspectives (Gravett & Petersen, 2022).

Other findings show that students use DeepSeek as a means of practicing cross-cultural communication through conversational simulations. In some of the experiences that participants recounted, they tried to formulate a question or response by considering the point of view of another cultural group before talking about it in real social interactions at school. This practice shows that AI technology can serve as an experimental space for students to practice empathy, understand different perspectives, and develop more inclusive dialogue skills. Recent research has also shown that AI-based simulations in learning can improve perspective-taking skills and help students understand complex social dynamics (Luckin, 2024).

In general, these experiences show a transformative learning process. The use of DeepSeek encourages students to view knowledge not only as a single piece of information, but as the result of a diverse range of perspectives that need to be critically understood. Through a process of self-reflection, expansion of cultural insights, and cross-perspective communication exercises, students begin to develop a more open understanding of diversity in social life at school. In the context of multicultural education, this experience shows that AI technology can play a role as a pedagogical tool that supports the growth of a more inclusive social consciousness (Purnama et al., 2024).

It can be seen in (Figure 1) that the conceptual model of multicultural character formation resulting from this study shows the process of transformation of students through three stages that are mutually sustainable. The first stage is self-reflection, when interaction with DeepSeek encourages students to be aware of biases or stereotypes in their perspective. The second stage is in the form of cultural exploration, which is when students expand their understanding of the diversity of values, traditions, and social practices through dialogue with AI. The third stage is dialogue simulation, where students practice communicating across cultures in a safe learning space before applying it in real interactions. The three stages form a cyclical process and reinforce each other in building students' multicultural awareness.

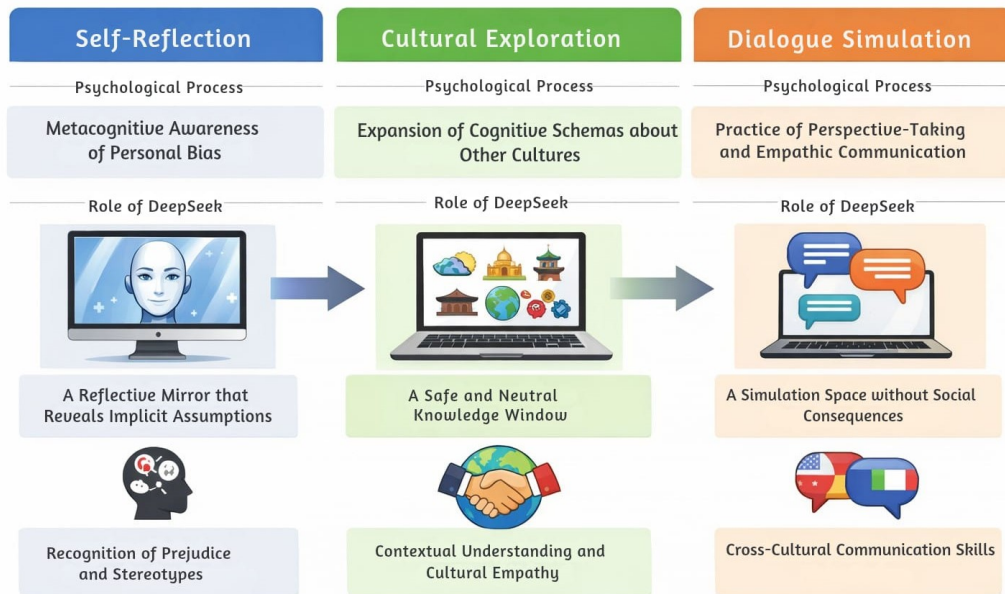


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Character Formation

Source: Research Scope Results

This conceptual model is commensurate with constructivist theories that hold that knowledge and values are not transferred inactively, but constructed through experience and interaction. Piaget (1970) explained that the process of assimilation and accommodation occurs when individuals are confronted with new information that does not fit into existing cognitive schemas. In this context, DeepSeek's response that presents an alternative perspective creates a cognitive dissonance that encourages students to reconstruct their understanding of diversity. Furthermore, the model also integrates the principles of *transformative learning* which Mezirow (1991) put forward. According to him, perspective transformation occurs through ten phases starting from disorienting dilemmas, followed by critical reflection, rational discourse, to real action. The findings of this study show that interaction with DeepSeek is able to trigger the early phases of the transformation, while implementation in group discussions and real interactions in schools continues the later phases (Bond et al., 2021).

This research aims to interpret the meaning of life experiences (*lived experience*) students of SMA Negeri 1 Babat in utilizing DeepSeek to form a multicultural character. Along with the phenomenological approach, the focus of the analysis is directed at how students give meaning to their interactions with AI in the context of

everyday schooling. Three main themes—AI as a medium of self-reflection, the expansion of cultural insights, and the space for simulating dialogue—emerge through a process of phenomenological reduction and an in-depth interpretation of the participants' narratives. This approach is in line with the development of contemporary Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) studies that emphasize the exploration of subjective experiences in specific social contexts (Smith et al., 2021).

In the framework of phenomenology, experience is not understood as a mere objective fact, but rather as a construction of meaning formed through awareness and reflection. The students' interaction with DeepSeek shows that there is a process of intentionality—awareness that is always directed at something—where AI becomes an object as well as a medium of reflection. The main significance of these findings lies in the function of AI as a relatively safe space of exploration for students to test cross-cultural perspectives. From a digital pedagogical perspective, an AI-based learning environment can reduce social anxiety while increasing the courage to explore (Antika et al., 2024). Phenomenologically, this condition allows for the occurrence of pre-interaction experiences (*pre-reflective experience*) which is then reflected back before being embodied in real action. This means that AI acts as a mediating medium between inner experience and social action.

Theoretically, the change in attitude occurs because students not only receive answers, but compare the alternative narratives presented by DeepSeek. This comparison brings up mild cognitive dissonance that triggers reflection. In the context of character education, critical reflection is a prerequisite for the formation of empathy and appreciation for diversity. Studies in Indonesia show that digital literacy associated with value reflection contributes to strengthening social character. In China, recent research on the integration of AI in education confirms that the effectiveness of technology increases when accompanied by a humanistic and dialogical approach (Baillot, n.d.).

Some of the findings of this study are in line with empirical reports in Indonesia that show that the use of artificial intelligence in education can increase student participation and involvement in learning. However, the study shows a more specific

finding, namely that the formation of multicultural characters does not occur automatically through the use of AI alone. This value actually develops through pedagogical interaction involving the role of teachers and collaborative discussions between students. Thus, technology functions as a medium of learning, while the process of value formation is still influenced by social dynamics in the classroom. These findings differ from a number of studies in China that have emphasized the role of AI in improving academic efficiency and learning performance, but have relatively little highlighted its impact on the development of social values. This difference shows that the application of AI in education is greatly influenced by the social and cultural context of schools, especially in societies with high levels of diversity such as Indonesia (Hanifah et al., 2024).

The difference in the way students of the science and social studies groups use DeepSeek can be understood phenomenologically as a difference in experience horizon. Each student brings a background of knowledge, learning experience, and social environment that influences the way they interpret technology. Therefore, interactions with AI do not take place uniformly, but are influenced by the experience framework that has been pre-had. These findings are in line with studies on artificial intelligence in education which show that students' responses to technology are highly dependent on the learner's context, such as academic background, learning style, and digital experience (Seo et al., 2021). Thus, the integration of AI in learning cannot be treated as a single solution, but rather needs to be accompanied by a pedagogical approach that takes into account the diversity of student characteristics.

Practically, this study shows the importance of designing learning that provides space for reflection and meaningful learning experiences. Approaches such as *flipped classroom* It can be used because it gives students the opportunity to explore material independently through technology before discussing it critically in class discussions. This pattern helps students build personal reflection while enriching mutual understanding through dialogue. In addition, the findings of this study confirm that artificial intelligence literacy is not only understood as a technical ability to use technology, but also as a reflective ability related to social and cultural awareness. In the

perspective of educational phenomenology, technology is part of the *lifeworld* students who also influence the way they interpret themselves, social relationships, and diversity in society (Bond, 2020).

D. Conclusion

This study shows that the use of DeepSeek by SMA Negeri 1 Babat students not only functions as an academic tool, but also as a medium that supports the growth of multicultural awareness. Through the phenomenological approach, three main patterns of experience were found, namely DeepSeek as a reflection space that helps students realize personal biases, as a source of exploration of knowledge about cultural diversity, and as a means of dialogue practice that develops cross-perspective communication skills. These findings suggest that interactions with artificial intelligence can encourage reflection, broaden horizons, and train social skills that support a more open attitude toward differences.

The implications of these findings also suggest that the integration of AI technology in studies requires the active role of teachers as learning companions who direct students in utilizing AI critically and responsibly. Teachers not only function as informants, but also as regulators of the reflection process so that students can assess, interpret, and use the information created by AI wisely.

Scientifically, this study enriches the study of the use of AI in education by showing that technology not only has an impact on the realm of thinking, but has the potential to facilitate the formation of students' character and social awareness. These findings also strengthen the perspective of constructivism and transformative learning that places reflection and experience as the basis for changing understanding. Thus, the integration of AI in learning can be understood as part of a pedagogical process that supports the development of multicultural awareness in a pluralistic educational environment.

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