

## BUILDING BRIDGES ON THE PATH TO GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION

### COĞRAFYA EĞİTİMİYLE KÜRESEL VATANDAŞLIK YOLUNDA KÖPRÜLER KURMAK

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#### ABSTRACT

Geography education has been identified as a key component of global citizenship education, as it provides students with the tools to understand and analyze the interconnectedness of the world and the complexities of global issues. The main focus of this research study was the role of geography education in global citizenship education. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the link between the skills necessary for individuals to be effective global citizens and the skills that are taught through geography education. Based on the literature review and inferences presented in the study, the results of the study suggested that there is a strong connection between geography education and global citizenship development. And, the study highlighted the importance of incorporating geography education into the curriculum to cultivate informed and engaged global citizens who are better equipped to address global challenges and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future. So, it is recommended that educators and policymakers prioritize geography education in curriculum development and implementations.

**Keywords:** Geography Education, Global Challenges, Global Citizenship, Sustainable World.

#### ÖZET

Coğrafya eğitimi, öğrencilere dünyanın birbirine bağlılığını ve küresel meselelerin karmaşıklığını anlama ve analiz etme araçları sağladığından, küresel vatandaşlık eğitiminin temel bir bileşeni olarak tanımlanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın ana odak noktası coğrafya eğitiminin dünya vatandaşlığı eğitimindeki rolünün araştırılmasıdır. Çalışma özellikle, bireylerin etkili bir dünya vatandaşı olması için gerekli olan beceriler ile coğrafya eğitimi yoluyla öğretilen beceriler arasındaki bağlantıyı incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Çalışmada sunulan literatür taraması ve çıkarımlara dayalı olarak, çalışmanın sonuçları coğrafya eğitimi ile küresel vatandaşlık gelişimi arasında güçlü bir bağlantı olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca çalışma, küresel zorlukların üstesinden gelmek ve daha sürdürülebilir ve eşitlikçi bir geleceğe katkıda bulunmak için daha donanımlı, bilgili ve katılımcı küresel vatandaşlar yetiştirmek için coğrafya eğitimi müfredatı dahil etmenin önemini vurgulamıştır. Çalışma ile eğitimcilerin ve politika yapıcıların müfredat geliştirme ve uygulamalarında coğrafya eğitimine öncelik vermeleri önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Coğrafya Eğitimi, Küresel Vatandaşlık, Küresel Zorluklar, Sürdürülebilir Dünya.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Global citizenship refers to the capacity of individuals to engage in collective action for social, economic, and political change on a global scale, while recognizing the interdependence of people and countries (Fuchs, 2021). It is a mindset and set of practices that involves acknowledging one's interconnectedness to others and to the planet, taking action to address pressing global challenges, and advocating for policies and structures that promote human rights, sustainability, and social justice (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). Furthermore, global citizenship involves understanding the complex and interconnected global issues we face and taking action to address these issues, including promoting environmental sustainability, advancing social justice and human rights, and advocating for equitable economic systems (Tarozzi & Torres, 2016).

Global citizenship is a concept that has gained increasing prominence in recent years as educators, policymakers, and scholars have recognized the importance of preparing individuals to engage with global issues and contribute to positive change in the world. Global citizenship education is increasingly seen as a key component of higher education, with institutions around the world incorporating global learning outcomes into their curricula (Perry et al, 2013; Hammond & Keating, 2018; Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019).

In the United States, the American Association of Colleges and Universities has called for higher education institutions to provide students with global learning opportunities in order to foster global citizenship skills (AAC&U, 2023). Similarly, in Canada, there has been growing interest in global citizenship education as a means of promoting social justice and equity (Brigham, 2011). In addition, in Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea and Thailand; Kennedy, Kuang, & Chow (2013) found that citizenship education can enhance students' civic knowledge and participation. Alviar-Martin & Baidon (2016) studied the effects of citizenship education in Singapore and concluded that it can promote critical thinking and civic-mindedness among students. In Japan, Motani (2007) argued that citizenship education should be incorporated into the curriculum to promote democratic values and social cohesion. And, in Turkey, Ersoy (2013) conducted a study and emphasized the need for global citizenship education to foster an inclusive and participatory democracy. Today there has been growing interest in global citizenship education as a means of promoting social responsibility, tolerance, and multiculturalism (Şen, 2022).

These examples highlight the global nature of the discourse around global citizenship and the ways in which it is being incorporated into educational and policy contexts around the world. Overall, the continued attention to global citizenship in science and practice reflects a growing recognition of the interconnectedness of the world and the need for individuals to think and act as responsible global citizens.

Furthermore, The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the forefront the importance of global citizenship as a means of addressing global challenges. In the wake of the pandemic, there has been a growing recognition of the need for individuals to be aware of and engaged in global issues. Recent scientific works have emphasized the importance of global citizenship in promoting a more just and sustainable world. For instance, Saperstein (2022) examined the ongoing continuum from globalization, to global citizenship, to a global pandemic and how the lessons from this growing age of globalism can serve as a blueprint for a new form of global citizenship following the pandemic, defined as "post-pandemic citizenship".

Estelles & Fischman (2020) questioned how global citizenship should be perceived and what should be done after Covid-19. explores and analyses the complex challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed on global citizenship education. Hungwe (2022) explored and analyzed the complex challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed on global citizenship education. Also, Wang et al. (2023), in their study, highlighted global citizenship as a unique and promising direction in promoting prosociality and solidarity, especially in the fight against COVID-19. Overall, these scientific works collectively suggest that global citizenship is becoming increasingly important in the post-Covid-19 world, and emphasize the need for incorporating global citizenship education into the curricula.

## **2. WHAT CHARACTERISTICS DOES A GLOBAL CITIZEN HAVE?**

Globalization has transformed the world into a more interconnected and interdependent place, creating a need for individuals who possess a set of characteristics that enable them to navigate and thrive in a globalized world. These individuals are known as global citizens, and they possess a range of attributes that allow them to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, understand and appreciate diverse perspectives, and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world (Reysen et al, 2020).

A global citizen possesses several characteristics that distinguish them from individuals who are not aware of the interconnectedness of the world. First and foremost, global citizens are aware of the world beyond their nation's borders. They keep themselves informed about global issues and understand how their actions impact the global community. They are knowledgeable about global issues such as climate change, human rights, and inequality, and are informed about diverse cultures and perspectives. Awareness is a crucial characteristic of a global citizen as it allows individuals to recognize their responsibility to act for the common good (Noddings, 2005; Green, 2012).

Global citizens also possess knowledge and understanding of different cultures, languages, and customs and should be able to understand and appreciate diverse cultures and perspectives (Morais & Ogden, 2010). They are respectful of different beliefs and values and can adapt their behavior and communication style to suit different cultural contexts. According to Dearthoff (2006), cultural competence is essential for creating meaningful and respectful interactions with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This involves being respectful and open-minded towards people from different backgrounds, as well as being able to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries (Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009).

In addition, a global citizen should have a strong sense of empathy and compassion towards others. As noted by Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan (2020), global citizens should have the ability to recognize and respond to the needs and suffering of others, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or social status. This empathy can help to foster a sense of solidarity and promote the well-being of all members of the global community. They are able to put themselves in other people's shoes and understand their perspectives and needs (Larsen & Searle, 2017).

Moreover, global citizens should have a strong commitment to social justice and equity. A strong commitment to social justice and equity as a part of global citizenship involves actively working to identify and challenge systemic inequalities and discrimination both locally and globally. This includes recognizing and challenging one's own biases and privilege, advocating for policies and practices that promote equal access to opportunities and

resources, and taking action to address social, economic, and environmental injustices (Morais & Ogden, 2010; Nixon et al, 2018).

Furthermore, global citizens should be engaged and active participants in their communities and in the world at large. They recognize that solving global problems requires collaboration between nations and people and actively seek to collaborate with others to promote global cooperation (Leduc, 2013). As noted by United Nations (2023), global citizens should have the knowledge, skills, and motivation to take action to address global challenges. This may involve volunteering, advocating for policy change, or supporting local and international organizations that work towards positive social and environmental outcomes.

Finally, global citizens should have a strong sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants. As highlighted by Zahabioun et al (2013), global citizens should recognize the interconnectedness of all living things and work to promote sustainability and environmental stewardship. They take responsibility for their actions and their impact on the global community. And, they work towards creating a sustainable future and reducing their carbon footprint. Furthermore, they take an active role in addressing global issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, and advocate for positive change (Brunell, 2013). Lilley, Barker & Harris (2017) suggest that responsibility is a critical characteristic of a global citizen as it enables individuals to take action for the betterment of society.

In conclusion, as noted by the scientific articles cited above, these characteristics are essential for promoting a more just and sustainable world in the post-Covid-19 era. By fostering these characteristics in ourselves and in future generations, we can work towards a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

### **3. THE CONTEXT OF STUDY**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in global citizenship education as a means of fostering individuals who possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to navigate an increasingly interconnected and complex world (Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019; Fuchs, 2021; Şen, 2022; Saperstein, 2022). And, geography education has been identified as a key component of global citizenship education, as it provides students with the tools to understand and analyze the interconnectedness of the world and the complexities of global issues (Gaudelli & Heilman, 2009; Gaudelli & Schmidt, 2018; Al-Maamari, 2020; Kim, 2023; Tuna, 2023). The main focus of this research study was the role of geography education in global citizenship education. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the link between the skills necessary for individuals to be effective global citizens and the skills that are taught through geography education.

### **4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION TO GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

First and foremost, geography education can contribute to global citizenship by providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the physical and human geography of the world, including the diversity of cultures, societies, and environments. Through geography education, students can develop a comprehensive understanding of the physical, social, economic, and political factors that shape the world and how they interact with one

another (Tuna, 2016; Shin & Bednarz, 2018). This knowledge helps students to appreciate the complexity and interconnectedness of the world and to recognize the impact of their actions on the global community.

In addition to knowledge, geography education emphasizes the importance of critical and spatial thinking, which enables students to analyze and interpret geographic data and to make informed decisions about global issues (Tuna & İncekara, 2010). Through maps, charts, and other visual tools, students can develop a better understanding of global patterns and trends, such as population growth, climate change, and economic development, and how these phenomena affect different parts of the world (Van Dijk et al, 1994). By promoting global awareness and cultivating a deeper understanding of the world, geography education can contribute to the development of informed and engaged global citizens who are better equipped to address global challenges and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future (Kerski, 2015).

Also, geography education, helps students to appreciate and respect the diversity of cultural perspectives and practices and to recognize the importance of cultural competence in creating meaningful and respectful interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds (Standish, 2008). Geography education can help to develop skills that are essential for effective communication across cultural boundaries, such as intercultural communication and cross-cultural collaboration. By promoting cultural competence, geography education can contribute to building more inclusive and harmonious communities that are better equipped to navigate the complexities of a diverse and interconnected world.

In addition, through geography education, students can learn about the diversity of the world's cultures and peoples, and develop an appreciation for the unique challenges and experiences faced by individuals from different backgrounds (Maude, 2016). This knowledge can help to break down stereotypes and prejudices and promote greater understanding and respect for different perspectives. Additionally, geography education can help students to develop the skills necessary to engage in effective communication and collaboration with others from different backgrounds, such as active listening, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution (Klein et al, 2014). By cultivating empathy and compassion towards others, geography education can contribute to the development of responsible and engaged global citizens who are better equipped to build bridges across cultural divides and work towards a more just and equitable world (Tuna, 2016).

Geography education can also play a vital role in developing a strong commitment to social justice and equity among individuals (Wellens et al, 2006). So, geography curriculum can focus on issues related to social justice and equity, such as studying the distribution of resources, political power, and social status across different regions of the world. Through this, students can develop a deeper understanding of the systemic inequalities and discrimination prevalent in different societies and be motivated to work towards addressing these issues.

As noted by Meadows (2020), geography education provides opportunities for students to engage with local and global issues and develop an understanding of the complex connections between people and places. Through hands-on learning experiences, such as community mapping projects and field trips to diverse locations, students can develop a sense of responsibility and agency to address local and global issues. By studying geography, students can also gain an understanding of how different societies and cultures interact with each other and the impact of human activities on the environment (Tuna, 2015). This



knowledge can help students to recognize the interconnectedness of the world and the importance of collaboration in solving global problems. Therefore, geography education can play a vital role in fostering engaged and active global citizens who seek to collaborate with others to promote global cooperation.

Furthermore, geography education plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants among global citizens (Tilbury, 2002). As highlighted by Reinfried & Hertig (2011), geography education can provide students with an understanding of the interconnectedness of the world and how human actions can impact the natural environment and society. This knowledge can empower students to take individual and collective actions to address global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequalities (Tuna, 2016). Through experiential learning opportunities, such as field trips and community service projects, geography education can also help students develop a sense of connection and responsibility to the local and global community. By instilling a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants, geography education can contribute to the development of global citizens who are committed to creating a sustainable and just world for all.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research study has focused on the significance of geography education within global citizenship education. Based on the literature review and inferences presented above, the results of this study suggest that there is a strong connection between geography education and global citizenship development. Geography education can contribute to global citizenship by providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the physical and human geography of the world, including the diversity of cultures, societies, and environments. Furthermore, geography education can promote global awareness, cultivate a deeper understanding of the world, and contribute to the development of informed and engaged global citizens who are better equipped to address global challenges and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.

Moreover, geography education can help to develop skills that are essential for effective communication and collaboration across cultural boundaries, such as intercultural communication and cross-cultural collaboration. Through this, students can appreciate and respect the diversity of cultural perspectives and practices and recognize the importance of cultural competence in creating meaningful and respectful interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds.

The study also found that geography education can help break down stereotypes and prejudices and promote greater understanding and respect for different perspectives. Additionally, through the study of issues related to social justice and equity, such as the distribution of resources, political power, and social status across different regions of the world, students can develop a deeper understanding of the systemic inequalities and discrimination prevalent in different societies and be motivated to work towards addressing these issues.

Finally, geography education plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants among global citizens. By providing students with an understanding of the interconnectedness of the world and how human actions can impact the natural environment and society, geography education can

empower students to take individual and collective actions to address global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequalities.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that well-designed geography education can have a positive impact on global citizenship development. The study highlights the importance of incorporating geography education into the curriculum to cultivate informed and engaged global citizens who are better equipped to address global challenges and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that educators and policymakers prioritize geography education in curriculum development and implementation. This can be achieved through the development of well-designed geography curricula that emphasize the importance of global citizenship and promote the development of skills necessary for effective participation in a globalized world. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers engage in professional development activities that enhance their knowledge of geography and promote innovative teaching practices. Furthermore, schools and educational institutions should provide opportunities for hands-on and experiential learning, such as field trips and community mapping projects, to help students develop a sense of personal responsibility and agency towards global challenges. Finally, it is recommended that further research be conducted to examine the impact of geography education on the development of global citizenship and the skills necessary for effective participation in a globalized world.

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