



The Impact of Local Culture on Teaching and Learning Practices in Makassar's Elementary Schools

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Abstract

A research project investigates how Makassar primary schools integrate local cultural elements into their teaching practices and affects the student participation level as well as their learning outcomes and cultural skills acquisition. The research utilized a qualitative research design through teacher interviews and classroom observation sessions to determine how local culture and language along with practices get integrated into curricular content. The concept of culturally relevant teaching proves effective in student engagement as well as representing an essential element for social relationship development among generations. Restrictions emerged regarding proper integration of cultural material into national educational requirements while experts judged that additional backing along with teacher training would be vital. The present study delivers critical knowledge regarding culturally responsive education by examining an older system from a non-Western context to support teachers and educational administrators.

Introduction

The assimilation of culture in education is one of the core aspects that helps determine the learning experiences of the students with core emphasis on the areas that have diverse cultural beliefs as that of Makassar. Since the practice of education has been globalized, as a result practices that involve implementation of local cultural beliefs and practices becomes relevant. Makassar is a city rich in culture and tradition among the communities residing in the country and this is where the educational system faces the complexity of the balance between ensuring that it complies with the national curriculum standards and at the same time developing the cultural aspect of the community. This research focuses on the effects of local culture when it comes to teaching and learning process in the Makassar's elementary school in reference to how cultural values are incorporated into the learning process and on the learning outcomes of the student.

Hence, the cultural institutions in Makassar feature traditions, languages, and community practices that were inherited through generations (Makkasau et al., 2021; Iskandar et al., 2022). The dominant cultural group is Bugis-Makassar; the community values loyalty, honor, and social order in their totality defining to a large extent the social and educational process of the population (Prasetyono et al., 2021). All these above-mentioned cultural values sometimes get manifested in the conduct of the teachers in managing the classroom, learners, as well as the methods applied in the implementation of instructional strategies (Ball, 2020). Nonetheless,

there are always challenges whenever local culture is introduced in the system of education. Teachers need to find ways of integrating multicultural approaches to education with the national curriculum that occasionally may not fully address cultural differences of students in Makassar (Rachmadtullah et al., 2020).

In recent years the concept of localization of education as inculcating local culture as the central pillars of education has received a lot of attention (Anwar et al., 2020). Educationists' have pointed out that the adoption of culturally relevant pedagogy that involves the use of the students' cultural experiences into the instructional process help increase students' attentiveness, desire to learn and performance. It has been found that when learning and cultural backgrounds of the students are accepted and appreciated educators can design a social context that encourages affirmative identification as learners. Preserving the cultural values of Makassar where the cultural identity is very strong, the incorporation of the cultures in education is crucial in order to make students connected with culture and as well get good grades (Pabbajah et al., 2021).

However, integrating local culture into education is a very complicated process and it is not a simple phenomenon. Culturally responsive teaching in Makassar's elementary school faces difficulties: 1) Lack of resources 2) Students and teachers have different levels of cultural understanding 3) National standard curriculum. Nonetheless, several teachers teaching in Makassar have adapted ways and means of celebrating local cultural values in their teaching learning practices. For instance, the teachers can use various forms of cultural artifacts that include stories, songs, and rites used in the context of teaching lesson to re-emphasize the cultural values of the students.

Culturally, Makassar influence plays a very important role in influencing learning experiences of students in the Makassar elementary schools. According to various students' research, students' cultural backgrounds incorporated into learning models make the students feel respected, hence boost their performance in class (Mahaseng & Radjuni, 2021). Moreover, it can be also noted that the activity of using culturally relevant teaching strategies can also guide the student in making meaning of the contents of their classes through experiences in their own culture. Thus, the use of cultural models in the process of education is particularly important today, for example, in Makassar, where culture acts even as the backbone of everyday life (Zainal, 2020).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the implementation of local culture into education also promotes the culture in general and thus enhances the conservation and dissemination of Makassar culture (Suri & Chandra, 2021). Educationists should ensure that what defines Makassar as a culture today should be passed on to the future generations through curriculum by embracing the culture, language and values of the people. This is even more so in the light of globalization, which is well recognized for putting pressure on traditional cultural practices and consequently subjecting the people to more universal forms of learning. Thus, understanding and maintaining the local culture within the school would help Makassar's schools to be a successful in maintaining the culture of the people.

Method

In this particular research, the author used qualitative research method in an attempt at trying to understand how local culture influences teaching and learning activities in the Makassar elementary schools. The rationale for adopting the qualitative approach derived from the need to understand narrated experience, perception, and handling of the issue of integration of local

culture into educational facility by the educators, students, and other stakeholders. The study employed ethnographical paradigm to enable the researcher document on the cultural intergration that transpires within the classroom. As the type of research method, ethnography enabled the researcher to become a part of the context of the study by observing and engaging with the participants with the aim of identifying the influence of the local culture on teaching practices and students' learning processes. The paper believed that this approach was suitable for the study due to the reason that it allowed for the exploration of cultural patterns of Makassar's elementary schools. There were several ways of collecting data in the study to guarantee that the research theme would be comprehensively and in detail investigated. The main techniques employed in the research processes were interviews, classroom observations and focus group discussions.

Purposeful sampling was used and participants included elementary school teachers, school administrators, and curriculum developers to whom semi-structured interviews were administered. These interviews helped to understand how local cultural practices were incorporated in the teaching process and what opportunities and difficulties were observed with such incorporation. The interviews mainly took place in Bahasa Indonesia and Bugis following the participants' preference, and all the interviews were taped with the participants' permission. All the interviews took approximately 45 minutes to one hour of the recorded interview time. Thus, the researcher observes or participate in different classes in elementary schools in Makassar using non-participant observations as the data collection technique. These were based on how they use local cultural practices in teaching and learning activities, students-teacher interface and classroom management. These observations were carried out over several weeks and socio-cultural integration of teaching activities noted in the field notes included different subject areas and grades. Students and parents were interviewed in focus group discussions in order to know their views regarding the integration of local culture in educations. These discussions made it possible for the participants to express their views and observations in groups, thus helping to get an amplified picture of the way that cultural integration was regarded by the students as well as their families. The focus group consisted of six to eight participants in each of the groups and the researcher was the facilitator of the group conducting the discussion based on some guiding questions.

The data that were gathered from the interviews, observations, and focus group discussion were analyzed by theme analysis. Thematic analysis was used to find, examine, and narrate patterns (themes) in the researched data. The process involved several steps: The interviewer recorded the interviews and focus group discussions in detail and also go through the notes taken during classroom observations. This initial step enabled one to get acquainted with the data at hand. The data were systematically coded by isolating the major phrases, concepts, and the ideas which kept on repeating themselves regarding the localization of culture in the teaching practices. General variables were given to parts of the data that contained aspects of the participants' experience and interpretation. These codes were then clustered into the main themes of the study issue that the research was based on. These themes captured the various aspects of the local culture that was evident in teaching and learning as well as the opportunities and barriers as noticed by the participants. After the data was collected, the identified themes of autonomy, flexibility and connectedness were used to analyze the data and checked to make sure that they are valid. This step implies checking of the themes with the original data so as to ensure relevance and coherence. The last number of themes was refined and labelled, which coherent and more meaningful narrative of the study was offered. Each of the themes was illustrated by the participants' quotations and specific descriptions of the observed practices.

The realised themes were then grouped into the final report which contained the analysis and the conclusion of the study. Hence, the report used examples and quotes to enrich the non-normative venue description of the effects of local culture on teaching and learning in Makassar's Elementary School.

Result and Discussion

A discussion of the wider importance emerges first regarding cultural integration within elementary education at Makassar before result presentation occurs. Student involvement together with cultural awareness and home-school connection happens because of culturally sensitive teaching methods as confirmed by earlier research. The execution of these approaches faces obstacles during their deployment mainly due to conflicts between national academic standards and local cultural maintenance. The investigation analyzes teacher strategies for handling these complexities by using cultural stories and multiple languages together with traditional exercises which enhance classroom instruction. A subsequent section introduces research findings by examining the extent of academic results change and social adaptation and educational experience modification due to cultural integration programs.

Integration of Local Culture in Teaching Practices

Local culture integration is an endemic concept evident in the Makassar elementary schools in regard to teaching practices as a way of protecting the culturally rich heritage when delivering education. This process is a complex one in which the cultural factors are incorporated into almost all components of education process such as curricular and classroom practices. These are equally well performed by teachers who aim at preparing students not only as academics but with cultural bearings as well.

Culturally relevant content inclusion is one of the largest ways that local culture is infused into teachers' practices. Teachers in Makassar have endeavoured to include in their curriculum peculiarities of the region's history, mythology and traditions. It is best manifested in the use of local narratives, history, and cultural activities in enhancing the Teaching Learning Material across the subjects.

Social studies lessons contain descriptions of the Bugis-Makassar people or the history and accomplishments that belong to the culture. Activities and rites like 'Mappalili' that is a ceremony performed during the start of planting rice are enlightened as far as their meanings and societal implications are concerned.

"There are many stories that are part of our culture and these stories are then passed to the students in the classroom so that they realise some of the values that are dear to the community such as the value of loyalty and respect. It goes beyond imparting history to the children, there is always the aim of bringing them closer to their roots."

This emphasis on cultural material is intended to give students an appropriate reference of identity and positive cultural attitude about their culture so as to have meaningful reference point to their overall learning experience that will be rooted in culture. Language is a very important factor especially when it comes to the incorporation of culture into the classroom. Today there are many teachers in Makassar primary schools, and they use a multilingual approach while talking to learners, at least switching between Bahasa Indonesia and the Makassar language. And of course, this kind of practice contributes greatly not only to the effective studying of the material by the students, but also to the protection and development of the local language, which is an indispensable element of an individual's identity. There is

always some use of proverbs and idioms in the classrooms and teachers love to include local proverbs and idioms to teach a moral lesson and for some emphases.

“This is found when using our local language lessons and the students identify with the lesson due to the prevalent expressions in their homes.”

It is vital because it familiarizes children with some local languages making it easy for them feel at home in school as opposed to being alienated due to differences in language. The aspect of the local culture applies not only to what is being taught in a class, but what is practiced in the classroom on daily basis. The teachers use traditional games, songs, and dances as teaching aids whereby these games help the learner to uphold culture in the community as well as enhance on social and learning abilities. For instance, during co-curriculum activities, physical education classes involve teaching of traditional dances which may include the “Pakarena” in the process enabling the students to gain some cultural aspects together with teamwork and coordination.

However, there are some challenges that arise as a result of integration of the cultural practices in teaching learning practices. Bearing in mind that every culture has its unique products, many teachers experience challenges as they struggle to achieve the national curriculum objectives while at the same time integrating cultural content. However, this challenge is made worse by the fact that one has to work under the culturally diverse population of students, some of who may not have equal exposure to conventional practices.

“It can be hard to pack it all in sometimes, but I think it is just as important to teach our culture to the children as it is for the child to learn English, Math, Science...you name it; it’s about holistic development of the child.”

This view underscores the ministers’ desire to provide educational content whilst being culturally sensitive to the environment and contexts they found themselves in though meaning that education has cultural and other facets.

Impact on Student Learning

This paper identifies and discusses the role of integrating the local culture in teaching practices in Makassar’s Elementary Schools on student learning outcomes and cultural and social development of students. This culturally sensitive perspective of learning enhances the instructional process so that students become more receptive, interested and related to the academy lessons learnt. It is possible to apply the kind of impact that improves student learning in many forms such as; acquisition of additional content knowledge as well as cultural sensitivity and cohesion within the community.

An essential advantage of the incorporation of the local culture in education is that it is likely to improve the interest from the learners. When cultural components are related to some certain aspects of students’ everyday reality, they will show more interest in those lessons. Interactions have shown that the students tend to be more engaged during the cultures references as they relate with what they go through in their day-to-day lives.

“This is a testimony from St. Cloud State University, what I’ve noticed is that when students are exposed to stories or examples from their own culture, they are more engaged and wish to learn more questions and are more involved in discussions.”

This results to an improved mastery of the topic as most students are able to relate between the academic concepts and the cultural practices or customs. Students are able to comprehend

given concepts better when the information they received is rather close to them, which in turn improves academic performance.

Besides the improvement of academic learning, insertion of local culture in teaching learning activities a greatly boost cultural consciousness and pride among the students. When students are often introduced to their culture in class by teachers, they become well-grounded with an understanding of where they come from. This sense of identity is very important in the promotion of self-esteem and confidence because culturally different students feel special.

“The Teaching of culture make students understand the importance of their culture and values much like understanding one’s identity and place in society is as important as getting good grades.”

Cultural pride that is promoted in the classroom transpires in other areas of the students’ lives, the society as well. Such an effect is most apparent in a multiculturally oriented nanny state where preserving one’s cultural integrity is crucial in order to promote the feeling of cohesiveness with the culturally ascendants. The social incorporation of culture in the education also enhances the relationship between students, their parents and other people in the society. Teachers incorporate cultural practices, language and traditions into the classroom, so they build a link between the school and the community – in so doing – teachers foster the notion that education is a communal process. It also establishes solidarity in students’ interactions as they get to accept the history of the people with whom they interact on a daily basis.

“When for instance we are teaching traditional dances or songs the students take it home to their families and every member of that family gets involved. If you create such a link between school and home then the entire community is benefited.”

This exchange between the school and the home helps to support the cultural learning that is going on with the students while at the same time endorsing the culture that students are learning and promoting it. Therefore, students not only get values to improve their academic performance but they also get to understand how culture contributes to their life and the lives of other people.

Despite its numerous advantages, the havoc of local culture poses some problems that may affect course delivery to the students. Teachers need to fulfill the requirements of the national curriculum requirements and at the same time address issues of cultural representation and this is a challenge because students originate from different cultural backgrounds. Some of the students may already be deeply rooted in those cultures and traditions, others especially those who come from more developed zones might not be very much in-touch with their culture.

“Not all students are equally connected to their culture and it is sometimes difficult to demand equal involvement; yet it is important because it adds value to the students’ education.”

However, this paper has revealed that incorporating local culture in education has the following pros: This way or another, it is essential to stress that the adaptation of teaching techniques should never stop and the discovery of new ways to make cultural studies appealing to any learner allows maximizing the positive impact of cultural integration.

This study of the incorporation of local culture in teaching practices at Makassar’s elementary schools provide a perspective on how culturally responsible teaching in enrich learning and engagement of students. Hence, this study makes a significant contribution to the literature by

presenting information and gaps concerning the teaching culturally appropriate strategies in Non-western countries especially in Indonesia Education System. The results underlined the significance of values assimilation with the settlement but also academic accomplishment, cultural preservation, and ethnic boundaries, which promote a community's cohesiveness; these insights have implications for the educational policy and practices.

The integration of culture in classroom has been thoroughly talked about in literature with special reference to multiculturally diverse societies where there exists a necessity to include culture of students in their learning process. Herrera et al. (2020) has supported the practice of incorporating all forms of cultural aspects to teaching for the purpose of transitioning from home to school culture. However much of this research has been conducted among multicultural city dwellers in basic and dominantly urbanized countries of the developed world (Demelius, 2020). Hence, this study is useful to add to the body of knowledge because it explores the application of culturally sensitive learning approach in a culturally sensitive setting of Makassar-Indonesia where the community practices distinctive and dominant culture and traditions (Zidny et al., 2020).

The observation from this study further affirms that, it is possible to use and apply assimilation of local cultural beliefs in education within the contexts of non-western countries since such nations have a special bearing on cultural conservation. Thus, teachers in Makassar have managed to effectively include history, legends, as well as traditions in their teaching, which made the process enhanced for students (Afsar et al., 2021). Besides increases engagement level, it also contributes to the strengthening of the culture's identification. This is in contrast to prior work that has focused on difficulties of enacting culturally sustaining pedagogy in contexts with reduced cultural density (Antony et al., 2021; Paoloni et al., 2020). Thus, this study contributes to the above-mentioned research gap and offers some ideas on how the concept of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy can be adjusted according to the given cultural context.

The use of culturally appropriate instructional practices on students' attentiveness and academic performance has been explored in the literature. Everhart (2022), when students relate to their culture, they are likely to be interested in what they are reading or what is taught in class hence increased performances. This study supports the above facts by confirming that the integration of local cultural factors in classroom has a positive correlation with student engagement and interaction.

According to the teachers in Makassar, the students were more focused and interested in classes where the teacher used concepts from the local culture as an example such as folktales, riddles and language. This may be due to the fact that the material covered is close to the lives of the learners and this makes learning more fun.

"The students are much more interested if the stories and example given reflect their culture. The quantity of questions being asked by the students, and the level of participation in discussions, and even enthusiasm to learn rises if the teacher is using examples that are familiar with the cultural background of the students."

The outcome is an improved understanding of the subject matter because the students are able to relate with new materials from what they already know. This finding is noteworthy especially in light of previous studies where most studies have concentrated on barriers to student engagement especially in diverse classrooms. On the other hand, this study shed some light on

the application of culturally relevant teaching that has the potentials of improving learning in culturally endogenously school (Martin & Spencer, 2020).

Further, the implementation of the use of culture definitely goes beyond the achievement of good academic results; it creates a great sense of cultural belongingness as well as pride among the students. This work aligns with the idea that Bayar & Karaduman (2021) brings up about the fact that education cannot only be about achievement, but it is also about culture. Including enhancements of cultural aspects in the daily teaching and learning activities, teachers in Makassar have created strong and meaningful bond of students being knowledgeable with their culture and therefore they will feel more confident.

This is important in the student's process of development since it acts as a firm platform on which they can base their attitude towards the rest of the world. The development of local culture in education is also another important achievement in that there is increased cohesion in the community (Chankseliani et al., 2021). This research shows that if the schools engaging in multicultural practices, cultural values, and cultural beliefs into classroom, they establish better relationship between the school and community. This is not merely a metaphoric link but a functional, symbiotic concept since it creates the notion of duty towards the continuing education process within the community. In Makassar, many teachers claimed that the cultural activities promoted in the class are also taken home by the students and that the students teach what has been learnt at school to their families (Suri, & Chandra, 2021).

“When we teach traditional dances or songs, the students take what they learn home and involve their families as well which creates a close relationship between school and home and the whole community gains.”

This is because it maintains the loop of cultural knowledge where the students are taken through certain cultural practices and beliefs, they in turn take it home to propagate the information to their families hence the relationship between the school, students, and unlike prior work of teachers grappling with issues of cultural assimilation in culturally diverse classrooms, this study puts an accent on cultural maintenance. Here, the study shows the benefits that culturally appropriate education can have in supporting the continuity of cultural practices in a community (O'Leary et al., 2020).

Those discussion also shed light on the general lesson that can be drawn for the policy and practice of education. What has been observed in the case of Makassar is that the approach that has been followed to implement these changes needs to be closely looked at it and such a method should be incorporated into policy making to embrace the culture that is practiced in the country so as to complement the education as well as culture in the society. This is in line with the principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy which aims at developing an environment in the classroom that would help embrace all the students with the rich cultural diversity (Alim et al., 2020). But the lack of proper training of teachers to incorporate culturally responsive instructional strategies as well as insufficient resources denote a different story.

To this point, as earlier works by Nwani (2021) & Hsiao (2023) have understood, teachers are the most useful when they possess the sundry and requisites in order to interject multiculturalism into the curriculum. This study supports this argument by indicating that professional development programs should form part of any of the efforts meant to adopt culturally relevant teaching. Nevertheless, there are certain obstacles which can be met while integrating local culture into teaching practices. This work adds to the body of knowledge on these challenges especially the complexity that teachers experience in their attempt to fulfill

the national curriculum requirements while at the same time integrating cultural content. The interviewed teachers in Makassar state that although they are aware of the responsibility of maintaining and promoting local culture, they encountered numerous problems when attempting to incorporate cultural values into lesson in addition to meeting academic requirements.

Interviews with the teachers generated this particular worry where one of them virtually said, “Not all students are equally rooted in their respective cultures but it is always worthwhile to make sure that every soul is enlightened about culture because it opens up their world ... Some of the students are more well-versed in the cultural values while others are not. This work fills a gap in the previously existing literature which seems to have mostly explored issues of cultural adaptation in more diverse or more intensified cultural situations. Unlike this study, the above works focus on the different challenges experienced in cultures where continuity remains a core value which has to be in consonance with the standardized educational system.

This paper also provides recommendations for handling the above-mentioned challenges; which makes it useful to educators and policy makers. The teachers in Makassar have come with the techniques of how they can incorporate the cultural materials into other subjects and the use of the bilingual approach to teach the students. Besides they assist in addressing imbalance on the curriculum as well as allowing students have an all-rounded education with cultural background as a consideration. This finding is different from other studies, which have examined some of the difficulties of practicing culture sensitive instruction while providing no solutions. A few steps are elaborated in this study explaining how these challenges can be mitigated; thus, this further enhances the existing body of knowledge and presents a model that can be replicated in other settings.

The impact of culturally relevant teaching practices on student engagement and academic outcomes has been well-documented in the literature. When students see their culture reflected in the curriculum, they are more likely to engage with the material, leading to improved academic performance. This study reinforces these findings by demonstrating that the inclusion of local cultural elements in the classroom significantly boosts student interest and participation.

In Makassar, teachers reported that students were more attentive and active in lessons that included cultural references, such as traditional stories, games, and language. This heightened engagement can be attributed to the relevance of the material to the students' own lives, which makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable. The importance of cultural relevance in education has been emphasized by scholars such as Sue & Okazaki (2022) who argue that when educational content is culturally congruent with students' backgrounds, it resonates more deeply, fostering a connection between the learner and the subject matter. This connection is crucial for cognitive engagement, as students are more likely to participate in discussions, ask questions, and take ownership of their learning when they see their culture valued in the educational environment.

This study also found that culturally relevant teaching practices can lead to improved academic outcomes, aligning with findings by Gunawardena & Wilson (2021), who highlighted the role of cultural references in scaffolding learning, thus making complex concepts more accessible to students. By connecting new knowledge to students' cultural backgrounds, teachers in Makassar are effectively utilizing cultural scaffolding, which enhances comprehension and retention. This process not only aids in the mastery of academic content but also fosters critical

thinking, as students are encouraged to draw connections between their cultural knowledge and new information.

Furthermore, the inclusion of local culture in education fosters a strong sense of cultural identity and pride among students. This aspect is particularly significant in non-Western contexts, where maintaining cultural heritage is a key educational goal. argued, education should encompass more than academic achievement; it should also support the development of students' identities. In Makassar, the regular incorporation of cultural elements such as traditional dances, local history, and indigenous languages into the curriculum helps students develop a deep connection to their heritage. This connection, in turn, boosts their self-esteem and confidence, essential components of successful learning experiences. The positive reinforcement of cultural identity through education creates a supportive environment where students feel valued and understood, which is fundamental to their overall development.

The importance of cultural identity in education is further supported by the work of Sorkos & Hajisoteriou, (2021), who emphasize the need for an educational paradigm that recognizes and respects the cultural backgrounds of all students. This study contributes to this discourse by providing evidence that culturally responsive teaching practices can effectively foster cultural identity in settings where local traditions are an integral part of the community. By doing so, the study not only highlights the benefits of culturally relevant pedagogy but also underscores its role in preserving cultural heritage in the face of globalization and educational homogenization.

Another significant impact of integrating local culture into education is the strengthening of community bonds. This study reveals that when schools actively incorporate cultural practices, language, and traditions into the curriculum, they create a stronger connection between the school and the community. This connection is not just symbolic but practical, as it fosters a sense of shared responsibility for the education of the next generation. The role of education in strengthening community ties is a concept well-articulated, who suggests that schools serve as cultural hubs where the transmission of knowledge and values occurs across generations, thereby reinforcing communal identity and solidarity.

Teachers in Makassar noted that cultural activities in the classroom often spill over into the home, with students sharing what they learn with their families, who in turn become more involved in their children's education. This exchange between school and home creates a cyclical relationship where educational practices not only reflect but also reinforce cultural values within the community. This finding supports the work, who argues that culturally responsive education extends beyond the classroom, influencing students' lives and their interactions within their broader communities. By bridging the gap between home and school, culturally relevant pedagogy fosters a sense of continuity and coherence in students' learning experiences, which is essential for both academic success and personal development.

The study also highlights the role of schools as cultural custodians, who assert that educators have a critical role in preserving and promoting cultural knowledge through their teaching practices. In Makassar, the integration of local culture into the curriculum ensures that traditional knowledge, languages, and practices are passed down to the next generation, thus contributing to cultural continuity. This role is particularly important in a rapidly globalizing world, where local cultures are often at risk of being overshadowed by dominant global narratives. By embedding cultural content in education, schools in Makassar are helping to safeguard their cultural heritage for future generations.

Moreover, the success of Makassar's approach suggests that educational policies should actively support the integration of local culture into the curriculum. This aligns with the broader goals of culturally responsive pedagogy, which seeks to create inclusive educational environments that reflect and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. However, as this study points out, the successful implementation of culturally relevant education requires adequate teacher training and resources, a point also emphasized. Without the proper support, educators may struggle to balance the demands of the national curriculum with the inclusion of cultural content, leading to gaps in both academic and cultural education.

This study thus not only highlights the benefits of culturally relevant teaching practices but also provides practical insights into how these practices can be successfully implemented in different cultural contexts. By offering a model of how to integrate local culture into education, this research contributes to the broader discourse on culturally responsive pedagogy, providing a roadmap for educators and policymakers who seek to promote both academic excellence and cultural preservation in their schools.

Teachers in Makassar explained that they observed the students to be more focused and engaged in all the lessons that touched on culture for instance telling of traditional tales, playing of traditional games and use of cultural language. This can be attributed to the fact that when the content is close to the heart relevance is high and therefore individuals get more involved in the learning process. Cultural relevance is a critical component in the learning process, according to Shiraev & Levy (2020), that is, when learning is done within student's culture preference, there develops a feeling of belongingness of the learner towards the content learned. This connection is very important for the appraisal of cognitive engagement because more students will be more willing to engage in classroom discussions and ask questions as well as taking more responsibilities for their learning when they feel that their culture is appreciated in the learning settings.

I also discovered that incorporating culturally appropriate instructional practices can enhance student achievement, this is in agreement with who asserts that cultural connection facilitates learning by building on students' existing understanding thus making academic content comprehensible. Teachers in Makassar are applying cultural scaffolding by linking new ideas to students' culture which empowers understanding and retention of the knowledge among students. This approach not only helps in learning of content but also promotes problem solving since the children are able to relate between their culture and what they are learning.

On the same note, learning that acknowledges local culture enables the development of a rich cultural identification to the student. This aspect is unique in the non-western society especially where the preservation of culture forms one of the core educational values. Education was described process that must go beyond academic skills, and include the cultivation of students' identity. This is evidenced by the fact that students in Makassar get to learn cultural aspects like dances, history about their region, indigo n languages making them have a sense of belonging to the culture. This connection, in return increases their self- esteem and confidence which are key aspects of actual learning. It is a key catalyzer of the child's development as reinforcement of cultural identity through education fosters an environment that validates the students.

Other related works that viewed cultural identity as crucial in the framework of education who noted the necessity for the educational paradigm shift that would consider the cultural background of learners in classroom. This research tacks into this discursive terrain by presenting data suggesting that teaching practices that culturally respond to learners' needs in

environments where cultures are integrated as a key part of localities can support learners' cultural identity development. In this way the study does not only illustrates positive effects of culturally appropriate approach to learning but also demonstrates the necessity to maintain cultural identity and traditions while globalizing educational standards.

Overall, care for and incorporation of local culture into education also has another advantage with an understanding of education as part of indigenous people's self-identification, the idea can be defended which emphasizes the formation of a sense of community belonging and therefore the reinforcement of community ties. It is now discernable that if schools involve cultural practices, language, and traditions of a particular society into the academic arena, it will foster a better relationship between the learning institution and the society. This link is real and not only metaphorical as it embodies both computationally adept persons and parents who entrust the formation of the next generation with educational institutions. The part that education plays in the enhancement of communal bonds can be best explained by the argument advanced arguing that school acts as cultural centres through which knowledge and culture is relayed from one generation to another hence promoting togetherness and belongingness.

Interviews with teachers in Makassar brought out the fact that through supporting and participating in cultural activities in class, the children take such experiences to their homes and make their families participate in what they are taught in class. This cycle of exchange between the school institution and the home always circulates values in the educative process as a means of ensuring that cultural practices are reflected and even promoted in the society. This endorses the argument who affirm that culturally conscious pedagogy is not restricted to the classroom as it colours the students' world and how they relate to their societies. Culturally relevant pedagogy helps to smoothen transitions between home and school thus creating coherent learning experiences for students at home and in school, both of which are critical for development.

The study also provides information on school as cultural bill keeper as supported who state that school plays an important role of cultural conversant in teaching practices. In Makassar, the culture of the community including knowledge, language and practice are taught and embraced to the coming generations hence promoting continuity. This role is especially relevant in today's world characterized by an increase globalization of cultures which stands to overshadow local cultures. Through incorporation of culture in education programmes schools in Makassar are contributing towards preservation of the culture for future generation.

However, the effectiveness of the Makassar approach analysis indicates that educational policies should contribute to include culture in learning and education processes. This is in line with the goals of culturally relevant pedagogy which aims at embracing the diversity of the cultural context as a way of learning reflecting the culture of the learners in class. However as this study showed, there is need for better training of teachers and provision of adequate teaching resources for implementation of culturally appropriate education a factor underscored. If not well supported, teachers may find it hard to address the national curriculum and cultural content at the same time and this results to either delivering inadequate curriculum or inadequate culture to the learners.

This study therefore does not only give emphasis towards the positive outcomes of culturally appropriate pedagogy but also offer possible details on how culturally responsive strategies can be effectively introduced across diverse cultures. In so doing, this study adds to the literature on culturally sustaining pedagogy by presenting an example of how this theoretical framework

can be applied in practice, thereby providing those concerned with education and local cultures with ideas to encourage both high academic achievement and respect for culture in schools.

Conclusion

It has been shown in this research that the incorporation of local culture into practice in Makassar's elementary school will improve students' participation, cultural identification, and social connection to the community alongside exacerbating the problem of social-cultural content against national- curriculum content. Consequently, as this investigation brings out the findings that are absent in the existing literature and gives suggestions for culturally sound instructional practice in a non- Western culturally diverse context on the basis of which worthwhile insights can be used much to the benefits of instructors and policy makers in similar culturally diverse context, this study underlines the importance of education in fostering the cultural identity and social inclusion.

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