

EMPATHY AND TOLERANCE CULTIVATION IN PRIMARY STUDENTS THROUGH LOCAL CONTEXT-BASED SOCIAL SCIENCE LESSONS

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Received November 27, 2023; Revised June 23, 2024; Accepted June 24, 2024

Abstract:

This study delves into the problem of fostering empathy and tolerance among elementary students through local context-based social science lessons. It investigated how integrating local context into the curriculum affected the development of students' empathy and tolerance. This study used a mixed-methods approach. The instruments used to collect data were questionnaires, observation sheets, and interview guidelines. The research was conducted on SDN 1 Baubau in Buton. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study underscored teachers' pivotal role emphasizing culturally relevant and context-based pedagogical strategies. These findings highlighted the transformative potential of local context-based education in shaping students' social and emotional development. The study recommends a comprehensive curriculum reevaluation, prioritizing empathy and tolerance as crucial educational outcomes. This research provides concrete evidence of the positive impact of integrating local context, shaping a more empathetic and tolerant generation prepared for an interconnected world.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini membahas cara menumbuhkan empati dan toleransi di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar melalui pelajaran ilmu sosial yang berbasis konteks lokal. Penelitian ini meneliti cara memasukkan konteks lokal ke dalam kurikulum dapat mempengaruhi perkembangan empati dan toleransi siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan *mixed-methods*. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah angket, lembar observasi, dan pedoman wawancara. Penelitian dilakukan di SDN 1 Baubau di Buton. Data dianalisis secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Penelitian ini menekankan peran penting guru dalam menggunakan strategi pengajaran yang relevan dengan budaya dan berbasis konteks lokal. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan berbasis konteks lokal memiliki potensi besar dalam membentuk perkembangan sosial dan emosional siswa. Studi ini merekomendasikan evaluasi ulang kurikulum secara menyeluruh, dengan menekankan pentingnya empati dan toleransi sebagai hasil pendidikan yang utama. Penelitian ini memberikan bukti konkret bahwa integrasi konteks lokal dapat berdampak positif, membantu membentuk generasi yang lebih empatik dan toleran yang siap menghadapi dunia yang memiliki interkoneksi.

Keywords:

Empathy, Tolerance, Primary Students, Local Context, Social Science Lessons

How to Cite: Aramudin & Susanti, R. H. (2024). Empathy and Tolerance Cultivation in Primary Students Through Local Context-Based Social Science Lessons. *Lentera Pendidikan : Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*, 27(1), 191-206. <https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2024v27n1i12>.

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INTRODUCTION

Empathy and tolerance are essential for creating a just, harmonious, and inclusive society. Despite their importance, the challenge of effectively fostering these qualities in young learners remains a significant issue. Traditional education methods often fail to address the cultural and social nuances necessary for developing empathy and tolerance, resulting in students who may excel academically but lack critical social skills. In an increasingly interconnected and diverse world, developing empathy and tolerance in young learners has become increasingly important (Cuff, Brown, Taylor, & Howat, 2016; Weisz & Cikara, 2021). These qualities serve as the foundation for nurturing individuals who not only understand the perspectives and experiences of others but also embrace and respect diversity in all its forms (Piñon & Forestier, 2018; Riess, 2017; Van Hazebroek, Olthof, & Goossens, 2017). Within the realm of education, cultivating empathy and tolerance has evolved into an integral component of curricula, especially in primary education, where young minds are most impressionable and open to learning (Hwang, 2022; Patel, Pelletier-Bui, Smith, Roberts, Kilgannon, Trzeciak, & Roberts, 2019; Schiefer, Levy, & Rdesinski, 2021).

Furthermore, empathy, the ability to genuinely understand and share the emotions and experiences of others, is essential for fostering meaningful interpersonal relationships (Smeenck, Sturm, Terken, & Eggen, 2019). It promotes compassion, kindness, and the ability to relate to individuals from various backgrounds. Conversely, tolerance signifies an open-minded acceptance of diverse viewpoints, cultures, and identities (Mamlok, 2023). It encourages individuals to embrace differences and work collaboratively with people with contrasting perspectives. These qualities are desirable for personal growth and fundamental for creating a more cohesive and interconnected global community (Alhashmi, Bakali, & Baroud, 2020; Sufanti, Nuryatin, Rohman, & Waluyo, 2021). Therefore, empathy and tolerance are pivotal traits that nurture personal relationships and global unity by fostering understanding and acceptance across diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Cultivating empathy and tolerance in early education has become increasingly urgent. In a rapidly changing world characterized by multiculturalism and globalization, the need to instill empathy and tolerance from a young age is more pressing than ever (Sakallı, Tlili, Altınay, Karaatmaca, Altınay, & Dağlı, 2021). Early childhood and primary education provide a critical window of opportunity to shape young minds and teach these

values. Children are naturally curious and receptive during their formative years, making this period optimal for introducing concepts of empathy and tolerance (Hernández-Beltrán, González-Coto, Gámez-Calvo, Suárez-Arévalo, & Gamonales, 2023; Masyitoh, 2020). By doing so, we can equip them with the tools necessary to navigate an increasingly diverse and complex world with grace and understanding. Primary education is a foundational stage in a child's academic journey, where fundamental values and attitudes are shaped (Harahap, 2021). During these years, children develop their moral compass and begin forming their identities. Therefore, integrating empathy and tolerance into the primary school curriculum is not merely an option but a moral imperative. It is an investment in the future, fostering socially responsible citizens equipped to address the challenges and opportunities our interconnected world presents.

Local context-based education is a state-of-the-art pedagogical approach that effectively bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This innovative method integrates students' immediate surroundings, cultural heritage, and personal values into learning (Artayana, Tegeh, & Bayu, 2022; Ilmiyah & Utomo, 2019). By making education more relevant and relatable, it not only enhances students' academic engagement but also nurtures a deep appreciation for local traditions and heritage. Local context-based education uniquely anchors students in their immediate environment in a world that increasingly emphasizes global connectivity. This approach provides a distinctive opportunity for students to explore their culture while fostering respect and understanding for others (Hasudungan, 2020; Rokayah & Rochman, 2019).

This research explores the pivotal role of local context-based social science lessons in nurturing empathy and tolerance among primary school students. It delves into how these lessons can effectively foster the development of these qualities, ultimately contributing to the creation of more compassionate, culturally aware, and socially responsible individuals (Bohensky & Maru, 2011; Paveglio, 2021; Ruckelshaus, McKenzie, Tallis, Guerry, Daily, Kareiva, Polasky, Ricketts, Bhagabati, Wood, & Bernhardt, 2015; Van Haefen, Milic, Addison-Smith, Butcher, & Davies, 2021). Understanding how local context-based education influences empathy and tolerance in young learners is academically significant and holds practical implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to cultivate a more harmonious and inclusive society (Saulius, 2018; Tohri, Syamsiar, Rasyad, Hafiz, & Rizkah, 2022).

The urgency of this research lies in the evolving socio-cultural landscape, where diversity is celebrated but occasionally met with misunderstandings and divisions. Recent global events have underscored the importance of nurturing empathy and tolerance to bridge divides and foster unity. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for resilience and empathy in adversity. As the world grapples with complex challenges, it is paramount that we equip the next generation with the skills and attitudes necessary to navigate these issues with empathy, tolerance, and a sense of shared humanity.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. The mixed-methods approach ensures a comprehensive understanding by combining qualitative insights with quantitative data. It allows for a holistic evaluation of how local context-based education influences the development of empathy and tolerance among primary school students. This structured approach ensures systematic data collection, refined information clarity, and comprehensive analysis. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, the research thoroughly explores the cultivation of empathy and tolerance among primary students, providing valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers.

The research was conducted on SDN 1 Baubau in Buton, explicitly targeting 30 fourth-grade elementary students and their teachers. This grade level was chosen because students in this stage exhibit concrete operational thinking, critical thinking, an understanding of causality, and practical life orientation. Their intellectual development at this age enabled hypothesis formulation and problem-solving. Additionally, the cultural values of Buton, which emphasize empathy and tolerance, make it an ideal setting for studying the cultivation of these qualities among primary school students.

The instruments used to collect data for this research were questionnaires, observation sheets, and interview guidelines. Questionnaires were distributed to gather quantitative data on students' levels of empathy and tolerance before and after the intervention of local context-based lessons. It included Likert scale questions to measure changes in attitudes and behaviors. The observation sheet for student social behavior was used to observe students' social interactions and behaviors during the learning process. This allowed for a real-time assessment of how students exhibit empathy and tolerance in a classroom setting. At the same time, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and teachers to gather insights and opinions related to the research subject or the developed model. These interviews include open-ended and closed-ended questions to elicit detailed data, facts, and opinions.

Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data used statistical techniques to collect data through questionnaires to identify significant changes and correlations. Descriptive statistics summarized the data, while inferential statistics, such as t-tests or ANOVA, were used to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. On the other hand, qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. In data reduction, the qualitative data obtained through observations are refined, sorted, and categorized to enhance comprehension. This involved sharpening information, sorting data into categories, and grouping data based on types for easier presentation. In data presentation, organized information was represented in tables for clarity and easier interpretation. Conclusions were drawn for each type of information collected, aligning qualitative data with criteria from distributed questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings highlighted the significant impact of local context-based social science lessons on primary students. The observed behaviors, such as active listening, offering assistance, and understanding feelings, indicated that these lessons had contributed to developing student empathy. This was particularly important as empathy was a fundamental trait that fostered positive relationships and compassionate individuals. Notably, most students exhibited these empathetic behaviors, suggesting that integrating local values and contexts into the curriculum effectively promotes empathy in the classroom. The findings are described in the following table:

Table 1. Student Empathy and Tolerance Behaviors

Behavior	Percentage	Number of Students (n=30)
Active listening when peers speak.	75%	22 students
Offering assistance or comfort to a peer in need.	68%	20 students
Understanding peers' feelings.	60%	18 students
Positive interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds.	72%	21 students
Attentively listening to differing opinions without judgment.	65%	19 students
Respecting cultural or individual differences.	80%	24 students

In addition to empathy, the research also assessed tolerance levels and students' interactions. The data collected showed promising signs of tolerance development. Approximately 72% (n=21) of observed students interacted positively with peers from diverse backgrounds, reflecting an inclusive classroom atmosphere where students appreciate and embrace differences. Moreover, 65% (n=19) of students were noted for attentively listening to differing opinions without judgment, indicating a willingness to respect and acknowledge diverse viewpoints. An impressive 80% (n=24) of students demonstrated respect for cultural or individual differences, emphasizing their capacity to value and celebrate diversity within the classroom environment. This data suggested that the local context-based social science lessons effectively contribute to fostering an environment where students could interact harmoniously, irrespective of their cultural or individual backgrounds.

These results are aligned with previous studies that emphasize the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in developing empathy and tolerance. Culturally relevant teaching strategies have been shown to help students better understand and appreciate the perspectives of others, thereby fostering a more empathetic and inclusive classroom environment (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Banks and Banks (2004) found that students who learn in an environment that values cultural diversity are more likely to develop tolerance and respect for others. Additionally, Nieto (2010) highlighted that

education that respects and includes students' cultural backgrounds leads to better social and academic outcomes.

The combination of research findings and supporting theoretical frameworks underscores the pedagogical value of contextualized education in nurturing empathetic and tolerant individuals who are better prepared to contribute positively to their communities. Integrating local values and contexts in the curriculum enriches students' understanding of their immediate surroundings and fosters a sense of empathy and respect towards their peers and community. This holistic approach to education equips students with essential life skills and lays the foundation for building compassionate and socially responsible individuals.

Empathy and Tolerance Levels Among Primary Students

Other findings related to empathy and tolerance were also found through observation sheets. Table 2 indicates the key questions used in the observation sheet to assess empathy and tolerance as follows:

Table 2. Key questions for the observation sheet

Empathy	Tolerance
Demonstrating active listening when peers speak.	Interacting positively with peers from diverse backgrounds.
Offering assistance or comfort to a peer in need.	Listening attentively to differing opinions without judgment.
Displaying an understanding of others' feelings.	Respecting cultural or individual differences.
Expressing empathy through verbal or non-verbal cues (e.g., comforting gestures, kind words).	Avoiding derogatory or prejudiced comments or actions.
Demonstrating a willingness to help others solve problems or conflicts.	Encouraging an inclusive and welcoming environment for all peers.

The research began by assessing the levels of empathy and tolerance among primary students participating in local context-based social science lessons after one semester of observation. The data collected through observations and assessments revealed a range of behaviors and attitudes of empathy indicative of these qualities. Notably, most students (75%) demonstrated active listening skills when their peers spoke and observed students displaying this empathetic behavior. This suggested a strong foundation for empathetic communication within the classroom environment.

Furthermore, 68% of students were observed offering assistance or comfort to peers in need, showcasing their willingness to provide emotional support. This behavior underscored the positive impact of local context-based lessons on students' ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Additionally, 60% of students displayed an understanding of their peers' feelings, indicating an increased capacity for emotional awareness. These observations collectively indicated a positive trend in cultivating empathy among primary students participating in the local context-based curriculum.

In addition to empathy, the research also assessed tolerance levels and students' interactions. The data collected showed promising signs of tolerance development. Approximately 72% of observed students interacted positively with peers from diverse backgrounds, reflecting an inclusive classroom atmosphere where students appreciate and embrace differences. Moreover, 65% of students were noted for attentively listening to differing opinions without judgment, indicating a willingness to respect and acknowledge diverse viewpoints. An impressive 80% of students demonstrated respect for cultural or individual differences, emphasizing their capacity to value and celebrate diversity within the classroom environment. This data suggested that the local context-based social science lessons effectively contributed to fostering an environment where students could interact harmoniously, irrespective of their cultural or individual backgrounds.

Impact of Local Context-Based Social Science Lessons

The research findings highlighted the significant impact of local context-based social science lessons on primary students. The observed behaviors such as active listening, offering assistance, and understanding feelings indicated that these lessons have contributed to developing student empathy. This was particularly important as empathy was a fundamental trait that fostered positive relationships and compassionate individuals. Notably, most students exhibited these empathetic behaviors, suggesting that integrating local values and contexts into the curriculum effectively promoted empathy in the classroom.

The impact of local context-based social science lessons on primary students was a crucial aspect of this research. It became even more insightful when examining the findings and the insights gathered through interviews with the teacher, Mrs. Sarnia. The observed behaviors among students, such as active listening, offering assistance, and understanding of feelings, indicated the positive influence of these lessons on empathy development. As Mrs. Sarnia's expressed during the interview, she said that integrating local context into the curriculum has indeed contributed to a noticeable improvement in her students' empathetic behavior. She noted that students have become more attentive to their peers' emotions and are more willing to extend help when needed. Mrs. Sarnia attributed this transformation to the contextualized approach of the social science lessons, which connect classroom content with real-life situations and local values.

Moreover, Mrs. Sarnia highlighted that the discussions and activities related to local culture, traditions, and community issues have enriched the students' understanding of their surroundings and fostered a sense of belonging and empathy towards their local community. This aligned with the research's emphasis on integrating local values and contexts, as it enhanced academic learning and cultivated empathy and a deeper appreciation for one's cultural heritage. The following table shows the basic competencies of social context in Social Science lessons.

Table 3. Basic Competencies of Social Context Social Science Lesson

Basic competencies	Material	Material Indicators
Read local environmental maps (district/city, province) using a simple scale.	Local Neighborhood Map.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describing the map components; 2. Reviewing the local environmental map; 3. Explaining the types of maps; 4. Drawing a map of the environment with certain symbols; 5. Stating the location of the area where you live and important locations in the area; 6. Explaining how to enlarge and reduce the map; 7. Calculating the distance to places using the map scale.
Describing the natural appearance of the district/city and provincial environment and its relationship with social & cultural diversity.	Local Natural and Social Cultural Appearances.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explaining the forms of natural features in the surrounding area; 2. Describing the various events that occur in nature; 3. Explaining people's behavior towards the surrounding natural environment; 4. Mentioning ways to preserve the surrounding natural environment; 5. Examining the forms of socio-cultural diversity in the region.
Showing the type and distribution of natural resources and their use for economic activities in the local environment.	Natural Resources and Local Economic Activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explaining the types of natural resources; 2. Identifying the benefits of natural resources; 3. Explaining the benefits of preserving natural resources; 4. Identifying the distribution of local natural resources; 5. Sequencing the natural resource production process flow; 6. Identifying the economic activities of local communities; 7. Linking the relationship between natural resources and the economic activities of local communities.
Respecting the diversity of ethnic		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explaining the meaning of <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i>;

Basic competencies	Material	Material Indicators
groups and local culture (district/city, province).	Diversity of Ethnicities and Local Culture.	2. Explaining the importance of unity in diversity; 3. Identifying the diversity of ethnic groups and cultures in the surrounding area; 4. Studying the forms of community habits related to religious and cultural activities; 5. Showing how to respect ethnic and cultural diversity in society.
Appreciating various historical heritages in the local environment (district/city, province) and maintain their preservation.	Historical Heritage in the Local Environment.	1. Explaining the meaning of historical heritage; 2. Grouping historical sources; 3. Grouping forms of historical heritage; 4. Mentioning historical heritage in the area where you live; 5. Explaining the origins of the formation of the Buton Kingdom; 6. Explaining the origin of the names Wolio and Baubau City; 7. Showing how to appreciate various historical heritages in the local environment; 8. Explaining how to preserve historical heritage; 9. Emphasizing the benefits of preserving historical heritage; 10. Explaining the officials and social strata within the Buton Sultanate.
Emulating the heroism and patriotism of figures in their environment.	Heroism and Patriotism	1. Identifying positive attitudes in the hero; 2. Showing the heroic attitude of the younger generation in the modern era; 3. Identifying the attitude of patriotism in the hero; 4. Showing the attitude of patriotism of the younger generation in the modern era; 5. Describing the struggle of the heroes in Buton; 6. Showing how to appreciate the services of heroes;

Most students exhibited empathetic behaviors, suggesting that integrating local values and contexts effectively promoted classroom empathy. This demonstrated that the

positive outcomes were not isolated incidents but a consistent classroom pattern. The combination of research findings and Mrs. Sarnia's insights underscored the pedagogical value of contextualized education in nurturing empathetic individuals who were better prepared to contribute positively to their communities.

The impact of local context-based social science lessons on primary students goes beyond the academic realm. It catalyzes empathy development, as evidenced by the research findings and the teacher's perspective. Integrating local values and contexts in the curriculum enriches students' understanding of their immediate surroundings and fosters a sense of empathy towards their peers and community. This holistic approach to education equips students with essential life skills and lays the foundation for building compassionate and socially responsible individuals.

Cultural Preservation and Revitalization

The significance of preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage through local context-based social science lessons for primary students is pivotal. Abdullah, Illah, and Nasir (2022) state that cultural preservation and revitalization are vital to any society's identity and well-being. This subchapter delves into the significance of preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage within local context-based social science lessons for primary students. It explores how these lessons contribute to preserving and revitalizing cultural traditions, practices, and values, shedding light on the broader implications of such efforts.

The research findings illuminated how local context-based social science lessons served as a conduit for passing down cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. Students understood their cultural heritage better by integrating local traditions, folklore, and historical narratives into the curriculum. This process safeguarded cultural practices and ensured they were carried forward, preserving a rich tapestry of traditions for future generations (Agung, 2017; Siska, Sapriya, & Febriani, 2021).

The role of the lessons in revitalizing cultural practices has waned over time. Globalization and modernization have led to declining traditional customs in many communities. However, local context-based education could act as a catalyst for rekindling interest in these practices. Through hands-on experiences, storytelling, and engagement with local experts, students actively participated in cultural revitalization efforts. Cultural preservation and revitalization extend beyond the classroom. Students often shared what they learned with their families and communities, sparking a ripple effect that strengthens cultural ties and renews pride in cultural heritage. This spillover effect was a testament to the transformative potential of education that prioritizes local context.

This research also pointed out the role of local experts and community members in shaping the lessons. Their involvement imparted authenticity and fostered a sense of community ownership over cultural preservation efforts. It was a collaborative endeavor where educators, students, and the broader community collaborated to safeguard and rejuvenate cultural traditions. The implications extended to the broader societal level. Communities actively engaging in cultural preservation and revitalization tended to experience a stronger sense of identity and cohesion. These efforts promote unity and pride, leading to a more harmonious and socially connected society. Cultural preservation

catalyzed positive social change, fostering empathy, understanding, and respect for diverse cultures.

Furthermore, this research underlined the importance of government and institutional support for these initiatives. Policies and funding that promote cultural preservation and revitalization through education could have a far-reaching impact (Agung, 2015). They validated the significance of cultural heritage and ensured that it remained a central component of the educational landscape. The effect of cultural preservation and revitalization through local context-based social science lessons extends into various aspects of students' lives. One of the notable findings is the development of a strong cultural identity among students. Students formed a deeper connection to their roots as they engaged with their cultural heritage in the classroom. This connection provided a sense of belonging and pride, reinforcing their cultural identity. In an increasingly globalized world, where cultural homogenization was a concern, this outcome was particularly significant as it helped maintain each community's unique identity. This research also underscored how these lessons contributed to intergenerational knowledge transfer. Students learn about their culture and become carriers of this knowledge. They often shared what they learned with their families and community members, bridging generational gaps and ensuring that cultural traditions were passed down effectively. This transmission of knowledge safeguarded cultural practices, ensuring their continuity and relevance.

Another aspect of cultural preservation and revitalization was promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity. Students developed a greater appreciation for diversity by learning about their culture and peers. They became more accepting and open-minded, positively impacting their interactions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This fostered a more inclusive and harmonious society where differences were celebrated rather than feared. Moreover, local context-based education instilled a sense of responsibility towards preserving cultural heritage. Students became stewards of their cultural traditions and were likelier to engage in efforts to protect and promote them. This sense of responsibility was not limited to cultural aspects but extended to environmental and social issues as students learned to value and protect their surroundings and communities.

The role of local context-based lessons could dispel stereotypes and biases. Students gained a nuanced understanding of diverse perspectives through direct engagement with their culture and others. This understanding challenges preconceived notions and prejudices, promoting a more inclusive and empathetic society. Cultural preservation and revitalization efforts could also have economic benefits for communities. As cultural practices and traditions were revitalized, they often attracted tourists and cultural enthusiasts. This could increase economic opportunities, such as cultural tourism, local handicrafts, and cultural events. Thus, these lessons contributed not only to cultural well-being but also to the economic development of communities.

Implications for Curriculum Development

The research results have profound implications for curriculum development in primary education, emphasizing the critical role of integrating local values and contexts into the curriculum to nurture empathy, tolerance, and positive social behavior among students. The local context-based approach emerged as a powerful tool for achieving these goals, engaging students effectively, and instilling the essential qualities. Curriculum developers and educators should consider adopting similar strategies to promote the holistic development of young learners.

The significance of curricular inclusivity urged educators and curriculum developers to move beyond traditional, textbook-centered approaches. By incorporating local values and contexts into the curriculum, students gained exposure to a wider range of knowledge and experiences, enriching their understanding of the world and enhancing their ability to relate to diverse individuals and communities.

Furthermore, the research findings highlighted the effectiveness of active and student-centered learning. The observed high levels of engagement in local context-based lessons suggested that students were more motivated and participatory when the curriculum directly related to their lives. This has implications for pedagogy, encouraging educators to design lessons that foster critical thinking, active discussions, and problem-solving based on real-life scenarios. In addition, the transformative potential of culturally grounded education. Students developed a deeper appreciation for their cultural heritage and a stronger sense of belonging by connecting classroom content to local culture, traditions, and community issues. This contributed to students' more robust sense of identity and self-confidence, promoting a positive self-image. Additionally, the findings emphasized that empathy could be taught and nurtured through carefully designed curricula that focus on understanding and respecting the feelings and perspectives of others.

The findings are relevant not only to curriculum developers but also to teachers themselves. Mrs. Sarnia's experiences and insights as a teacher in the study exemplify the importance of professional development and support for educators. Teacher training programs should incorporate elements of local context-based teaching methods and emphasize the role of teachers as facilitators of empathetic learning experiences. Moreover, the study advocates for ongoing assessment and evaluation of curricular approaches. Regular feedback from teachers and students can inform curriculum adjustments and improvements. Maintaining a dynamic curriculum that evolves to meet the changing needs and expectations of students and society is essential.

The implications extend beyond the classroom, emphasizing the pivotal role of schools in shaping future citizens. A curriculum that emphasizes empathy and tolerance can contribute to developing responsible, compassionate, and socially aware individuals who are more likely to engage positively in their communities. The research findings emphasize that curriculum development should prioritize local context-based education to enhance empathy, tolerance, and positive social behavior. This approach aligns with global trends in education that emphasize the importance of equipping students with academic knowledge and social and emotional skills to prepare them for active participation in a diverse and interconnected world. The implications also underscore the importance of collaboration among educators, curriculum developers, and local communities. Effective integration of local values and contexts requires input from various stakeholders who understand the nuances of the local culture and traditions, ensuring that the curriculum resonates with students and remains relevant to their lives.

Moreover, the research challenges the traditional view of curriculum as a static set of subjects and textbooks, positioning it as a dynamic tool for shaping compassionate, respectful, and responsible individuals. Additionally, the implications highlight the role of assessment in curriculum development, emphasizing the need for comprehensive assessments that evaluate empathy, tolerance, and social behavior. It emphasizes the importance of teacher professional development. It calls for policy-level educational changes to advocate for integrating local context-based education into national and regional curricula. It encourages educational institutions to prioritize the holistic development of students by adopting curricular approaches that emphasize empathy and tolerance. The research also encourages a global perspective on curriculum development, as the principles of empathy, tolerance, and inclusive education are universally applicable. Educators and curriculum developers worldwide can draw inspiration from this research to create curricula that promote these essential qualities, ultimately contributing to a more compassionate and harmonious world.

Curriculum development underscores the transformative potential of local context-based education, calling for a more inclusive, collaborative, and dynamic approach to curriculum design that prioritizes empathy, tolerance, and positive social behavior as essential outcomes of education. This research serves as a call to action for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers to reshape education to equip students with the skills and values needed to thrive in an interconnected and diverse society.

The research findings suggest that local context-based education fosters empathy and tolerance and enhances students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students are encouraged to analyze complex issues, consider multiple perspectives, and propose innovative solutions by connecting classroom content to real-life situations within their local context. This approach empowers students to become active agents of change in their communities and prepares them to address contemporary societal challenges. The implications extend to the broader school culture. Schools prioritising local context-based education create an environment where empathy and tolerance are taught and practised. This positive school culture promotes inclusivity, reduces bullying and discrimination, and cultivates a sense of belonging among students. Such schools become nurturing spaces where students feel safe expressing their opinions and seeking support when needed.

Beyond the immediate classroom setting, the research findings indicate the potential for long-term social benefits. Students exposed to local context-based education may carry the values of empathy and tolerance into adulthood. Future citizens and leaders are more likely to contribute positively to society, advocating for social justice, embracing diversity, and promoting inclusive policies. These students may become the catalysts for positive social change in their communities.

The research highlights an unexpected yet significant outcome, namely the role of local context-based education in preserving and revitalizing local cultures and traditions. By integrating cultural elements into the curriculum, students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of their heritage. This, in turn, can lead to increased participation in cultural events and activities, ensuring that traditional practices continue to thrive and evolve rather than being lost over time. The research findings suggest that educators can be more active in curriculum design. Mrs. Sarnia's experience adapting and implementing

local context-based lessons underscores the importance of empowering teachers as curriculum designers. Teachers possess valuable insights into the needs and preferences of their students. Encouraging them to develop and share their innovative teaching strategies can lead to more effective and engaging curricula that prioritize empathy and tolerance.

CONCLUSION

This research underscores the transformative impact of empathy and tolerance in fostering a cohesive and inclusive society, particularly through implementing local context-based social science lessons for primary students. By integrating these values into the curriculum, the study demonstrates their crucial role in developing respectful, compassionate, and socially aware individuals. It advocates for a paradigm shift in curriculum development, emphasizing academic knowledge and social and emotional skills essential for navigating today's interconnected world. The findings stress the importance of holistic student development within nurturing school environments, aiming to empower students as responsible and empathetic citizens. Moreover, the research contributes significantly to educational practices by providing empirical evidence of how cultural integration in education can enhance social and emotional growth. It highlights the relevance of these findings beyond the local context, urging global educators and policymakers to adopt similar approaches to cultivate empathy, tolerance, and inclusivity worldwide. Ultimately, the study champions local context-based education as a catalyst for creating a more harmonious and empathetic global community.

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