



RESEARCH PAPER

**Multilingual Education and Acceptance of Cultural Diversity:
Developing Sustainable Peace through Literacy for Mitigating Unrest
in the Society**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of multilingual education on promoting cultural diversity, sustainable peace, and mitigating social unrest. By examining the relationship between language, culture, and literacy, it was investigated that how multilingual education can foster acceptance and understanding among diverse communities. The research methodology used in this study was qualitative in nature. The self-developed research tool i.e the open ended interview guide was used. The fifteen interviews were conducted from the stake holders of educational experts and administrative officers of education and literacy departments of district Chiniot. The data was analysed through thematic analysis. The findings of study reflected that the multilingual education had important role in the development of sustainable peace in the society and mitigating the unrest among the people. The research also revealed that multilingual education programs can bridge cultural divides, promote inclusive learning environments, and enhance literacy skills, ultimately contributing to sustainable peace. It was recommended that the multilingual education should be made the part of curriculum so that it might be implemented at primary to tertiary level education.

KEYWORDS Cultural Diversity, Inclusive Learning, Literacy, Multilingual Education, Social Unrest, Sustainable Peace

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, cultural diversity acceptance is vital not only for ethical integrity but also as a strategic necessity for sustainable peace and development. Multilingual education has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting cultural literacy and reducing prejudice, as it allows individuals to gain cultural competencies necessary for harmonious living (UNESCO, 2017). Diversity, multiculturalism, ethno linguistic, religious differences and cross cultural communication demonstrate the importance of overcoming cultural barriers since most cultural differences are a precursor to conflict (Baker, 2011). The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity claims that diversity enhances cultural integration in any society (UNESCO, 2017). Therefore the education in general, but especially multilingual education is crucial to decrease cultural differences and to contribute to the functioning of multicultural societies and to peace (UNESCO, 2015). Moreover, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 also stresses the need for quality education appealing the education as a key which provides people with a lifelong learning, social integration and sustainable development (United Nations, 2015). For instance, on insights, multilingual education helps in increasing inter cultural tolerance and social integration, reduce prejudice and enhance the minority groups'

power (Garcia, 2009). This helps students to study in the first language thus helps foster cognitive as well as cultural development of students and at the same time fosters other language skills for meaningful social interaction. It also respects cultural and linguistic diversity in learners, it enables learners to acquire knowledge and skills in handling the world at large.

Hence, multilingual education apart from monolingual or first and second bilingual education, supports linguistic diversity by valuing and developing the minority language in each society (Baker 2011). UNESCO maintains that such a unified approach improves learning results and fosters a good self-perception in the learners with impaired abilities and from different cultural backgrounds to assimilate into multicultural societies (UNESCO, 2003). Research shows that students who start learning literacy in their first language have better academic achievement, has better cognitive and social development (Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012). May (2014) posited that these benefits speak to the fact that multilingual education may be used to improve youth acceptance, belongingness, and overall, or wellbeing in a multilingual world. A multilingual education environment provides a student with pre-vocational training thus developing the intercultural complementary viewpoint as a person. Students' learning in languages other than their first language exposes them to a diversity of languages and cultures, we postulate that this would enhance their cultural sensitivity (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). The study found out that use of L2 results in students being receptive to other cultures hence eradicating prejudice and making the world society more diverse (Garcia, 2009). This is most effective in combating racist disposition, and prejudice that fosters social tension and conflict; consequently, promoting multilingual education for peace making (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009).

Further, literacy and especially multiliteracy is an instrument of positive change, equality and enhanced social and political participation. According to UNESCO, literacy fights against exclusion, unemployment, and social problems that might lead towards conflicts (UNESCO, 2017). Education empowers people to participate effectively in the political process, vote and fulfill other responsibilities as well as improve their own economic status and of a society making it stronger (Wong & Benson, 2019). Literacy preserves cultural equality in multicultural and multilingual settings to accomplish the task of cooperation and integration hence collaboration by a mutual agreement especially when in conflict. Such a linguistic variable creates a better understanding of societal harmony that decreases misunderstanding to other cultural representatives and carry on mutual cooperative conversation among them (Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012).

Multilingualism presents an opportunity to be ahead of a common language approach as it works to provide proper language access to all students and all people in general in the community. Working in environments where learners master several languages, the students possess knowledge about different cultural attitudes, which are helpful during conflict solving and reducing tensions (Hornberger, 2009). This approach also helps reduce extremism, as people, who were accepted and valued as members of society, have less chance to be induced by extremist opinion makers. UNESCO also recommends that education systems should embrace the cultural diversity if the sustainable peace has to be implemented (UNESCO, 2017). Due to the fact that multilingualism reduces social conflicts, this type of education adapts students to respect other cultures learning in languages that seem to be unfamiliar thus creating a society that is more inclusive and tolerant (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). With the changes in societies where the number of people who belong to different cultures and speak different languages as a second language rises, multilingual education will be an

essential way of bringing multilingual cohesion, understanding and peace. Thus, the Multilingual Education should become a priority not only for education equality purposes but also for improving the outlook of the international society. Thus, this research study will examine the part that multilingual education, cultural diversity and literacy play in reducing social conflict, and in the construction of sustainable peace, as a discourse about education for change in the globalization and increasing cultural complexity.

Literature Review

The multilingual education has a key role in fostering cultural diversity, achieving sustainable peace and avoiding social conflicts. Studies indicated that the multiple goals could be achieved through the integration of multiple languages in education (UNESCO, 2003; May, 2014). It not only fosters an appreciation for linguistic diversity among the students but it also develops greater tolerance among them and diminishes prejudice. In addition, multilingual literacy enhances students' critical thinking as well as communication skills that play significant roles in conflict transformation and peace-making tasks (Garcia, 2009). It has been found that multilingual education is useful in order to address several socio-cultural issues in diverse societies. Moreover, through restructuring the education by reflecting and honouring the cultural diversity, the social conflicts could be resolved effectively. Hence the multilingual education gives a positive contribution in minimizing social conflict. Through this, students are enabled to operate in other linguistic and cultural environments and hence enhance multiculturalism and social integration (UNESCO, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012). Scholars such as Garcia (2009) emphasized that the multilingual education promote mutual understanding and dialogue which is mandatory for the inhibition of societal tensions and peace building.

Multilingual Education

Multilingual education can be understood as learning arrangements which involves the integration of two or more languages along with students are allowed to maintain their first language. Moreover, the students are also encouraged to acquire additional languages which are relevant to their country or region. It usually means the usage of the 'first language' which is the language that the child learns first, together with the integration of one or more other languages which are considered as relevant in their regional or national domains. Multilingual education frameworks are not homogeneous and are sometimes classified as dual language immersion programs. It is followed by using several languages according to the regional language ecology. It is noted that the cognitive abilities of students are enriched if they are instructed in their first language. It also enhances student motivation and improves their social and academic development.

Multilingual Education and Cultural Diversity

It is advocated by the UNESCO (2003) that the learners' first languages must be adopted at earliest in education as it is beneficial for fostering cultural identity, enhancing academic performance, and promoting literacy. Multilingualism on the other hand was defined as an attempt to address the plight of the linguistic minorities so that language does not become a hindrance to their societal and educational advancement as envisaged by May (2014). A major advantage of multilingual education is its positive relation to intercultural tolerance. Moreover, this inclusive approach also advocates that the use of multilingual approach to the teaching and education facilitates the

development of language and culture which are valued and embraced in the classroom. According to Garcia (2009), multilingual education promotes dialog that fosters appreciation of diverse ways of perceiving the world as the learners meet with various language perspectives. In a multilingual classroom, the students learn to communicate in various languages which enable them to have broader perspective of the different cultures as well as the different values and belief systems that exist in the society. This exposure to diverse languages discourages the ethnocentric mentality and helps the students to appreciate diversity, be open-minded and hence promote the inclusive cultural approach. Being together with peers of different first languages, students get to work, listen to each other, communicate, and basically get to understand different cultures hence making the school inclusive. Many such interactions help students develop the ability to see diversity as an opportunity to be leveraged, rather than as something that will limit them and keep them from participating fully in society. Thus, the multilingual education not only helps linguistic minorities to exercise power and progress in other aspects, but also improves the intercultural contact and relations of all students and creates awareness for multicultural relations in multicultural societies.

Reducing Ethno linguistic Marginalization

The ethno linguistic marginalization is one of the biggest contributors of social problems across many multicultural societies. When minority languages are not made the part of the formal education systems, sometimes the people who use those languages feel isolated which increases polarization in the society. On this aspect, multilingual education intervenes by placing the value of the first language and other languages at par with the second language in order to eradicate the exclusion common among students speaking minority languages (Kosonen & Benson, 2013).

Literacy as a Pathway to Peace Building

Language discriminations are always a root of social and political crisis mainly in the post-colonial societies where the language of the colonial master has become the medium of learning and administration (Brock-Utne, 2007). In such settings, the provision of multilingual education provide a way to address historical injustices giving indigenous and minority languages a higher status. Such approach, apart from promoting linguistic diversity, enables the social justice because all regarding linguistic minorities get equal chances to complete education or other achievements. In particular, since multilingual education supports the recognition of languages in society it facilitates the feelings of belonging to society. If all linguistic communities are satisfied with reciprocity of language and culture, social integration is enhanced, and ethnic tensions have fewer opportunities to develop. In this regard, education in several languages is making a contribution towards the sustenance of sustainable peace in societies which are diverse.

Multilingual Education as a Tool for Sustainable Peace

Linguistic inequalities are often integral to the political and social conflicts, particularly in post-colonial societies where the language of the former colonizer has been imposed as the dominant medium of instruction and governance (Kosonen & Benson, 2013). In these contexts, multilingual education serves as a mean of redressing historical injustices by elevating the status of indigenous and minority languages. This approach not only helps to preserve linguistic diversity but also contributes to social justice by ensuring that all linguistic groups have access to education and other opportunities (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009). By promoting linguistic inclusion,

multilingual education fosters a sense of shared ownership and belonging within society. When all linguistic groups feel that their languages and cultures are respected and valued, social cohesion is strengthened, and the potential for conflict is reduced. In this way, multilingual education serves as a tool for promoting sustainable peace in diverse societies.

Literacy and Conflict Prevention

In multilingual contexts, literacy in multiple languages enhances individuals' ability to engage in intercultural dialogue, resolve conflicts peacefully, and participate in decision-making processes that affect their communities. Moreover, literacy is a powerful tool for reducing inequality, which is often a driver of social unrest. When individuals from minority language groups are given access to quality education in their mother tongue, they are better equipped to advocate for their rights and participate in society on an equal footing with speakers of the dominant language. This inclusion reduces feelings of marginalization and alienation, which are often exploited by radical or extremist groups to incite violence (Brock-Utne, 2007). By promoting multilingual literacy, education systems can help to prevent conflicts by addressing the root causes of social unrest such as exclusion and inequality. Education in more than one language benefits people living in multilingual societies in the extent to which they can participate in intercultural communication, negotiate, search for solutions to controversies locally, regionally, or globally and indeed participate in the decision-making process of their society.

However, it is important to acknowledge that education is one of the most effective ways of decreasing inequality, which is major reason of social instability. Minority latent learners are well equipped to defend their rights in classes and in the society, if they are empowered through education in their first language. The integration of these minorities can be helpful in eradicating annoyance among the persons of weaker communities that are then used by radicalized groups to engage in violent behaviours (Kosonen & Benson, 2013). Through using multiple languages in classrooms, education systems can reduce conflict as they target diverse causes of social conflicts including marginalization and discrimination.

Preventing Radicalization and Extremism

Another critical issue of modern society is radicalization of people. It is found that persons experiencing social isolation are more likely to be vulnerable to the appeals of radicalism political beliefs which promise to integrate the person into the larger community (Ting-Toomey, 2007). The multilingual education may have the potential to reverse this trend since the solution has the effect of making societies more inclusive, thereby creating a new spirit of unity among communities that may have moderate or serious ethnic tensions. Ensuring that all the students from different linguistic backgrounds are effectively supported and included in the educational institutions can reduce radicalization. This inclusion also minimizes the chances of his/her being radicalized by other endearing beliefs that capitalize on frustrations and hatred. Moreover, multilingual education also helps the students to develop critical thinking and valuable intercultural communication skills to fight extremism and practice conflict solution (Singh, 2020).

Addressing the Root Causes of Societal Unrest

The societal unrest arises when the cultural and linguistic minorities are shelved, and only the dominant language is favoured by the educational systems. To curb such problems multilingual education offer equal opportunities for quality education in different languages thereby making a minority group fared. As far as linguistic identity is contained in social or political conflict, education in two or more languages reduces enmity. One can largely support this point of view based on the studies conducted in post- conflict countries. The incorporation of indigenous languages into education systems of countries like Philippines and Guatemala has promoted positive interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous communities, reduces conflict in society as well as improves societal order in the two countries (Kosonen & Benson, 2013). Since multilingual education enhances appreciation of linguistic rights, it reduces cases of conflict arising from linguistic minority groups because they are regarded as valued national assets.

Developing Critical Thinking and Dialogue Skills

Multilingual literacy improves the learners' critical perspectives with a view of enabling students to approach critical tasks from different vantage points. Moreover, the inter-cultural mediated communication is a crucial element of peace building since it encourages the consideration of various viewpoints and promotes the cooperative solutions of arising conflicts (Hornberger, 2009). Bilingualism makes the individuals more flexible in conflict relation and problem solving, as it enables them to work collaboratively, and more compromising for sustaining peace (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Literacy in such languages facilitates the learners to participate in informed debate, outcomes of which are important in solving social and political questions.

Further, multilingual literacy enables students to personally contribute to the processes of society's peaceful reconstruction. In societies, where conflict can potentially encourage promotion of conflict, the use of multilingual literacy education has assisted people in grasping concepts of peace in their natural language resulting in the notion being more familiar to such people (Ekiotuaere, 2024). When learners are multiliterate, they are capable to advocate the values of social justice, equity, and inclusion leading to sustainable peace from the ground up.

Promoting Civic Engagement and Empowerment

Multilingual education ensures meaningful participation of people from different linguistic backgrounds in civic and social processes. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) have pointed out that the multilingual literacy prepares people for those roles where one needs to call for change or reform at the policy level, build peace and set up social communication. It also gets people of different languages to come to the negotiating and policy making table. Where minority and marginalized groups are silenced in public space, multi linguistically literate people are equipped to lobby for change, engage in peace-keeping. Take the examples of the literacy programs provided in Rwanda where people are taught both Kinyarwanda and English have been helpful in enabling citizens engage in post genocide reconciliation. It also stresses the centrality of multilingual literacy required for interconnection and interaction on which harmonious relations, or post-war reconstruction depends (McCarty, 2011).

Challenges and Criticisms of Multilingual Education

Although multilingual education is very beneficial endeavour, but it is also accompanied with various challenges and issues especially in its implementation. Multilingual education has also been said to organize a large burden of work on education systems in terms of finance and other resources particularly in the developing world. The development of instructional and learning resources, teacher trainings and preparing the curriculum for multiple languages could be challenging and costly (Baker, 2011). However, the other challenge in this regard is to create balance between the mother-tongue instruction and the learning of other dominant languages which are necessary for social and economic mobility. Likewise, if the mother-tongue instruction is over emphasized, it may make certain students reach a restricted level of mastery of more commonly used languages which are equally important in national and global economy. It might also affect their access to the wider opportunities available at the global level (Hornberger & Link, 2012).

Multilingual education is an effective tool for endorsing linguistic inclusion, promoting sustainable peace in multicultural societies, and reducing social tension. As for the current necessity and problems of employing multilingual education, it must be pointed out that despite challenges which still exist it holds great promise for decreasing social tension in multicultural countries and building a sustainable peace. Hence the multilingual education remains one of the most important tools for policymakers and teachers of different nations for promoting social inclusion and improving the status of unpopular groups. With intensity increasing in democratization across the global societies, the use of multicultural education policy to support cultural diversity and peace will be paramount in fighting against the root causes of unrest and social vices within societies while catalysing formation of an integrated society.

Material and Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the impact of multilingual education on cultural integration and the role of literacy in fostering sustainable peace.

The population of the research study was based on the stake holders of educational experts and administrative officers of education and literacy departments of district Chiniot. The participants were selected through purposive sampling technique, and the fifteen participants were taken for semi-structured interviews. These interviews explored the participants' experiences and perspectives on the effects of multilingual education on diversity, ethnicity, conflict, and literacy. However, the thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data in order to look for themes and patterns from the data. This approach enabled to build a rather rich understanding of the interconnections between multilingual education, cultural integration, and conflict reduction.

Research Tool

The research tool used in this study was an interview guide. The in-depth insight requires a qualitative interview guide containing general, non-leading questions or statements to help the interviewer through a discussion. It elicits specific exploration of participants' experiences as well as their opinions and emotional states as they are designed within a structured but unrestrictive format. However, the closed questions

narrow down the responses of participants while the open-ended questions let participants to respond at length and with full detail to say anything they want. Hence the open ended interview is effective particularly when dealing with issues of social concern such as the multilingual education, cultural diversity and peace.

Results and Discussion

In order to analyse the data collected through the interviews, the thematic analysis was used. The fifteen interviews were conducted from the administrative officers and teachers. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Below are the questions with possible themes that could be elucidated from their answers.

1. In your opinion, what is multilingual education?

In response to this question, varied viewpoints were obtained. According to the respondent (R) no. 1, *"multilingual education is a teaching-learning method wherein more than one language is used in the teaching-learning process to promote the students' languages and thinking growth as well as cultural sensitivity"*. Besides, R5, R9 and R15 also defined multilingual education as; *"it is the systematic use of more than one language in the education system in order to embrace the culturally diverse world."* However, the R7 pointed out that, *"multilingual education is a way through which student's gain better perception and recognition of different languages or cultures and in turn be in a position to become productive and relevant in a diverse human society."* The remaining respondents i.e R2, R3, R4, R8, R10, R12 and R13 shared almost similar opinions. They all emphasized on the importance of multilingual education for encouraging children and teenagers to integrate and respect the use of different languages. It might develop the cognitive and critical thinking skills of learners to perceive other languages significant. Moreover, these responses indicated that the multilingual education is not only a language learning process that is being provided, but also an effective mechanism promoting intercultural education and social inclusion in educational spaces.

Thus, in light of the responses received from all the participants, the multilingual education could be defined as an educational approach that incorporates and is sensitive to the use of many languages in a learning process so as to develop students' languages learning ability, intellect, and cultural understanding. This strategy is accepted by the respondents as crucial for appreciating and developing students' communication and interpersonal skills in a multicultural society.

2. How many languages can you speak, share their names?

When the respondents were asked to share the number and names of languages they could speak, variety of responses was noted. The respondent (R) no. 1 stated that *"he is fluent in three languages: English, Urdu and Punjabi,"* as these are some of the languages, which are commonly used for communication in the country. The respondents R3, R5 & R7 expressed the same multilingual capacity as R1 asserting that *"one can speak two or more languages, specifically English and the national or regional language that is related to the respondent's cultural background."* However, the respondents R9 and R12 reported *"English and Urdu as their languages of expertise, even though they showed concern in learning other languages for cultural purposes only"*. Similarly, the remaining respondents i.e R2, R4, R6, R8, R10, R11, R13, R14 and R15 claimed that *"they can communicate in two languages, English and their national language Urdu"*, which in their view is important for international and local interaction for individuals and in the workplace. The teachers insisted on retaining as many languages as possible from all

over the world and at the regional level. They argued that the ability of knowing several languages helps the students to operate in different cultural contexts effectively, and improves personal interactions.

On the basis of the responses of all the respondents, it was found that majority of the respondents are able to read and write two languages, either the English language or regional or national languages while several are able to speak three languages. They firmly believe that multiple languages operation can improve interpersonal and professional communication, facilitate cross-cultural understanding and help multicultural society to embrace divergence.

3. How do you think learning multiple languages can promote mutual understanding of other cultures?

In essence, respondent (R) no. 1 said that *“it is easy to appreciate other cultures when learning multiple language as it enables more understanding of different cultures and ways of living.”* In the same way, the respondents R5, R7, and R10 argued that, *“getting to know different languages enables individuals understand the culture and practices in those languages hence fostering respect and reducing narrow-mindedness.”* While the respondents R3, R6 and R12 corresponded by adding that *“language learning is a positive way of eliminating barriers that hinder interaction between people of various cultures and languages.”* The similar viewpoints were expressed by respondents R2, R8, R11, R13, and R14, who termed *“multiculturalism as one of the positive outcomes of multilingualism because it reduces cultural prejudices”*. Overall, the respondents agreed that learning multiple languages is the way to achieve better intercultural tolerance since language reveals people’s beliefs, traditions and perceptions of the world.

4. How has multilingual education influenced your acceptance of cultural diversity?

In response to this question, the respondents shared varied opinions. The respondents (R) no. 1 said that *“multilingual education enriches his views of the world and compliance to the different cultural influences.”* Likewise, the respondents R4, R6 and R9 also emphasized that learning different languages enabled them to embrace the cultural differences and focus on the diversity of the cultures. Similar viewpoints were shared by the respondents R5, R8, and R13. As the respondent R8 reported that *“multilingual education helped me to become more open-minded on cultural diversity”*. These reflections were also supported by the respondents R2, R7, R10, R12, and R15. It was opined by the respondent R7 that *“it allows not only the development of the language skills but also the multicultural interaction”*. Subsequently, it has been ascertained from the respondents that multilingual education has had positive impacts on their perception towards cultural diversity since this practice has fixed their social fears arising from cultural discriminations.

5. Can you provide examples of how multilingual education has helped you understand and appreciate different cultural practices?

In response to the question regarding the provision of examples of how multilingual education has helped you to understand and appreciate different cultural practices, varied views were obtained. According to the respondent (R) no. 3, *“there was an advantage of learning different languages where they understood the differences in greetings, rituals and social behaviours of people belonging to different cultures and languages”*. While the respondents R5, R9, and R11 gave examples based on their practice, for instance the respondent R9 said, *“Make arrangements for understanding the importance of festivities and*

ceremonies which prevails in the various parts of the world which according to them enhanced their culture understanding". The similar viewpoints were obtained by the remaining respondents R2, R4, R7, R10 and R13 where they mentioned that they used the multilingual education to get a first-hand experience of the cultures of other people hence gaining respect to them. Hence on the basis of the analysis of all the respondents, it was found that the multilingual education has facilitated the valuing and appreciation of cultural practices through contextualization of cultural symbols in the class.

6. How do you think multilingual education contributes to develop sustainable peace in society?

When the respondents were asked to share their views about the contribution of multilingual education to develop sustainable peace in society, varied views were obtained. The In an respondent (R) no. 1 said that *"multilingual education helps in the development of person to person interpersonal cordial communication and conflict solution."* The similar views were expressed by the respondents R3, R5, R6, R7, R9, R12 and R14. As the respondent R3 indicated that *"through multilingual education, respect and understanding for each other's languages develop. Hence there will be little conflict which is integral to sustainable peace"*. For instance, the respondents R9 underscored the social cohesion and empathy which is a precondition of sustainable peace with references to multilingual education. By analysing the responses of all the respondents, it was revealed that multilingual education is the catalyst of better understanding of cultural diversity thus resulting in sustainable peace due to the reduction of prejudices within societies that are multicultural in nature.

7. Can you share any experiences where multilingual education has helped resolve conflicts or promote understanding between different cultural groups?

In response to this question, the respondents shared diverse views. The respondent (R) no. 7 stated that *"His listening and speaking skills of more languages enabled him to resolve the dispute among the students of respective languages and cultures."* The remaining respondents R1, R2, R3, R8, R9, R10, R11 and R15 were also having the similar opinions. As the respondent R10 shared an experience where multilingual education actually improves his understanding of other cultures and facilitate in conflicts solving processes. While the respondent R14 argued that *"the multilingual education has developed the respect for other cultures in him and thus, enabled him to avoid any aggressive confrontations at workplaces and neighbourhoods"*. In sum, with regard to the management of conflict, respondents agreed that multilingual education is effective to eliminate language and cultural differences.

8. How can literacy help mitigate unrest in society caused by cultural differences?

The respondents shared varied views in response to this question. As the respondent (R) no. 11 said that *"literacy enables people to learn different perspectives and contexts which play a significant role in minimizing the clash occurring due to the culture and conflicts."* Similarly, the respondent R8 pointed that *"literacy fosters communication and since communication removes barriers so it discourages stereotypic behaviours and thus forces harmony in society."* All the remaining respondents shared almost similar viewpoints. As the respondents R13 opines that *"literacy creates a means for people to think critically, and question the biases that give rise to unrest"*. After the analysis of all the respondents, it was revealed that the respondents supported the assertions that learning different

languages and awareness democratize the culture and also reduce tensions in society which promote critical consciousness.

9. Can you suggest ways to through literacy to better address cultural diversity and endorse peace?

In response to this question, the respondents gave varied suggestions. As the respondent (R) no, 1 said, *“in order to promote the multilingual education, the schools should encourage such a social model and implement the multilingual literacy programs from a tender age.”* While the respondent R3 proposed that *“media campaigns in culturally and linguistically specific communication styles should be arranged for different audience groups.”* Furthermore, the respondents R2, R5, R7, R10, and R14 described almost same views. As the respondent R10 emphasized *“the need to use digital environment and multicultural resources to promote the multilingual education strategies for target groups”*. On the basis of the analysis of all the respondents, the significant suggestions for the promotion of multilingual education included that it might be promoted through the provision of culturally relevant reading materials, participation of the community and through the use of ICT tools and the understanding of cultural diversity. It would lead to harmony in the society. Moreover, the respondents suggested that the multilingual education could be supported by literacy using various approaches such as integration of multilingual education at an early stage in schools, community education, educational technologies, multicultural libraries, and oral stories. Furthermore, these approaches could not only better resolve the issues of cultural diversity but also bring in the idea of peace since people would know and accept each other more.

Discussion

The current study was aimed to explore the impact of multilingual education on promoting cultural diversity, sustainable peace, and mitigating social unrest. The findings of the study revealed that multilingual education can substantially bring improvement in the level of appreciation of diversity and also bring sustainability to the culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence within society. Consequently, in relation to this study, Garcia and Wei (2014) research also argued for embracing multilingual education because it helps create culturally sensitive societies in which people from different cultures learn about and appreciate other peoples' cultures, and therefore, become empathetic. This assertion is also similar to the opinion of Cenoz and Gorter (2005) who observed that multilingualism fosters inter-cultural relations, and consequently minimizes ethnic discrimination, prejudice and colonial stereotyping. Likewise, multilingual education has been known to produce education equality through promoting talents for cultural diversity among the students, which help reduce social problems by producing well informed and tolerant citizens (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Furthermore, knowing multiple languages play an immense role towards sustainable integrated peace building since it empowers individuals with social critiques as well as critical thinking skills for challenging those stereotypic and misinformative prejudices as primary raw materials for fanning the flames of conflict (Hornberger & Link, 2012). On the other hand, Baker and Jones (1998) assert that use of multilingual education as a tool enhances mutual appreciation, and thus can help address origins of societal conflict. For instance, in multilingual classrooms, the perception that the clients develop towards cultural diversity is enhanced by the ability to appreciate cultural difference (Baker & Jones, 1998).

However, it is also noted that multilingual education may not suffice to ensure culture acceptance and sustainable peace. As Phillipson (2017) opined that multilingual

programmes might deepen language prejudice by failing to provide resources, professional development and support from the community. In addition, Orman and Pable (2015) emphasized that there is a contradiction in definition of multilingual education as an inclusive system because the implementation of multilingual education is often faced with various practical problems including shortage of teachers' training and lack of adequately developed curriculum in many education systems in developing countries. Hence to ensure a peaceful society, the multilingual education should be promoted in the educational institutions.

Conclusion

This research therefore intended to examine the effectiveness of using multilingual education in enhancing appreciation of diversity and eventually maintaining sustainable peace characterized by reduction of societal conflict through literacy. The study outcomes revealed that the multilingual education has a positive impact on cultural sensitivity, cultural appreciation and tolerance – which are crucial for successful management of culturally diverse societies. As students learn multiple languages and other perspectives, multilingual education promotes student tolerance and acceptance of culture and language differences. A goal of this study consistent with it is to determine the importance of learning language in creating intercultural understanding.

It was also found that the multilingual education as an institution has a noble role to play in the achievement of sustainable peace through attaining functional literacy. Bilingual literacy enhances problem solving and equips students' ability to question prejudice, and the preconceptions that cause social tensions. This is in line with the study goal to explore how multilingual literacy can reduce social contestations. The more the learners, become culturally sensitive they stand to benefit in their ability to interact with fellow people from different cultures so that they may avoid bias and conflicts. Hence the multilingual education is useful as a peace building tool within societies that have diverse populations. However, to obtain these results demands for effective education sponsors including teachers, culturally appropriate curriculum and resources. Without these, the prospects of multilingual education are unlikely to be fully facilitated toward the attainment of accepting diversity and enhancing a culture of harmony and peace in society. This calls for long-term support for multilingual education frameworks in order to be implemented effectively.

Therefore, the multilingual education is a promising area for multiculturalism and harmony promotion. However, to enhance the applicability of this study, this research emphasizes the significance of appropriate educational frameworks. When properly done, this study which was designed to achieve a more adequate realization of multilingual education potential to produce inclusive and tolerant societies that do not nurture hate and conflict, contributes to the general aim of building peaceful societies for sustainable development.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the current research study, some recommendations were made which are detailed as below.

The study outcomes suggested that the multilingual education has a positive impact on cultural sensitivity, cultural appreciation and tolerance – which are crucial for successful management of culturally diverse societies. Hence the multilingual

education should be made integral element of curriculum. As students learn multiple languages and other perspectives, multilingual education promotes tolerance and acceptance of cultural and language differences.

It is also recommended that the multilingual literacy should be promoted to reduce social conflicts. The more the learners become culturally sensitive, the more they would become flexible and would interact with fellow people from different cultures which might be beneficial to avoid bias and clashes.

It is also suggested that for developing a peaceful society, it is needed to demand for effective education sponsors including teachers, culturally appropriate curriculum and resources. Without these, the prospects of the multilingual education are unlikely to be fully facilitated toward the attainment of accepting diversity and enhancing a culture of harmony and peace in society.

However, it is also suggested for future researchers to conduct the similar study by using the quantitative research design. It might be beneficial to get a more insight about the significance and integration of multilingual education in educational institutions. Furthermore, the other factors which might play a significant in promoting multilingual education and building peaceful societies for sustainable development should be examined in future studies.

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