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EDITORIAL SUMMARY

This study investigates the effectiveness of a pedagogical approach grounded in Malay cultural values for enhancing higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) among primary school students. Employing a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design, the research involved an eight-week intervention with 120 students, yielding robust quantitative and qualitative evidence that indicates significant improvements in analytical skills, creativity, and critical thinking.

The article is well-structured, supported by an up-to-date theoretical foundation and rigorous methodology. It offers an innovative contribution by integrating local cultural values as cognitive tools to enhance engagement and meaningful learning in multicultural settings. For greater impact, the manuscript would benefit from a more detailed description of participant profiles and a broader discussion on the implications for educational policy. This research presents a valuable advancement in culturally responsive pedagogical practices and is of clear interest to educators, researchers, and education policymakers.

ARTICLE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This study evaluates the effectiveness of a culturally inspired learning framework based on key Malay values (e.g., gotong royong, hormat, kesopanan) in fostering the development of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in primary school students.

The introduction clearly articulates the research problem, situating it within the current educational landscape and aligning it with ongoing debates regarding the development of advanced cognitive skills.

- The text begins with a well-substantiated critique of traditional educational models, highlighting their limitations in addressing the complexities of a dynamic, globalized world;
- It provides a current literature overview, drawing on recent and relevant studies that support the rationale for the intervention;
- It presents a strong justification for the study, contributing meaningfully to the discourse on culturally sensitive pedagogical practices and proposing an innovative educational intervention.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The article makes a well-structured and relevant contribution to the field of education, particularly in multicultural contexts. The integration of Malay cultural values in teaching higher-order cognitive skills is both innovative and timely, offering a synthesis between traditional heritage and contemporary educational demands. The manuscript is clearly written, theoretically grounded, methodologically sound, and presents significant results with relevant theoretical and practical implications.

STRENGTH OF ARGUMENT

The article presents a clear, logical, and progressive line of reasoning. The introduction effectively defines the problem, contextualizes the discussion on HOTS, and underscores the importance of incorporating cultural values—in this case, Malay—into educational practice. The authors interpret the findings cautiously and avoid overgeneralization or unsupported claims.

LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This is a high-potential article in the domains of intercultural education, curriculum development, and cognitive advancement. However, several areas could be further refined:

- The participant profile could be more thoroughly described (e.g., age, educational background, geographic location) to better contextualize the target population;
- The discussion would benefit from an exploration of how public education policies might integrate these recommendations to support institutional or nationwide changes;
- The manuscript should explicitly address the extent to which the findings are generalizable to other cultural or educational contexts.

ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER AUTHORS

Fedorchenko et al. (2024) and Zhang et al. (2024) argue that traditional education models rooted in rote memorization and passive learning are inadequate for current demands, resulting in critical gaps in advanced cognitive skill development.

Koukpossi et al. (2024) and Somuah et al. (2022) recognize the value of cultural integration in education but note that its practical application in strategies targeting HOTS remains underexplored.

Madayag et al. (2024) and Nayak et al. (2024) emphasize that collaborative learning models, centered on peer interaction and mutual feedback, foster cognitive development and better prepare students for real-world problem-solving and adaptive challenges.

Finally, Frisina (2024), Kim et al. (2021), and Tran et al. (2024) maintain that embedding students' cultural heritage into the curriculum enhances critical engagement and supports deeper, more meaningful learning experiences.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

This study is highly relevant as it demonstrates that integrating Malay cultural values into education fosters the development of key skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and analysis among primary school students. Such integration contributes to more meaningful learning, increases student motivation, and strengthens cultural identity. In a rapidly evolving, multicultural world, this pedagogical approach offers a more inclusive and effective educational model that prepares learners for real-world challenges.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

The study clearly and convincingly evaluates the effectiveness of a learning framework grounded in Malay values for enhancing higher-order cognitive skills in primary school students. The introduction is well contextualized, drawing on recent literature and justifying the cultural-educational integration proposed.

The analysis reveals that the article is well-structured and methodologically rigorous, presenting coherent arguments without exaggeration. Among the limitations, the paper would benefit from a more detailed participant profile, a discussion on educational policy integration, and clearer considerations regarding the generalizability of findings.

The study engages with relevant authors to reinforce the importance of moving beyond traditional methods, embracing collaborative learning, and integrating students' cultural backgrounds to foster more meaningful and engaged education.

In summary, the work is both timely and significant in demonstrating how cultural values can enhance essential cognitive skills, increase motivation, and promote a more inclusive and effective educational experience in multicultural settings.

REQUIRED REVISIONS

Please highlight the following revisions in yellow within the manuscript:

- The participant profile could be more thoroughly described (e.g., age, educational background, geographic location) to better contextualize the target population;
- The discussion would benefit from an exploration of how public education policies might integrate these recommendations to support institutional or nationwide changes;
- The manuscript should explicitly address the extent to which the findings are generalizable to other cultural or educational contexts.

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