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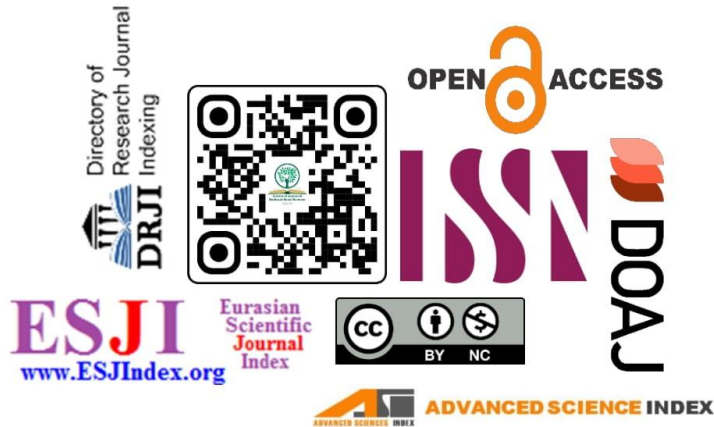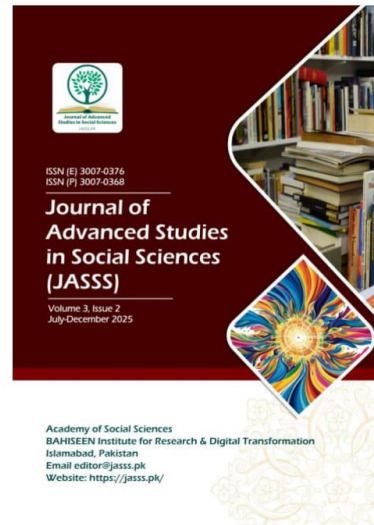
Adaption of Transformative Education to Respect and Incorporate Cultural Diversity in South African Classrooms Through Inclusive Pedagogy

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Abstract

This study investigates the adaptation of transformative education to respect and incorporate cultural diversity in South African classrooms through inclusive pedagogy. The research utilized a descriptive survey design, focusing on 300 secondary school teachers in Eastern Cape, South Africa. The sample was selected using multistage sampling techniques: 10 schools were randomly chosen, and 30 teachers from each school were selected. Data was collected through a Questionnaire on Transformative Education and Cultural Diversity in South African Classrooms (QTECDSAC), which explored teachers' practices in integrating cultural diversity, the challenges of implementing transformative education, the effectiveness of such practices, professional development needs, and the impact of inclusive pedagogy on student outcomes. The instrument was validated, and its reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83) confirmed its suitability for the study. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, means, standard deviations, and percentages) were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that culturally relevant teaching materials were the most commonly used practices for integrating cultural diversity, though there was considerable variation in the extent of integration. Key challenges included inadequate training in culturally responsive pedagogy and insufficient teaching resources. While transformative education was viewed as moderately effective in promoting student engagement and belonging, teachers identified workshops and multilingual classroom management training as the most beneficial strategies for adopting inclusive pedagogy. The use of inclusive pedagogy was found to positively impact students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and academic performance. Recommendations include expanding teacher training on culturally responsive pedagogy, providing adequate resources, focusing on multilingual classroom management, and fostering student-centered approaches to improve intercultural understanding and academic success. Regular monitoring and evaluation of transformative practices are crucial for ensuring their effectiveness.
Keywords: Transformative, Education, Cultural Diversity, Classrooms and Inclusive Pedagogy

Introduction

Adapting transformative education to integrate and respect cultural diversity in South African classrooms could represent an essential response to the country's multicultural context and a pathway toward educational equity. Transformative education, as described by Mezirow (2002), emphasizes learning that promotes critical reflection, self-awareness, and shifts in personal beliefs to support a more inclusive worldview. This approach seeks to help students recognize biases, understand systemic inequalities, and appreciate diversity. In South Africa, where classrooms reflect a rich array of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, implementing transformative education calls for inclusive teaching practices that embrace and respect cultural diversity.

South Africa's educational system, influenced by historical and socio-political factors such as apartheid, continues to grapple with challenges in establishing truly inclusive education that embraces diversity (Adewusi, 2020). Transformative education may offer a framework to address these disparities by promoting inclusivity and social justice within classrooms. This educational approach encourages students to develop open-mindedness and intercultural awareness, preparing them for a multicultural society. Some recent studies suggest that transformative education might help make the South African educational system more inclusive (de Klerk, et al, 2024). Teachers using dialogic teaching methods, such as exploring cultural perspectives and social justice, potentially support students in critically examining issues related to race, identity, and inequality. This process could foster empathy and engagement with cultural differences, both of which may be vital for reconciliation and respect in post-apartheid South Africa (Mpisi, & Alexander, 2022).

Inclusive pedagogy, which incorporates teaching methods that honor students' cultural backgrounds, aligns well with transformative education goals. Florian and Beaton (2018) propose that inclusive pedagogy moves away from a deficit model, in which differences are seen as challenges, to one that values diversity as a strength. In South Africa, such an approach aims to counter the legacy of exclusion by embracing each student's cultural and linguistic uniqueness. Culturally responsive teaching, which includes materials and methods that reflect the diversity of students' lives, plays a key role in inclusive pedagogy (Caingcoy, 2023). By integrating South African authors and varied historical narratives, an inclusive curriculum can reinforce cultural identity and expand students' understanding of different histories (Vavrus, 2023).

Yet, implementing inclusive pedagogy in South African classrooms faces certain obstacles. Teachers often navigate limitations, including scarce resources, large class sizes, and limited training in inclusive practices (Mpu & Adu, 2021). These challenges may restrict teachers' ability to provide culturally responsive education. Furthermore, some teachers may have limited understanding of their students' diverse cultural backgrounds, which could lead to biases or misrepresentation in teaching materials. Linguistic diversity also presents challenges; with 11 official languages in South Africa, and many students speaking home languages different from the language of instruction, teachers often work with limited resources to bridge these linguistic gaps. Bilingual resources or collaborative learning strategies, where students can engage with content in their preferred languages, could help address these barriers (Florian & Beaton, 2018).

Professional development for teachers could also play an important role in addressing these challenges. Training in culturally responsive pedagogy can help teachers incorporate

students' cultural identities into teaching practices (Jama & Lunga, 2024). Training programs might focus on integrating cultural backgrounds into lesson plans, understanding classroom dynamics, and strategies to address prejudice. Additionally, fostering collaborative classroom environments where students share cultural experiences may build mutual respect. Group work and peer learning are frequently suggested as ways to promote intercultural understanding, as students can learn to appreciate diverse perspectives (Sarangapani, 2021). By including group discussions and collaborative projects, teachers might create inclusive spaces where students feel encouraged to share and learn from one another's cultural backgrounds. Differentiated instruction could further support varied cultural and learning needs. This approach tailors teaching methods to accommodate different student needs, employing visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities that respect cultural and learning preferences. Differentiated instruction has shown promise in helping students from various backgrounds experience academic success and feel represented in the classroom (Mpisi, & Alexander, 2022).

Incorporating culturally relevant examples and linguistic inclusivity into classroom practices could also foster cultural integration in South African classrooms. For instance, presenting multiple perspectives on historical events could support a more comprehensive view that includes indigenous cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Additionally, using stories, proverbs, and examples from diverse South African cultures can make learning more inclusive. Linguistic inclusivity, which involves encouraging students to use their home languages, could support language development and affirm cultural identity (Heugh, 2013). Simple practices, like labeling objects in multiple languages or allowing students to use preferred languages for some assignments, could enhance linguistic inclusivity. Engaging families and communities in the learning process might strengthen the bond between school and home life, making students feel that their cultural identity is respected and valued. According to Naicker & Mestry, (2021), partnerships between schools and families often highlight a positive impact on students' academic performance and sense of belonging.

While the principles of transformative education are increasingly recognized in South Africa, implementing them in classrooms remains challenging. Teachers often encounter difficulties in balancing curriculum demands with cultural sensitivity, managing diverse classroom dynamics, and accessing resources that reflect various cultural perspectives. Addressing these challenges requires developing practical, context-specific strategies that support teachers in embracing inclusive practices. This study tends to explore the relevance of transformative education in South African classrooms and identifies inclusive pedagogical approaches that can respect and incorporate cultural diversity effectively.

Statement of the Problem

In South Africa, the educational system faces the ongoing challenge of creating inclusive and equitable learning environments that recognize and embrace the country's rich cultural diversity. Despite strides toward desegregation and equal access, remnants of apartheid-era inequities persist, often resulting in classrooms that struggle to fully integrate and respect the diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds of all students. These challenges are compounded by systemic issues such as limited teacher training in culturally responsive pedagogy, insufficient resources, and large class sizes, which can limit teachers' ability to implement inclusive teaching strategies effectively.

Transformative education, which emphasizes critical reflection, inclusivity, and intercultural understanding, presents a potential pathway to address these issues by fostering open-mindedness and respect for diversity within classrooms. However, in practice, teachers may encounter barriers, including inadequate professional development on inclusive pedagogies, limited curriculum representation of diverse cultural perspectives, and difficulties in managing linguistic diversity. Without effective integration of transformative education principles, South African classrooms may continue to face disparities in student engagement, participation, and sense of belonging.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the challenges and opportunities of implementing transformative and inclusive education practices in South African classrooms. Specifically, it aims to identify effective strategies for fostering an inclusive learning environment that respects and integrates cultural diversity, examines the systemic and pedagogical barriers teachers face, and explores the potential impact of culturally responsive teaching on student engagement and academic success in diverse educational settings.

Research Objectives

1. To examine current practices in South African classrooms that integrates and respect cultural diversity.

2. Determine the extent of integrating cultural diversity into teaching practices.

3. Establish how often culturally diverse (e.g., diverse historical events, stories, or authors) is used in lessons.

4. To identify challenges teachers, face when implementing transformative education and inclusive pedagogy in multicultural classrooms.

5. To assess the effectiveness of transformative education practices, including culturally responsive teaching, in promoting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging.

6. To explore strategies and professional development programs that support teachers in adopting inclusive, culturally responsive teaching methods.

7. To evaluate the impact of inclusive pedagogy on students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking skills, and academic performance in multicultural classroom settings.

Research Questions

1. What practices are currently in place in South African classrooms to integrate and respect cultural diversity?

2. What is the extent of integrating cultural diversity into teaching practices?

3. How often was culturally diverse (e.g., diverse historical events, stories, or authors) used in lessons?

4. What challenges do teachers face when implementing transformative education and inclusive pedagogy in multicultural classrooms?

5. How effective are transformative education practices, such as culturally responsive teaching, in promoting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging?

6. What strategies and professional development programs could support teachers in adopting inclusive, culturally responsive teaching methods?

7. How does the use of inclusive pedagogy influence students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking skills, and academic performance in multicultural classroom settings?

Methodology

The research design for this study is descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for the study consisted of teachers teaching in secondary schools in Eastern Cape, South Africa. The sample of the study consisted of 300 teachers teaching in secondary schools. The samples were selected through the use of multistage sampling procedures. At the first stage, 10 schools were selected using simple random sampling techniques. The second stage involved the selection of 30 teachers from each of the selected schools using simple random sampling technique to make it a total of 300 teachers. An instrument tagged; Questionnaire on Transformative Education and Cultural Diversity in South African Classrooms (QTECDSAC) was used to collect primary data for this study. It illicit information on current practices in integrating cultural diversity, challenges in implementing transformative education and inclusive pedagogy, effectiveness of transformative education practices, strategies and professional development for teachers, and impact of inclusive pedagogy on student outcomes. The instrument was validated, and the reliability was determined through the use of Cronbach Alpha yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.83 making the instrument reliable to be used for the collection of data for the study. The instrument was administered via face to face with the teachers in each of the selected schools. The data generated was analysed through the use of descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean, standard deviation and percentages.

Results

Research Question 1: What practices are currently in place in South African classrooms to integrate and respect cultural diversity?

Table 1: Mean ranking of responses on the practices currently use to respect and integrate cultural diversity in the classroom

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Ranking
Incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into lesson content	45 (15%)	85 (28.3%)	100 (33.3%)	70 (23.3%)	2.85	0.95	2nd
Using culturally relevant teaching materials (e.g., books, media)	60 (20%)	95 (31.7%)	90 (30%)	55 (18.3%)	3.05	0.9	1st
Encouraging students to share their cultural traditions	50 (16.7%)	80 (26.7%)	95 (31.7%)	75 (25%)	2.85	0.98	2nd
Celebrating cultural events and holidays	30 (10%)	70 (23.3%)	110 (36.7%)	90 (30%)	2.6	1.02	5th
Collaborative projects with a focus on diverse cultures	40 (13.3%)	90 (30%)	95 (31.7%)	75 (25%)	2.75	1	4th

Table 1 reveals the most prevalent practice for respecting and integrating cultural diversity in South African classrooms is using culturally relevant teaching materials (Mean = 3.05), ranked 1st, indicating its frequent adoption. Incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into lesson content and encouraging students to share their cultural traditions follow closely, both with a mean score of 2.85, tied at 2nd. Collaborative projects focused on diverse cultures rank 4th (Mean = 2.75), while celebrating cultural events and holidays ranks last (Mean = 2.6), suggesting that formal cultural celebrations are the least integrated practice. Hence, the most prevalent practice is the use of culturally relevant teaching materials (e.g., books, media)

Research Question 2: What is the extent of integrating cultural diversity into teaching practices?

Table 2: Frequency and percentages Extent of Integration of cultural diversity into teaching practices

Response	Frequency (n=300)	Percentages (%)	Cumulative Percentages (%)
Not at all	90	30%	30%
To a small extent	100	33.30%	63.30%
To a moderate extent	70	23.30%	86.60%
To a large extent	30	10%	96.60%
Fully integrated	10	3.40%	100%

Table 2 reveals that 100 (33.3%) respondents feel that cultural diversity is integrated to a small extent into teaching practices, making this the most common response. Not at all is reported by 90 (30%) respondents, indicating a significant proportion of teachers are not incorporating cultural diversity into their teaching. To a moderate extent is reported by 70 (23.3%) respondents, showing a moderate level of integration. To a large extent is mentioned by 30 (10%) respondents, reflecting a smaller group who see a higher degree of integration. Only 10 (3.4%) respondents believe that cultural diversity is fully integrated into teaching practices, indicating that complete integration is relatively rare. This implies that while there are efforts to integrate cultural diversity, there is still considerable variation in the extent to which it is achieved in South African classrooms.

Research Question 3: How often was culturally diverse (e.g., diverse historical events, stories, or authors) used in lessons?

Table 3: Frequency of use of culturally diverse (e.g., diverse historical events, stories, or authors) in lessons

Item	Frequency (n=300)	Percentages (%)	Cumulative Percentages (%)
Never	90	30%	30%
Occasionally	120	40%	70%
Frequently	60	20%	90%
Always	30	10%	100%

Table 3 reveals that 120 (40%) respondents occasionally use culturally diverse materials in their lessons, making it the most common practice. Never using such materials is reported by 90 (30%) respondents, indicating a significant portion of teachers do not incorporate them at all. Frequently is reported by 60 (20%) respondents, showing that a smaller group of teachers make regular use of culturally diverse content. Only 30 (10%) respondents always use culturally diverse materials in their lessons, reflecting that consistent use is relatively uncommon. These findings shows that while cultural diversity is incorporated to some extent, there is variability in its frequency of use in lessons across classrooms.

Research Question 4: What challenges do teachers face when implementing transformative education and inclusive pedagogy in multicultural classrooms?

Table 4: Challenges face by teachers when implementing transformative education and inclusive pedagogy in multicultural classrooms

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Ranking
Lack of training in culturally responsive pedagogy	150 (50%)	90 (30%)	45 (15%)	15 (5%)	3.25	0.85	1st
Insufficient teaching resources (e.g., books, tech)	135 (45%)	105 (35%)	45 (15%)	15 (5%)	3.20	0.82	2nd
Large class sizes	120 (40%)	90 (30%)	60 (20%)	30 (10%)	3.00	0.9	3rd
Lack of support from school administration	105 (35%)	120 (40%)	60 (20%)	15 (5%)	3.05	0.78	4th
Resistance from students or parents	90 (30%)	105 (35%)	75 (25%)	30 (10%)	2.85	0.88	5th
Language barriers (students' home languages differ)	75 (25%)	105 (35%)	90 (30%)	30 (10%)	2.75	0.92	6th

Table 4 identifies key challenges faced by teachers in implementing transformative education and inclusive pedagogy in multicultural classrooms. The lack of training in culturally responsive pedagogy ranks highest (Mean = 3.25), indicating that inadequate preparation for cultural responsiveness is the primary obstacle. This is followed closely by insufficient teaching resources, such as books and technology (Mean = 3.2), and large class sizes (Mean = 3), which complicate individualized attention. Lack of support from school administration also poses a notable challenge (Mean = 3.05). Lower-ranked issues include resistance from students or parents (Mean = 2.85) and language barriers (Mean = 2.75), highlighting that language diversity and community support can also affect the successful implementation of inclusive practices.

Research Question 5: How effective are transformative education practices, such as culturally responsive teaching, in promoting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging?

Table 5: Effectiveness of transformative education practices, such as culturally responsive teaching, in promoting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging

Engagement	Frequency (n=300)	Percentages (%)	Cumulative Percentages (%)
Not effective	50	16.70%	16.70%
Slightly effective	80	26.70%	43.40%
Moderately effective	90	30%	73.40%
Very effective	50	16.70%	90.10%
Extremely effective	30	10%	100%
Motivation	**Frequency (n=300)**	**Percentages (%)**	**Cumulative Percentages (%)**
Not at all	40	13.30%	13.30%
To a small extent	70	23.30%	36.60%
To a moderate extent	110	36.70%	73.30%
To a large extent	50	16.70%	90%
Very much so	30	10%	100%
Sense of Belonging	**Frequency (n=300)**	**Percentages (%)**	**Cumulative Percentages (%)**
Not at all	50	16.70%	16.70%
To a small extent	80	26.70%	43.40%
To a moderate extent	100	33.30%	76.70%
To a large extent	40	13.30%	90%
Very much so	30	10%	100%

Table 5 shows the effectiveness of transformative education practices, such as culturally responsive teaching, in promoting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging. For engagement, 90 (30%) respondents found these practices moderately effective, while 80 (26.7%) saw them as slightly effective, and 50 (16.7%) considered them very effective. In terms of motivation, 110 (36.7%) reported a moderate impact, with 70 (23.3%) perceiving a small extent of effectiveness. Regarding a sense of belonging, 100 (33.3%) found these practices moderately effective, and 80 (26.7%) felt they were effective to a small extent. Hence, while there are varying levels of perceived effectiveness, the findings suggest that transformative education practices contribute positively to student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging.

Research Question 6: What strategies and professional development programs could support teachers in adopting inclusive, culturally responsive teaching methods?

Table 6: Strategies and professional development programs that support teachers in adopting inclusive, culturally responsive teaching methods

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Ranking
Workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy	130 (43%)	100 (33%)	50 (17%)	20 (7%)	3.12	0.82	1st
Training on managing multilingual classrooms	120 (40%)	110 (37%)	55 (18%)	15 (5%)	3.12	0.78	2nd
Peer learning and sharing of best practices	110 (37%)	100 (33%)	60 (20%)	30 (10%)	2.97	0.89	3rd
Online courses on diversity and inclusion	100 (33%)	90 (30%)	70 (23%)	40 (14%)	2.82	0.91	4th
Classroom observations and mentoring	95 (32%)	85 (28%)	80 (27%)	40 (13%)	2.79	0.00	5th

Table 6 highlights key strategies and professional development programs that can support teachers in adopting inclusive, culturally responsive teaching methods. The top-ranked strategy is workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy (Mean = 3.12), indicating that hands-on, focused workshops are seen as highly beneficial. Close behind are training on managing multilingual classrooms (Mean = 3.12), which addresses the diverse linguistic needs in multicultural classrooms. Peer learning and sharing of best practices ranks third (Mean = 2.97), emphasizing the importance of collaborative learning among teachers. Other strategies include online courses on diversity and inclusion (Mean = 2.82) and classroom observations and mentoring (Mean = 2.79), which suggest that flexible, ongoing learning opportunities and mentoring are valuable but slightly less prioritized. These findings suggest that teachers would benefit from both structured workshops and continuous peer-driven and online support.

Research Question 7: How does the use of inclusive pedagogy influence students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking skills, and academic performance in multicultural classroom settings?

Table 7: How the use of inclusive pedagogy influence students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking skills, and academic performance in multicultural classroom settings

Improve students' intercultural understanding	Frequency (n=300)	Percentages (%)	Cumulative Percentages (%)
Not at all	50	16.70%	16.70%
To a small extent	80	26.70%	43.40%
To a moderate extent	90	30%	73.40%
To a large extent	60	20.00%	93.40%
Very much so	20	7%	100%

Improve students' critical thinking skills	Frequency (n=300)	Percentages (%)	Cumulative Percentages (%)
Not at all	40	13.30%	13.30%
To a small extent	60	20.00%	33.30%
To a moderate extent	100	33.30%	66.60%
To a large extent	80	26.70%	93%
Very much so	20	7%	100%
Students perform better academically	Frequency (n=300)	Percentages (%)	Cumulative Percentages (%)
Not at all	30	10.00%	10.00%
To a small extent	50	16.70%	26.70%
To a moderate extent	100	33.30%	60.00%
To a large extent	90	30.00%	90%
Very much so	30	10%	100%

Table 7 reveals that for intercultural understanding, 90 (30%) respondents reported moderate improvement, while 60 (20%) saw a large extent of improvement. In terms of critical thinking, 100 (33.3%) respondents noted moderate improvement, and 80 (26.7%) observed a large extent of improvement. Regarding academic performance, 100 (33.3%) respondents felt it moderately improved, and 90 (30%) saw it improve to a large extent. These results indicate that inclusive pedagogy has a positive influence, with moderate to large improvements on students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking skills, and academic performance in multicultural classroom settings.

Findings

1. The most prevalent practice for integrating and respecting cultural diversity in South African classrooms is the use of culturally relevant teaching materials.

2. There is considerable variation in the extent to which cultural diversity is integrated into teaching practices, with a significant portion of teachers reporting only small or moderate integration.

3. Culturally diverse materials, such as historical events or stories, are used occasionally by most teachers, with relatively few using them consistently.

4. Key challenges faced by teachers in implementing transformative education include lack of training in culturally responsive pedagogy and insufficient teaching resources.

5. Transformative education practices are perceived as moderately effective in promoting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging.

6. Teachers see workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy and training on managing multilingual classrooms as the most beneficial strategies for adopting inclusive teaching methods.

7. The use of inclusive pedagogy positively influences students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking skills, and academic performance.

Discussion

The study's finding that the most prevalent practice for integrating and respecting cultural diversity in South African classrooms is the use of culturally relevant teaching materials aligns with the finding of Flores (2018) which reveals that culturally relevant materials help bridge the gap between students' diverse cultural backgrounds and the learning process, fostering inclusivity. Similarly, Change Kids Lives (2019) emphasizes that incorporating cultural elements into teaching resources enhances engagement and learning outcomes by making education more relatable to students' lived experiences. This approach not only supports cultural diversity but also promotes mutual respect among students, reflecting the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in fostering inclusive educational environments.

The study's finding that there is considerable variation in the extent to which cultural diversity is integrated into teaching practices, with many teachers reporting only small or moderate integration, reflects a broader trend identified in the literature. For instance, Dewia and Alam (2020) note that while some educators embrace culturally responsive teaching, others struggle to effectively integrate cultural diversity due to a lack of training or resources. Similarly, Ladson-Billings, (2014) highlights that teachers' ability to incorporate cultural diversity often depends on their awareness and comfort with diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as the educational context in which they work. This disparity in implementation showed the need for targeted professional development and resources to support teachers in adopting more inclusive practices.

The finding of the study shows that culturally diverse materials, such as historical events or stories, are used occasionally by most teachers, with relatively few using them consistently. This finding is consistent with the finding of Lim, Tan, & Saito, (2019) which found that culturally relevant content like historical events and stories can enhance students' connection to the curriculum, many teachers use these resources sporadically due to constraints such as time, curriculum demands, or limited access to diverse materials. Change Kids Lives (2019) further emphasize that consistent integration of culturally diverse materials requires deliberate planning and support, which are often lacking in traditional educational settings. This inconsistency highlights the need for institutional support to encourage the continuous use of culturally relevant materials in classrooms.

The study's finding that key challenges in implementing transformative education include a lack of training in culturally responsive pedagogy and insufficient teaching resources is well-supported by existing literature. Zion (2020) argues that many educators are unprepared to adopt culturally responsive teaching methods due to limited training, which can hinder their ability to engage students from diverse backgrounds effectively. Similarly, Souto-Manning (2019) emphasizes that insufficient resources further constrain teachers, making it difficult to incorporate culturally relevant materials consistently. This lack of training and resources not only limits teachers' instructional effectiveness but also impedes the creation of an inclusive, transformative educational environment that respects cultural diversity.

Transformative education practices are perceived as moderately effective in promoting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging. This aligns with the finding of Mezirow (2000), transformative education fosters critical thinking and self-reflection, which can enhance student engagement by connecting learning to students' personal experiences. Additionally, Darling-Hammond et al. (2019) found that when students see their identities reflected in the curriculum, their motivation and sense of belonging increase, leading to improved educational outcomes. However, the moderate effectiveness observed may stem from inconsistent implementation and the need for further teacher training, as educators may not always have the skills to fully realize transformative education's potential in diverse classrooms.

From the finding of the study, it was revealed that teachers see workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy and training on managing multilingual classrooms as the most beneficial strategies for adopting inclusive teaching methods. This finding corroborated the finding of Chang, & Viesca, (2022) which reveals that professional development, particularly workshops focused on culturally responsive teaching, equips teachers with practical skills to address students' diverse cultural backgrounds effectively. Similarly, García and Wei (2014) emphasize the importance of multilingual training, which helps educators manage linguistically diverse classrooms and fosters an inclusive environment for multilingual students. Together, these training opportunities empower teachers to adopt inclusive practices that enhance students' educational experiences across cultural and linguistic lines.

The finding of the study reveals that the use of inclusive pedagogy positively influences students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking skills, and academic performance. The finding corroborated the finding of Banks and Banks (2019), inclusive pedagogy fosters intercultural understanding by exposing students to diverse perspectives, which broadens their worldview and enhances empathy. Furthermore, Gay (2018) argues that inclusive teaching strategies encourage critical thinking, as students are prompted to analyze and question cultural norms within and beyond their communities. Additionally, research by Dee and Penner (2017) shows that students in inclusive classrooms often demonstrate improved academic performance, as such environments promote engagement and relevance in learning. Together, these benefits highlight the essential role of inclusive pedagogy in cultivating a well-rounded, effective learning experience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The adaptation of transformative education to respect and incorporate cultural diversity in South African classrooms through inclusive pedagogy is essential for fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment. While culturally relevant teaching materials are the most widely used practice, the overall integration of cultural diversity into teaching varies significantly, with many educators only moderately incorporating diverse content. Challenges such as inadequate training in culturally responsive pedagogy and limited resources hinder the full potential of transformative education. However, when effectively implemented, inclusive pedagogy positively influences students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and academic performance. The findings highlight the need for ongoing professional development, targeted training programs, and greater institutional support to ensure that educators are equipped to implement inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices.

To enhance the integration of cultural diversity in South African classrooms through transformative education, it is recommended that teacher training on culturally responsive pedagogy be expanded, along with providing adequate resources that reflect students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Schools should also focus on multilingual classroom management and encourage peer learning among educators. Institutional support is essential for fostering an inclusive environment, and student-centered approaches should be prioritized to enhance engagement and motivation. Additionally, regular monitoring and evaluation of transformative practices will help ensure their effectiveness in promoting intercultural understanding and academic success.

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