

## CULTURAL RELEVANCE IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF CONTEMPORARY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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### **Abstract**

*In the context of secondary education, globalization has impacted curriculum policies, methodologies, and student learning outcomes. The research study aims to explore the impact of globalization on curriculum development in secondary schools in Pakistan, especially in the context of cultural appropriateness. The research study employed a qualitative descriptive research design and analyzed around two dozen national and international research studies from around the world, conducted between 1995 and 2024.*

*The research study found that the curriculum in secondary schools in Pakistan is increasingly incorporating Western methodologies and the English medium in line with global standards to make students globally competitive. However, in the process, students are becoming less familiar with local culture, regional languages, and values. The research study also found that there is a lack of culturally relevant methodologies in secondary schools in Pakistan, as suggested by Gloria Ladson-Billings in her study in 1995, because teachers are not being trained accordingly.*

*So, the research study found that a balanced curriculum is needed in secondary schools in Pakistan that can make students globally competitive without compromising their local culture and values.*

### **Keywords:**

*Globalization, Curriculum Development, Cultural Relevance, Secondary Education, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Global Competencies, Local Cultural Identity, Pakistani Education System*

### **Introduction**

In the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century, globalization is one of the most powerful phenomena which influence in all aspects of life. Through globalization, the countries and nations are interconnected with each other in every field, such as socially, economically, politically, and job market as well as in education (Powell,2004). Globalization is a powerful force which effect every field of human life, including education. Because of globalization, people are more initiative as compared to before, as it develops a strong communication across the world, which also develop high order thinking skills (Graham 1996).

So, globalization is a new reality in today's world. As scholars discussed, globalization is influencing every field of life. In this manner, globalization is also greatly influencing the process of the education system. As countries are interconnected, in this way, the global idea, technology, and communication have an influence on the school system and curriculum (Kinelev,2000). It

brought changes in the teaching and learning process with new knowledge and skills for students (Graham, 1996).

According to Azad (2003), globalization change whole education system. Due to global pressure, curriculum developers ignore local cultural values, needs, and identity, and they just prepare the students for global jobs.

Because of this reason, there is a need to maintain a balance between borrowing from global education practice and being culturally relevant. This issue becomes more critical at the secondary school level, as this is the stage when the formation of identity, critical thinking, and shaping their view about society.

The present study explores how the modern secondary school curriculum manages global influences while maintaining local cultural identity. It considered whether curriculum design, textbook and classroom practices still represent of students own cultures and values.

This study aims to explore how globalization shapes curriculum development and how it effects culture relevance. The findings of this study will be beneficial for educators, administrators, policymakers, and curriculum developers to develop an effective curriculum at secondary that prepares the students for the global world as well as protects and values their cultural identity.

### **Problem statement**

Globalization is changing the educational system in Pakistan, as in the rest of the world. International standards, English-medium teaching, and global methods now shape secondary school curricula. While this gives students global competencies, it decreases the focus on the local culture, history, and values, making the education less relevant to the students' culture. Although policies and curriculum reforms have been there, little research has been done on how the balancing between global demands and local cultural relevance occurs in Pakistani secondary school curricula. In the same way, although theories like culture-relevant pedagogy (CRP) stress academic success, cultural understanding, and social awareness, the degree to which those ideas actually get applied in practice remains unclear. This study will investigate how globalization shapes the development of secondary school curricula and how such curricula position themselves to support both global competencies and local cultural identity. Results will help teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers to develop education that is not only globally competitive but also culturally meaningful.

### **Objectives**

1. To explore the influence of globalization on curriculum development at the secondary school level.
2. To examine how well the secondary school curriculum expresses local cultural values, traditions, and heritage.
3. To explore the challenges and solutions for developing school curricula that maintain a balance between global learning and local cultural values.

### **Research Question**

1. How does globalization influence overall curriculum development at the secondary school level?
2. How much secondary school curricula demonstration students' local culture, values, and heritage?
3. What are the challenges and strategies for designing and implementing culturally inclusive curricula that maintain both global and local relevance?

### **Literature review**

Literature review: Education is instrumental in developing reasoning, social life, and cultural growth of the countries. In the 21st century, rapid globalization has transformed education systems around the globe. It shapes curriculum, influence teaching methodology, and even the opinion of students about their own culture. On one hand, Globalization, with the help of digital technology and international connections, provides an opportunity for students to understand and learn about multiple cultures, but on the other hand, it warrants consideration as local culture may become weaker and western teaching method may lead. (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). Globalized curricula often lead to conflicts with local and national content, despite preparing pupils for a connected and competitive world. Pakistani secondary school curricula are increasingly incorporating English medium instruction and Western educational methods, sometimes at the expense of indigenous history, art, and cultural values. Globalized curricula often lead to conflicts with local and national content, despite preparing pupils for a connected and competitive world. Pakistani secondary school curricula are increasingly incorporating English-medium instruction and Western educational methods, sometimes at the expense of indigenous history, art, and cultural values. (Kanu, 2005; Novelli & Cardozo, 2008). Pakistani Educational Culture and Cultural Relevance. The education system in Pakistan has always been built on Islamic rules, social mores, and indigenous traditions. (Halstead, 2004). School curricula have long been impacted by regional customs, the arts, morals, and values. After World War II, Western educational ideas started to appear in schools throughout many countries, including Pakistan (Kanu, 2005). As a result, regional and global educational ideas were integrated. Cultural relevance is necessary in school to preserve students' identities, values, and social awareness. At the secondary school level, the curriculum has an essential role in molding the students' personalities, cultural awareness, and sense of community. (Livesey, 2004). According to some researchers, if curricula stressed global knowledge while ignoring local culture, it may increase the risk of cultural marginalization. (Saeed et al., 2020). Some researchers argue that this blend could promote learning, but it also risks undermining cultural identification, and it detaches pupils from regional socioeconomic problems. (Fabian, 2007).

### **Culture-relevant pedagogy**

Culture-relevant pedagogy, which enhances students' academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness among students. But due to globalized the culture are mismatched with countries and nations (Lesson Billing, 1995). So, the early research emphasized that teachers must practice methods that match students' home and community culture, such as the concept of culturally relevant, culturally compatible, and culturally suitable. Which is essential for specific culture values, beliefs, and practices (Jardon et all, 1981). Ladson Billings (1995), stressed that early approach based on culture have limited because the challenging the structurally inequalities that shape the educational experience of minority students, they merely helped fit them into the inequitable structure already in place. So, the researcher highlights that culture-relevant pedagogy must be beneficial for both academic achievements and maintaining students' own cultural identity. However, the researcher also asserts that students' cultural knowledge and communities' experiences in language style, leadership platform, and artistic expression must be combined into the curriculum and instruction for effective cultural competence. So, overall, the Ladson Billings work has played an integral role in establishing a strong theoretical framework through which culturally relevant curriculum can support identity formation, critical thinking, and social

awareness at the secondary school level necessary components students navigate today in a challenging global context.

### **Cultural Relevance and Identity at the Secondary Level**

Global dominance can be seen in high-school classes, books, rules regarding language, and attitudes among learners. Researchers have discovered that globalization has an impact on teaching strategies, teamwork among educators, teacher effectiveness, and the general school environment. (Bush, 2008; Spring, 2008). Globalization offers opportunities for better instruction, but it also runs the risk of "academic imperialism," eroding national culture, and deviating from national educational objectives (Saeed et al., 2020). This has made it crucial to comprehend how curricula maintain cultural relevance. Students develop their sense of self, identity, moral reasoning, and cultural awareness during secondary school. Digital media, English-medium education, global lifestyles, and shifting social norms are some of the ways that globalization impacts this. Research (Spring, 2008; Livesey, 2004) demonstrates that cultural exposure shapes students' personalities and social behaviors. Students may experience identity confusion, a lack of connection to community values, and a diminished sense of belonging if the curriculum does not represent their own culture. Thus, studies have demonstrated both positive and negative global effects. Positive effects include increased access to technology, exposure to global knowledge, enhanced communication abilities, chances for further education, and improved teaching techniques (Adedimeji, 2021). Negative factors include academic imperialism, brain drain, weakening national ideology, reliance on Western teaching models, and commercialization of education (Saeed et al., 2020). While globalization has also increased the access of knowledge and introduce of modern models of teaching, it has also reduced the culture identity, value and uncritical follow of western models and the erosion of tradition value the students. So, in this respect secondary education provides an importance for needed adjustment with in the school curricula to guarantee that students culturally relevant yet preference for global challenges (Baker,2014; Fulu,2013).

### **Global pressure**

Today education faces pressure because of global issue, the mixture of culture, but research shown that these is expected to education to help prepare students to deal with global issue as climate changes, inequities and culture classes. According to researches, school and universities serve not only as an area where knowledge is passed on but also societal force that can shrink or expand various inequalities (foster,2002). many of complex global challenges.so the expert not that education should interlinked with the intersection of idea in various disciplines, such as culture, technology, environment and society. This would enable the learner to view problem from different dimension (Gibbon et all, 1994). So, these types of learning encourage students to engage with critical thinking, reflect on their action and encourage life long learning. According to higher education research that these ideas are more important in secondary school because teenager need curricula that enable them to make sense both their culture and world beyond, especially as globalization link cultures but also increase inoculating. So, the researcher such as "Browsers and Foster" emphasized that students learning is enhanced in way that make connection between their personal experience and global problems is made relevant the purpose of culturally relevant education which supports students in taking pride in their own culture as well developing a awareness of becoming responsible and global citizens. Therefore, borrows concept from sustainability education into secondary school curriculum can be allow students to develop both culture understanding and global responsibilities.

### **Designing Culturally Inclusive Curricula**

Strategies for incorporating local culture into curriculum while achieving global competency goals are the focus of recent empirical research. These tactics consist of: • Including local customs, art, and history in the curriculum • Adapting instructional materials to the cultural contexts of pupils • Educating educators in culturally sensitive teaching • Juggling national curriculum requirements with international standards Among the challenges are a lack of resources, teacher preparedness, and pressure to implement globalized teaching practices (Amorfati, 2022). In order to avoid globalization from undermining students' cultural identities, Pakistan must adopt culturally inclusive curricula (Adedimeji, 2021; Kamens & McNeely, 2010).

### **Empirical Evidence from Pakistani Secondary Schools**

Four major areas affected by globalization are highlighted by research conducted in Punjab public schools:

1. Teacher Effectiveness: Teaching quality is influenced by training and global knowledge.
2. Learning Enhancement: Certain academic skills are enhanced by exposure to multinational topics
3. Teachers work together to implement global pedagogical principles.
4. Transformational Teaching Approaches: Cutting-edge approaches follow international trends (Bush, 2008).

Although globalization offers chances to improve skills, research indicates that Pakistan is ill-equipped to handle curricular hybridization, which puts local cultural and religious values at risk of being marginalized (Novelli & Cardozo, 2008; Saeed et al., 2020).

### **Need for Culturally Responsive Curriculum in Pakistan**

Scholars emphasize the critical need for culturally sensitive curricula because of these difficulties. According to Gay (2010), this is a curriculum that incorporates students' experiences, cultural backgrounds, and values. A culturally relevant curriculum in Pakistani secondary schools should balance local and global knowledge, reflect Islamic values, respect local languages and customs, address actual social issues, and include national history. Therefore, a curriculum that is culturally relevant helps students develop global skills while maintaining their identity.

A curriculum is very important for every country represent whole education system values, culture. so, the educators, students, administrator, should be proud and support the curriculum of their own country (water,2007). Water emphasize that curriculum developer must decide what culture value to preserve. The curriculum developer must know before deigning the curriculum. What we went for future.so, the curriculum developer must have clear view about:

what aspect of curricula should be retained?

What global skill should be added?

How curriculum can remain relevant to the local culture as well as prepare students for global world. This study highlight that there is need to take balance between global competence with culture in the secondary school curriculum. Water (2207), idea support the argument that in curriculum planning the national identity and culture values need to be persevered while responding the demand of gallization.

Scholars argus that due to globalization such as students have many skills such as thinking, technology, communication creativity, flexibility and culture understanding. So, the curriculum must contain practical activity and real-world application to ensure readiness for 21st century challenges ((Aasa, 2008; James, 2004; Pam, 2009; Sang, 2007).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a descriptive exploratory approach to exploring the effect of globalization on cultural relevance within secondary school curriculum development.

### **Population**

The data were collected from many articles, including national and international articles. The publication from 1995 to 2024. The articles specifically addressed globalization and its effect on education and curriculum development.

### **Sampling techniques**

This study aims to identify the effect of globalization on culture-relevant curriculum, for this purpose, non-probability sampling techniques will be employed. Purpose sampling techniques will be used to select articles that address the effect of globalization on curriculum, culture relevance, and culture relevance pedagogy, Pakistani secondary school curriculum reform. Approximately 20 published studies were studied to confirm saturation.

### **Data collection**

Data were collected for this study from multiple articles. Peer -reviewed Pakistani research articles from (2010 – 2024). International journey about globalization, curriculum, and cultural relevance. Global curriculum studies and academic chapter culture relevant pedagogy. Only credible academic sources that were relevant to globalization, cultural relevance, and the development of a curriculum were considered.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed through the thematic analysis method, reading multiple articles and highlighting key concepts that related to globalization, culture, and curriculum.

### **Discussion and Finding**

The thematic findings were generated from the analysis of Pakistani and international articles. The discussion is related to the research question to explore the overall effect of globalization on the education system, especially culture relevance curriculum.

#### **The effect of globalization on curriculum development**

The analysis shown that globalization has greatly influence on curriculum at secondary level. Most studies have highlight that increasing and borrow Western pedagogical models, English-medium instruction, international assessments, and technology-driven learning (Kamens & McNeely, 2010; Bush, 2008). So, the Pakistan curricula under pressure the only prepare the students for international job market. In this way they give less importance to their own local culture value, tradition, custom.

#### **Representation of Local Culture in Secondary Curriculum**

The finding revel that the local culture curricula content still not fully represent, in some area especially in the English medium schools. Because the private school mostly follow the western concept. However, some textbooks incorporate cultural themes, they are usually superficial, outdated, or regionally non-diverse. This leads researchers to caution that a lack of representation can make students lose their connection with the community and their heritage.

#### **Teachers' Role and CRP Implementation**

The analyzed articles reveled that the teacher face difficulties to implements culture relevant pedagogy because of lack training, global pressure to follow western teaching methods and lack

of time to complete the syllabus. This would also include limited use of students' cultural experiences in classroom instruction. As Ladson-Billings (1995) proposed that culturally relevant teaching promotes identity, critical thinking, and cultural competence. However, many studies demonstrate that secondary teachers rarely use examples from a local context, local languages, and learning based on communities in Pakistan.

### **Challenges to Developing a Culturally Inclusive Curriculum**

The major challenges that have been identified are

English language domination globally

Pressure for International Employability

Lack of government investment in culturally rich teaching material

Foreign models used by teachers

Curriculum changes that are still theory-driven with inefficient implementation

Such are the challenges that contribute to a systemic disagreement between what is globally accepted and what is locally significant culturally.

### **Recommendation**

Based on finding the following recommendation are proposed, for improving culture relevance in secondary schools' education in Pakistan.

Curriculum development should clearly spell out its framework with a stated incorporation of cultural relevance within the curriculum policies; integration of knowledge, regional histories, and local cultures across curriculum subjects must ensure equity with global competencies/cultural identity.

Teacher training should introduce mandatory professional development on culturally relevant pedagogy to ensure that teachers can effectively use local examples, community stories, and mother tongues to make learning more meaningful and contextually anchored.

Furthermore, there is a dire need for reforming textbooks so that the learning materials portray culturally authentic content and stand for diversity while picturing all the provinces, languages, and ethnicities of Pakistan. At the policy level, national curriculum standards are needed to ensure that cultural preservation is protected, while collaboration among developers, researchers, educators, and local communities is encouraged for context-sensitive curriculum designs. Future Research: Classroom-based research would better elaborate on some of the cultural dynamics in teaching practices and students' perspectives regarding globalization and cultural identity,

### **Conclusion**

This study is concluded that that globalization has create a challenge for Pakistani curriculum but it also provides an opportunity. It provides updated knowledge about world as well as essential for student's future success. But it is true that cultural relevance has been extensively recognized in contemporary times regarding identity, unity, as well as development. It is evident from the analysis that there is a bias in the current curriculum towards a more globally influenced approach, which sometimes overlooks the importance of local culture. If a culturally responsive teaching approach is adopted, changes are made in textbooks, teacher training is improved, and a balanced policy is developed, Pakistan is capable of producing a globally competitive as well as a culturally significant curriculum.

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