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Impact of Regional Language and Cultural Learning on the Student Profile of High Schools in the Kurdish Region: Moderating Role of Government Support

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Abstract

The enhancement of student profiles has emerged as a primary requirement for educational institutions, as evidenced by recent studies that emphasise its importance in improving institutional performance. This study aims to investigate the impact of regional language and cultural acquisition on the student demographics of high schools located in the Kurdish region. This study also examines the moderating influence of government support on regional language, cultural learning, and student profiles in high schools within the Kurdish region. The survey questionnaires were employed by the researchers in order to gather data from the chosen students. The researchers employed the smart-PLS methodology to assess the reliability of the data and examine the relationships between variables. The findings of the study suggest that the acquisition of regional language and cultural knowledge has a beneficial influence on the student composition of high schools located in the Kurdish region. The findings of the study also indicate that government support plays a significant moderating role in relation to regional language, cultural learning, and student profiles in high schools located in the Kurdish region. This paper provides guidance to regulators in the development of regulations pertaining to the enhancement of student profiles through the utilisation of effective regional language and cultural learning strategies.

Keywords: Regional Language, Cultural Learning, Student Profile, High Schools, Government Support, Kurdish Region

Introduction

The field of education encompasses a multitude of dimensions that extend beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, encompassing considerations of identity, culture, and societal integration. The manifestation of this phenomenon is particularly evident in regions characterised by linguistic and cultural diversity, wherein the role of education serves as a conduit for both the preservation of traditional values and the pursuit of progress. The Kurdish region exemplifies the intricate interplay of various factors, situated amidst a diverse array of languages, dialects, and vibrant cultural customs (Kreyenbroek & Sperl, 2005). The previously mentioned context establishes the foundation for the examination of the notable effects of regional language and cultural acquisition in the high school setting of the Kurdish region. This study investigates the impact of a curriculum enriched with local background on students' academic achievement, cultural sensitivity, and social integration, with a focus on how it transforms their profiles.

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Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that this investigation does not occur in isolation but rather within the framework of government aid, which has the potential to either enhance or impede the effectiveness of these educational initiatives. Therefore, a crucial aspect of this study revolves around comprehending the utilisation of government funding and policies in mitigating the repercussions associated with the acquisition of regional languages and cultures. This endeavour aims to not only facilitate the discourse surrounding inclusive and culturally diverse education but also provide valuable guidance to individuals engaged in the formulation of policies, pedagogy, and other facets of holistic student development within the Kurdish region. The Kurdish region, encompassing various nations in the Middle East, has historically been recognised for its linguistic and cultural diversity. The presence of this diversity functions as a representation of the region's multifaceted historical and cultural heritage.

The Kurdish language, characterised by its diverse array of languages, dialects, and cultural customs, exemplifies the rich linguistic diversity within a broader global context. The presence of diverse cultural backgrounds within the region serves as a manifestation of its cultural abundance, yet it also presents a distinctive amalgamation of challenges and prospects for the educational system (Hassanpour, Sheyholislami, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012). High schools must find a delicate equilibrium between preserving cultural history and preparing students for a globally interconnected society to offer a well-rounded education. Regional language and cultural learning facilitate a delicate balance by fostering students' appreciation of their heritage and equipping them with the necessary skills to engage in global societies (Ghareb, Ahmed, & Ameen, 2019). This study examines the significant role of regional language training in the high school curriculum. Leinonen (2022) emphasises the significance of language in preserving the diverse linguistic heritage of the Kurdish region.

Learning regional languages not only enhances students' linguistic competence but also fosters a profound sense of cultural identity and connection to their origins. The provided link fosters a sense of belonging and identity, enhancing confidence and self-esteem. These factors are crucial for academic achievement and social integration. The incorporation of cultural education into language learning enhances the transformative experience. Shanks (2019) states that students receive a comprehensive curriculum that encompasses various aspects of Kurdish identity, including customs, rituals, historical accounts, and language skills. This educational aspect transcends conventional methods and offers an immersive experience that enables students to actively participate in a dynamic and vibrant culture. They engage in the preservation and advancement of their cultural heritage through active involvement in dance, music, folklore, and historical narratives, rather than passively receiving information. The involvement of individuals evokes feelings of pride, gratitude, and an understanding that cultural identity is shaped by contributions from the past and present. Cultural education provides students with cultural competency that extends beyond the classroom, empowering them to become leaders in their own historical context (Jung & Lee, 2020).

The study emphasises the significance of government support in influencing the effectiveness and extent of regional language and cultural learning initiatives in high schools. Morawska-Jancelewicz (2022) asserts that governmental policies, budget allocations, and curriculum mandates exert substantial influence on the advancement of educational programmes. The presence or absence of supportive policies in high school environments can either facilitate or impede the integration of regional language and cultural education (Hassanpour et al., 2012). The purpose of this study is to assess the moderating impact of government support on the relationship between cultural and language education and student profiles, in order to determine the potential for policy frameworks to enhance positive outcomes.

This project seeks to explore various aspects related to the acquisition of regional languages and cultures. The main objective of the study is to analyse the effects on academic performance. This involves a comprehensive analysis of students' grades, standardised test scores, and other indicators of academic achievement, leading to a thorough understanding of the correlation between linguistic and cultural education and academic performance. The study seeks to examine students' cultural awareness and identity formation. The objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of regional language and cultural learning on individuals' sense of cultural heritage and belonging. This will be achieved through the use of surveys, interviews, and observations. The project aims to examine the impact on social integration and interpersonal skills by analysing student interactions both within and outside of the school setting.

The study also has notable limitations. The study suggests that government assistance leads to consistent improvements in effectiveness. However, it is important to further investigate potential biases or variations in resource distribution and policy implementation that could affect programme outcomes. The study's examination of student perspectives is limited. The study's scope primarily encompasses high school outcomes, but it could be broadened to incorporate broader socioeconomic factors, such as household income, parental educational attainment, and access to educational resources. The elements discussed can significantly influence the accessibility and effectiveness of regional language and cultural learning programmes. It would be advantageous to conduct a comprehensive examination of the impact of multilingual environments on the implementation and outcomes of regional language and cultural learning initiatives, given the linguistic heterogeneity observed in the Kurdish region. This study comprises five distinct sections: a literature review, methodology, data collection, discussion, and conclusion. Each of these sections will be elaborated upon in the following paragraphs.

Literature Review

The provision of regional language training has a significant and indisputable influence on the academic profile of students. Zeydanloğlu (2012) argues that the preservation of cultural history and the development of a profound connection to one's heritage are of utmost importance. According to Mendoza and Phung (2019), It has been observed that when students engage in interactions using their regional language, they embark on a transformative journey that extends beyond mere linguistic acquisition. The individuals explore the core of their shared identity, fostering a feeling of inclusion that extends well beyond the confines of the educational environment. The provided link offers an immersive experience that extends beyond passive vocabulary and grammar acquisition, as it actively engages students in a vibrant and dynamic cultural environment. Language provides access to a wide range of traditions, folklore, and historical narratives, forming the basis of their cultural heritage (Barrot, 2022). This approach promotes a feeling of pride and ownership, as well as the recognition that their cultural identity is an essential and ever-changing influence in the current context. Increased self-confidence in their cultural identity has a positive impact on various aspects of their educational trajectory. Self-esteem and agency are important factors for academic achievement (Kreyenbroek & Sperl, 2005). Students are more likely to approach their educational goals with purpose and commitment when they possess a strong sense of confidence in their cultural identity.

Cenoz and Gorter (2020) argue that regional language competence offers students a range of abilities and competencies that extend beyond linguistic proficiency. Flexible thinking and cross-cultural adaptability are essential skills in our increasingly interconnected global society. Students enhance their cultural sensitivity by engaging with regional languages, which

helps them gain a deeper understanding of different perspectives (Rizal & Nurjaya, 2020). Cultural competency enables individuals to effectively contribute in multicultural environments, promoting collaboration and understanding among colleagues from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Cirocki and Farrell (2019) argue that proficiency in regional languages enhances cognitive abilities such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and linguistic analysis. Cognitive enrichment has a positive impact on various academic disciplines, leading to enhanced academic performance across the board. Research suggests that individuals who are bilingual or multilingual exhibit enhanced cognitive flexibility, resulting in improved academic performance and favourable outcomes across various domains (Ali et al., 2021).

Additionally Pozo-Rico and Sandoval (2020), found that proficiency in a regional language serves as a valuable connection between formal education and community engagement. Fluency in a regional language enhances students' ability to engage actively in their local communities, encompassing cultural events, intergenerational discussions, and community service activities. Active participation not only enhances cultural identity but also promotes civic responsibility and social cohesion. It enables students to act as cultural ambassadors, promoting communication and fostering understanding among diverse community groups and generations. Regional language training is essential for the holistic development of children, fostering cultural sensitivity and academic excellence. Therefore, we make a hypothesis that,

H1: *Regional language has a positive impact on student profile.*

Budur, Demirer, and Rashid (2023) suggest that cultural learning can enrich a student's educational journey by providing a deeper understanding, diverse perspectives, and a heightened sense of identity. Beyond textbooks and classrooms, this educational experience embraces children, allowing them to engage with a vibrant and living heritage that forms the basis of their cultural identity. Students play a vital role in safeguarding and advancing their cultural heritage by engaging in activities such as dance, music, folklore, and the exploration of historical narratives (Wang, Degol, & Henry, 2019). This interaction promotes pride and appreciation and highlights the ongoing influence of past and present generations on cultural identity. Cultural learning fosters a sense of belonging and self-assurance, which are crucial elements of a comprehensive student profile. Students who possess knowledge of their cultural background tend to approach their educational endeavours with a sense of purpose, rootedness, and self-assurance in their abilities (Scherer et al., 2021).

Cultural learning equips students with essential cross-cultural skills that have practical applications beyond academic settings (Mohammed & Kinyó, 2022). It promotes open-mindedness and appreciation for diverse ideas, which are essential in our interconnected world. Abdelhadi et al. (2020) argue that students develop cultural sensitivity through exposure to diverse cultural practices and beliefs, enhancing their ability to navigate different contexts with respect and comprehension. Cultural competency is not only advantageous for individual development, but it also holds significant value in professional contexts where there is a growing recognition of the importance of cross-cultural interaction and collaboration. Based on empirical research, individuals who possess a high level of cultural competence tend to exhibit superior performance within cross-cultural team settings, as well as demonstrate enhanced adaptability and productivity across diverse work environments.

Bearman et al. (2021) argue that cultural learning fosters social cohesiveness and a sense of community. Students who participate in cultural activities and actively engage with their history are more likely to develop strong community bonds. They serve as cultural ambassadors by

promoting understanding among different community groups and bridging generational and cultural divides. Active student involvement in community-building projects fosters a sense of civic responsibility and inspires their active participation. Moreover, it fosters a heightened sense of empathy and global citizenship, instilling in children an awareness of their role within a broader, interconnected global community. As a result, we make a hypothesis that,

H2: *Cultural learning has a positive impact on student profile.*

Government support is essential for connecting student profiles with regional language training (Ali et al., 2021). The crucial factor that determines the impact of language and cultural education activities is whether they are amplified or diminished. Government assistance, in the form of policy frameworks, funding allocations, and curriculum guidelines, plays a crucial role in shaping the development and effectiveness of educational programmes. Governments demonstrate their dedication to preserving cultural heritage and fostering a sense of identity among students by allocating funds and enacting legislation that prioritise the teaching of regional languages. Kaghed and Dezaye (2009) suggest that schools can enhance their language and cultural curricula by securing sufficient funding. This would enable students to have a comprehensive educational experience that extends beyond conventional academic subjects. This financial assistance facilitates the purchase of textbooks, instructional materials, and region-specific language training technology. Additionally, it facilitates extracurricular cultural learning activities such as seminars, festivals, and community gatherings. Furthermore, the allocation of funds for professional development programmes allows teachers to enhance their proficiency in teaching regional languages, ensuring that students receive high-quality instruction (Qader, 2021).

Moreover, the implementation of supportive regulations could foster the recruitment and training of proficient educators who possess fluency in the languages spoken within the local community. According to Ramírez-Montoya et al. (2021), teachers play a crucial role in delivering effective language and cultural education. A comprehensive understanding of regional dialects and cultural disparities enables teachers to engage students more profoundly and efficiently. Educators can enhance their teaching of regional languages through proper training and knowledge. Government support can facilitate specialised training programmes, workshops, and certification courses to promote these efforts. Encouraging policies can establish clear guidelines for integrating regional language instruction into the curriculum, thereby emphasising its significance and prioritising its inclusion in the educational system.

Insufficient government assistance, such as inadequate funding or a lack of clearly defined policies, could hinder the successful implementation of regional language and culture learning initiatives. Abdulazeez and Ali (2021) suggest that insufficient resources, such as a shortage of trained teachers and necessary learning materials, can have a detrimental impact on the quality of education. This could result in a limited understanding of local languages and cultures, failing to prioritise the development of comprehensive cultural awareness and proficiency that these programmes should emphasise. In the absence of explicit policy guidelines, schools may face challenges in prioritising regional language education within their curriculum, potentially relegating it to a subordinate position compared to more widely recognised courses. The lack of emphasis may diminish the intended impact on students' cultural understanding and linguistic competency. Therefore, we make a hypothesis here that,

H3: *Government support works as a mediator between regional language and student profile.*

Government support plays a crucial role in connecting cultural learning with the student profile (Shih, 2015). Cultural education relies heavily on it as a fundamental element, which significantly impacts its

success and breadth of activities. Government support is crucial for the success of educational initiatives, achieved through the strategic development of policies, targeted budget allocation, and innovative curriculum frameworks. Shih (2015) found that governments exhibit a significant dedication to fostering students' sense of identity and cultural awareness through the allocation of funds and the establishment of regulations that prioritise cultural education. This financial commitment enables schools to develop comprehensive cultural curricula encompassing various activities, including in-depth explorations of folklore, historical narratives, traditional arts, and music.

It provides the necessary resources for a comprehensive cultural education, including supplies, equipment, and tools. Furthermore, it provides financial support for cultural activities, workshops, and community engagement initiatives, which contribute to the cultivation of a stronger appreciation for one's own culture among students. Supportive policies can stimulate the recruitment and training of educators specialising in cultural studies, enabling teachers to serve as leaders of cultural enlightenment in addition to being information conduits (Alanson & Schomaker, 2018). Educators can enrol in specialised training programmes and certification courses to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for effective teaching in the field of cultural studies. These policies can establish explicit guidelines for incorporating cultural education into the overall curriculum, thereby acknowledging its importance within the educational setting.

However, Efforts to promote cultural learning may face challenges in achieving desired outcomes without official support, such as limited funding or the absence of specific regulations. Insufficient resources may lead to a deficit of qualified educators and necessary materials, thereby diminishing the quality of cultural education (Pishghadam et al., 2023). Superficial understanding of cultural customs, folklore, and historical accounts may result from engaging with these programmes, lacking the deep cultural appreciation and awareness that they strive to foster. The absence of explicit policy guidance may cause schools to prioritise cultural learning less than traditional subjects, as they may be uncertain about its importance within the curriculum. Discrimination can significantly impact students' cultural awareness and competence in their heritage (Brubaker, 2007). Therefore, we make another hypothesis that,

H4: *Government support works as a mediator between cultural learning and student profile.*

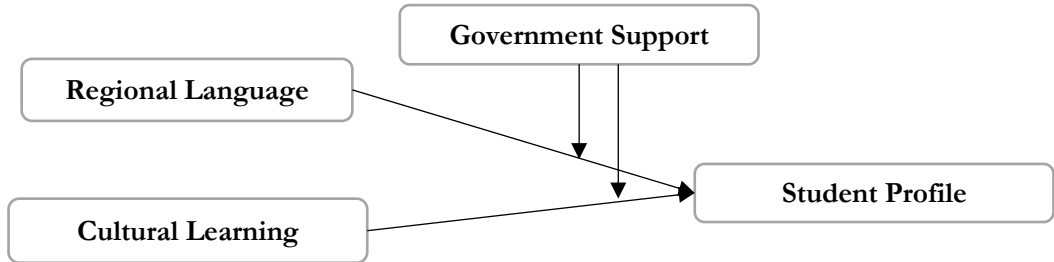
Research Methods

This study explores the influence of regional language and cultural learning on student profiles in high schools within the Kurdish region. Additionally, it examines the potential moderating effect of government support on the relationship between regional language, cultural learning, and student profiles. The researchers employed survey questionnaires to collect data from the chosen students. The surveys used in this study were derived from previous literature. The regional language survey consisted of six questions extracted from Moser, Wei, and Brenner (2021). The cultural learning survey included seven items taken from Bouilheres et al. (2020). The government support survey comprised five questions adopted from Zulu-Chisanga, Chabala, and Mandawa-Bray (2021). Lastly, the student profile survey consisted of six questions taken from Gonzalez-Nucamendi et al. (2021).

Furthermore, the participants in this study were chosen from a pool of high school students. The surveys were distributed to the students through personal visits to the schools by the researchers. The researchers employed simple random sampling to select the students. Out of the 512 surveys distributed, only 290 were received, indicating a response rate of approximately 56.64%. Additionally, the researchers employed smart-PLS to assess the reliability of the data and examine the relationships between variables. Smart-PLS is a useful tool for analysing

primary data and handling large datasets effectively (Hair, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). The study employed two independent variables, regional language (RL) and cultural learning (CL), as well as one moderating construct, government support (GS), and one dependent construct, student profile (SP). The constructs are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research model



Research Findings

According to the study's findings, the items' correlation supports their convergent validity. Additionally, the values of Alpha and composite reliability exceed 0.70, while the values of average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings exceed 0.50. The results demonstrated a strong correlation among the items, confirming their convergent validity. The data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Convergent validity

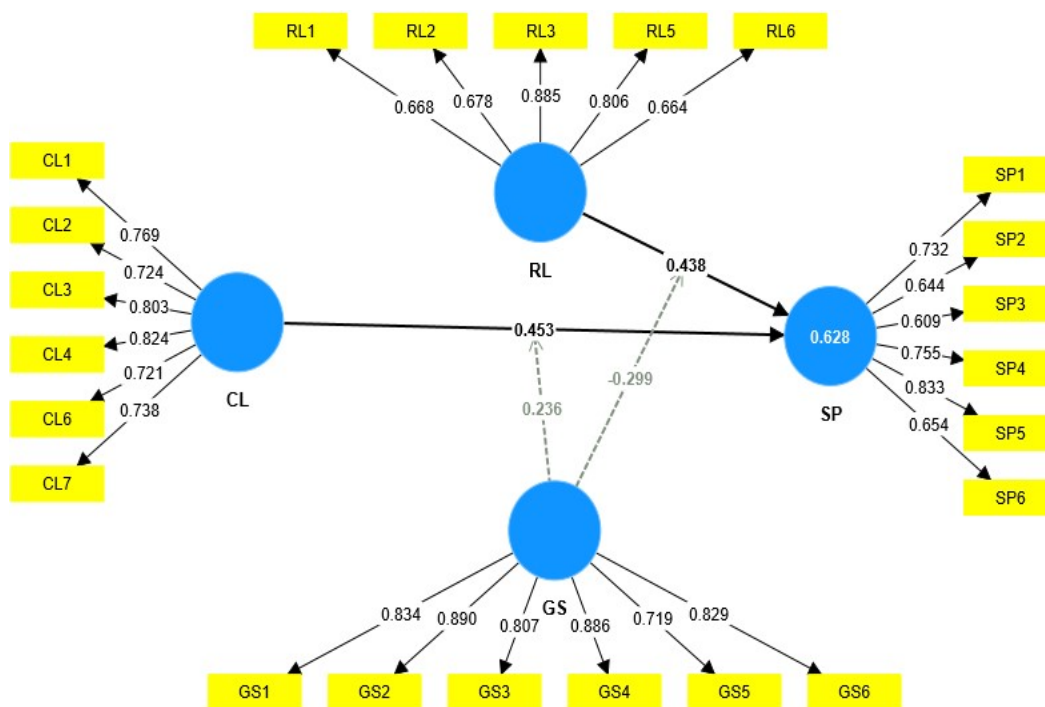
Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Culture Learning	CL1	0.769	0.857	0.894	0.584
	CL2	0.724			
	CL3	0.803			
	CL4	0.824			
	CL6	0.721			
	CL7	0.738			
	Government Support	GS1			
GS2		0.890			
GS3		0.807			
GS4		0.886			
GS5		0.719			
GS6		0.829			
Regional Language	RL1	0.668	0.806	0.861	0.556
	RL2	0.678			
	RL3	0.885			
	RL5	0.806			
	RL6	0.664			
	Student Profile	SP1			
SP2		0.644			
SP3		0.609			
SP4		0.755			
SP5		0.833			
SP6		0.654			

HTMT ratios below 0.90 are evidence that the study's findings demonstrate discriminant validity between the variables. The results demonstrated that there was a low correlation between variables, confirming the validity of discriminant validity. The data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Discriminant validity

	CL	GS	RL	SP
CL				
GS	0.522			
RL	0.706	0.760		
SP	0.875	0.482	0.779	

Figure 2: Measurement assessment model

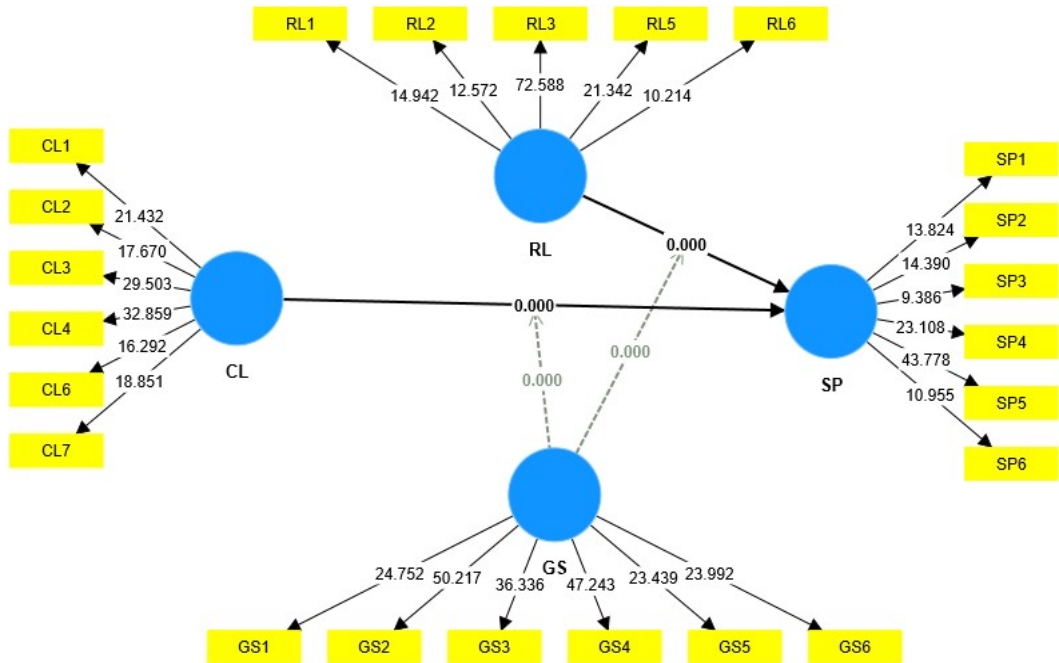


The path analysis results support the hypothesis that regional language and cultural learning positively influence the student profile of high schools in the Kurdish region. Additionally, the findings indicate that government support plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between regional language, cultural learning, and student profile in high schools located in the Kurdish region. This supports the acceptance of hypotheses H3 and H4. Table 3 presents the associations.

Table 3: Path analysis

Relationships	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
CL -> SP	0.453	0.060	7.574	0.000
RL -> SP	0.438	0.067	6.518	0.000
GS x RL -> SP	-0.299	0.071	4.220	0.000
GS x CL -> SP	0.236	0.064	3.696	0.000

Figure 3: Structural assessment model



Discussions

The study focuses on a significant aspect of educational development in the Kurdish region. The educational system in the Kurdish region faces both challenges and advantages due to its extensive linguistic and cultural diversity (Kreyenbroek & Sperl, 2005). This study examines the influence of regional language and culture learning on high school student profiles, with a focus on the potential moderating effect of government support in facilitating these educational pursuits. This study highlights the importance of regional language and cultural learning in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of Kurdish high school students. The assertion is substantiated by research conducted by Pammu and Hasyim (2023) and Rizal and Nurjaya (2020), which found that proficiency in regional languages not only facilitates effective communication but also fosters a deeper comprehension and admiration for the cultural diversity within a particular region.

Linguistic proficiency plays a crucial role in promoting diversity and ensuring equitable access to educational resources for students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. According to Gao et al. (2021), incorporating cultural learning into the curriculum enhances students' connection to their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of identity and belonging. The study's findings indicate a positive correlation between the acquisition of regional language and culture knowledge and an enhanced student profile. Active student participation in educational activities is associated with improved academic achievement, cultural awareness, and social integration. Being proficient in a regional language equips students with essential skills that extend beyond the classroom. This proficiency enables them to navigate diverse linguistic contexts with assurance and competence (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). Cultural learning fosters intercultural competence by cultivating students' appreciation and respect for the diverse perspectives and traditions that influence their community (Abdelhadi et al., 2020).

This study focuses on investigating the role of government support in facilitating regional language and cultural learning within high schools. According to Ali et al. (2021), government policies, financing, and resources exert a significant influence on the educational landscape in regions with language and cultural diversity. The findings indicate that robust government support significantly enhances the positive impacts of studying regional languages and cultures on student profiles. Khoir (2023) and Wahab (2021) have demonstrated that the success of educational projects relies heavily on sufficient funding, curriculum development, and teacher training programmes. Government policies that prioritise the understanding of local languages and cultures provide a strong foundation for educational institutions to develop comprehensive programmes. To foster an inclusive and culturally diverse learning environment, it is essential to allocate resources for curriculum development, teacher training, and the provision of instructional materials. Policies mandating the inclusion of regional languages and cultural studies in the curriculum demonstrate a commitment to preserving and promoting the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Kurdish region.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the substantial influence of regional language and culture learning on the student profile of Kurdish high schools. Proficiency in regional languages and cultural awareness have a positive impact on academic achievement, foster cultural appreciation, and facilitate social integration among students. Additionally, the study highlights the crucial role of government funding in facilitating these educational initiatives. Robust policies, adequate funding, and comprehensive teacher training programmes are essential for the effectiveness of regional language and culture learning initiatives. Educational institutions in the Kurdish region can cultivate an inclusive and culturally diverse learning environment, promoting intellectual and cultural growth among students.

Implications

The study's findings have significant implications for educational policy and practice in the Kurdish region. Authorities should prioritise the implementation of robust policies that promote the learning of regional languages and cultures in high schools. This entails allocating sufficient resources for the development of curriculum, the training of teachers, and the distribution of learning materials. Moreover, the incorporation of regional languages and cultural studies into the curriculum can serve as evidence of a dedication to preserving and advancing the distinct linguistic and cultural characteristics of the region. Additionally, it is crucial to invest in teacher education and professional development. Educators should possess the necessary pedagogical skills and cultural competency to deliver high-quality education in diverse linguistic environments.

Teachers can adapt their instructional strategies to accommodate the diverse learning needs of students with varying language backgrounds by engaging in continuous professional development initiatives. Developing collaborations between educational institutions, local communities, and cultural organisations can enhance the learning experience. Collaboration can lead to the development of tools and programmes that enhance students' understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage, thereby reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging. This paper provides guidance to regulators in developing regulations aimed at enhancing students' profiles through effective regional language and cultural learning.

Limitations

This study has both valuable findings and certain constraints. The study specifically examines high schools in the Kurdish region, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to educational settings with different linguistic and cultural dynamics. Additionally, the cross-sectional methodology employed in the study may offer a limited perspective on the immediate state of affairs, potentially overlooking the enduring advantages of incorporating regional language and culture education into student outcomes. The study relies heavily on self-reported data from students and educators, potentially introducing biases or limitations in response accuracy. The study lacks comprehensive analysis of socioeconomic factors that may impact the implementation and effectiveness of regional language and cultural learning initiatives. Future research could enhance our comprehension of these dynamics by conducting longitudinal studies, expanding geographical sampling, and conducting a more comprehensive investigation into the socio-economic background.

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