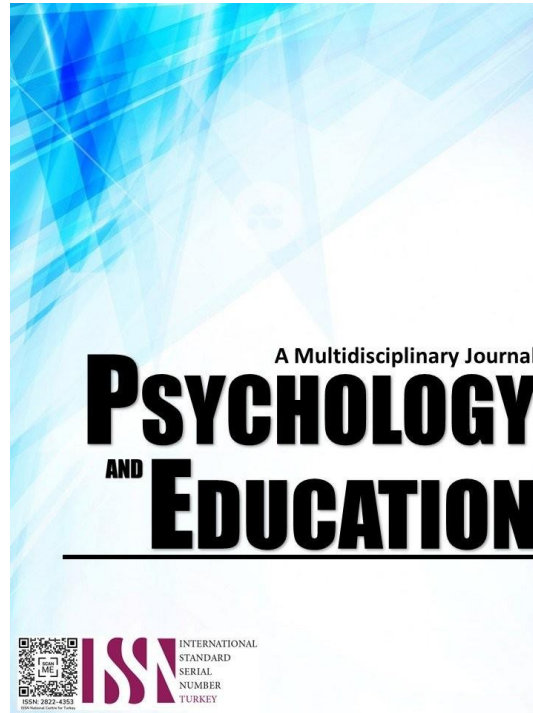


KEM TUTUL: A CONTEXTUALIZED STORYBOOK FOR VALUES EDUCATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION



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Kem Tutul: A Contextualized Storybook for Values Education and Its Implications on Character Development and Cultural Preservation

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Abstract

Despite the emphasis on contextualized learning materials, challenges remain in enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of values education. At Lembotu Elementary School, the Values Education Mean Percentage Score (MPS) for the 2024–2025 school year indicates an average level of mastery and limited impact of contextualized activities on student performance. To address this, the study examines the effects of Kem Tutul, a contextualized storybook, on character development and cultural preservation among T'boli learners. This research employs a descriptive and correlational method, utilizing adapted survey questionnaires to assess Kem Tutul's effectiveness. The study draws on frameworks from Estandarte (2019) and Banks & Banks (2019) to evaluate its influence on cultural and moral dimensions. Teachers at Lembotu Elementary School and Lembotu Be Nef Extension rated Kem Tutul as highly effective regarding content, organization, mechanics, and overall presentation. Similarly, T'boli learners strongly agreed on its significant impact on character development—specifically in terms of attitude, responsibility, and empathy—and cultural preservation, including practices, values, and traditions. A strong positive relationship was observed between character development and cultural preservation, with changes in character development attributed to cultural preservation. The findings encourage the integration of contextualized storybooks like Kem Tutul into curricula, especially in schools serving Indigenous communities, to align education with cultural values and foster meaningful learning experiences. While contextualized learning is widely studied in general education, its specific impact on values education for Indigenous learners remains under-researched. This creates a “Population Gap,” as highlighted by Robinson et al. (2011), where certain groups, such as Indigenous learners, are underrepresented in educational research. The study aims to evaluate whether incorporating culturally relevant narratives enhances students' moral reasoning and strengthens their cultural identity, addressing challenges in implementing values education effectively.

Keywords: *Kem Tutul, contextualize storybook, character development*

Introduction

The World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) highlights the inadequacy of Western-based education systems in serving Indigenous communities globally (Moe, 2021, as cited by Sabio, 2024). WINHEC advocates for the development and implementation of Indigenous teaching methodologies to address these gaps. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has taken steps to reform education through the promotion of contextualized curricula as part of the K to 12 program (Llego, 2022). Central to this is the implementation of DO 62, s. 2011—the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework—which uses a rights-based approach to provide culturally relevant education for Indigenous learners.

In SOCCSKSARGEN, Regional Memorandum CLMD No. 152, s. 2022, and Division Memorandum CID No. 095, s. 2022, mandate training workshops for the Balik Kasaysayan Program. This initiative encourages educators to localize, indigenize, and contextualize teaching materials to enhance student learning. Despite these programs, significant challenges remain, including a lack of sufficient learning resources, which hinders the effectiveness of contextualized instruction in schools (Pepano, 2019).

Contextualized storybooks have emerged as valuable tools for enhancing learning by bridging students' prior knowledge with new concepts, particularly through culturally relevant narratives. These storybooks foster better understanding and moral development by relating lessons to real-life experiences, making education more engaging and meaningful. Additionally, storytelling plays a crucial role in values education, serving as a medium for imparting ethical lessons and shaping character traits like respect, responsibility, and empathy.

For years, contextualization has driven educational innovation, ensuring curricula respond to diverse needs. It is defined as the process of aligning the curriculum with specific settings or contexts to make learning relevant and practical. Contextualized materials are essential in creating connections between students' cultural identities and the content, promoting both engagement and academic achievement.

However, challenges persist in values education. At Lembotu Elementary School, the Values Education Mean Percentage Score (MPS) for 2024–2025 revealed average mastery levels, with a score of 42.24. This indicates that existing contextualized activities have not significantly improved student performance. Although teachers have participated in training and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, the impact of contextualized teaching strategies remains unclear, prompting the need for intervention-based materials and further research to maximize their effectiveness.

While contextualized learning is widely studied in general education, its specific impact on values education for Indigenous learners

remains under-researched. This creates a “Population Gap,” as highlighted by Robinson et al. (2011), where certain groups, such as Indigenous learners, are underrepresented in educational research.

To address these gaps, this study examines the effects of Kem Tutul, a contextualized storybook, on the character development and cultural preservation of T’boli learners at Lembotu Elementary School. The study aims to evaluate whether incorporating culturally relevant narratives enhances students' moral reasoning and strengthens their cultural identity, addressing challenges in implementing values education effectively.

Research Questions

The academic landscape of T’boli pupils of Lake Sebu East District presents a complex interplay on their character development and cultural preservation, particularly within the context of Values Education Subject. Despite recognizing the importance of these factors in shaping the educational experience, there exists a gap in understanding how they interact and influence one another. Hence, it addressed the following questions:

1. What is the level of effectiveness of Kem Tutul in terms of:
 - 1.1. Content;
 - 1.2. Organization;
 - 1.3. Mechanics; and
 - 1.4. Overall package?
2. What is the impact of Kem Tutul on the character development of T’boli learners in Lembotu Elementary School in terms of:
 - 2.1. Attitude;
 - 2.2 Responsibility; and
 - 2.3. Empathy?
3. What is the impact of Kem Tutul on the cultural preservation of T’boli Learners in Lembotu Elementary School in terms of:
 - 3.1. practices;
 - 3.2. values; and
 - 3.3. traditions?
4. Is there a significant relationship between character development and cultural preservation?

Literature Review

The research emphasizes the importance of contextualized storybooks in fostering both character development and cultural preservation. These storybooks integrate local cultures, traditions, and values into educational content, making learning more meaningful and relevant to students' lives. By reflecting students' cultural backgrounds, these materials support values education, allowing learners to connect more deeply with the lessons and internalize important moral principles. Studies show that incorporating indigenous narratives, folklore, and local traditions into these materials helps students develop a stronger sense of identity and cultural pride. This alignment between education and students' cultural contexts not only enhances moral understanding but also preserves cultural heritage. When learners engage with culturally relevant materials, they are more likely to participate in cultural activities and adopt values such as honesty, respect, and empathy.

In terms of character development, local culture plays a crucial role. By embedding cultural values into the educational curriculum, students can internalize noble principles such as teamwork, social responsibility, and respect—values that shape their everyday behavior. Additionally, participating in community rituals or local practices strengthens students' moral growth and encourages them to carry these principles into their adult lives. Cultural Learning Theory and studies like those by Kumar and Pani (2018) support the idea that contextualized storybooks not only enhance academic performance but also deepen students' cultural engagement and emotional connection to their heritage. Such integration helps preserve community identity while guiding ethical behavior, benefiting students both academically and personally.

Character development is closely tied to cultural preservation as students learn to adopt values that are integral to their local culture. Contextualized storybooks serve as tools for integrating local traditions and values into moral education, reinforcing identity and ethical decision-making. By bridging cultural heritage and moral principles, these storybooks create a lasting connection between students' cultural backgrounds and the values education they receive. This synergy between educational content and cultural heritage ensures that learning is more engaging, relevant, and impactful, promoting both academic growth and cultural pride.

By conducting this study in Lembotu Elementary School, the researcher aims to examine the impact of Kem Tutul, a contextualized storybook, in reinforcing character development and cultural preservation.

Methodology

Research Design

The research used a descriptive and correlational approach to determine the significance of Kem Tutul, a contextualized storybook, for character development and cultural preservation among T'boli learners at Lembotu Elementary School. According to Creswell (2014), a descriptive and correlational study allows researchers to quantify relationships between variables, showing whether an increase or decrease in one variable corresponds with an increase or decrease in another. This method is particularly suitable when experimental manipulation is not feasible, ethical, or necessary for the research question. Researchers collect data through surveys, observations, or archival research and then apply statistical analyses to determine correlation coefficients, which measure the strength and direction of the relationships between variables (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016).

Respondents

To determine the impact of Kem Tutul on the character development and cultural preservation of T'boli learners, the study's respondents were the pupils of Lembotu Elementary School. Fifty (50) pupils were taken from grades 3 to 6 - ages 10 to 13 – thru purposive sampling method.

The study also involved 30 T'boli teachers of Lembotu Elementary School who validated the acceptability of Kem Tutul in terms of content, organization, mechanics and overall package. These experts were involved in this study as evaluators because of their proficiency in T'boli culture and language and expertise in crafting learning material. Hence, their suggestions and comments are relevant in crafting the modules.

The survey questionnaire was used to collect data. Survey questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaires to be used in determining the effectiveness of Kem Tutul are adapted from the study of Estandarte (2019). On the impact of contextualized storybooks on pupils' cultural development and cultural preservation, the questionnaires were adapted from the study of Banks and Banks (2019). It consisted of ten (10) statements with five questions evenly distributed to character development and cultural preservation. Evaluating the stability and consistency of a measurement tool, such as a survey, test, or questionnaire, is known as reliability testing (Cohen et al., 2018).

Procedures

The data-gathering procedure was a critical component of the research studies. A well-designed data-gathering procedure ensures that the data collected is accurate, consistent, and reliable. It minimizes errors and biases, leading to more trustworthy results and conclusions. The diagram below depicts the data collection process's sequence. First, the researcher sought the approval of the Dean of Graduate School at SKSU to conduct the study. A permit to conduct the study was sought from the President's office and the Vice President For Academic Affairs to give institutions access to the survey questionnaire was used to collect data. Survey questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaires to be used in determining the effectiveness of Kem Tutul are adapted from the study of Estandarte (2019). On the impact of contextualized storybooks on pupils' cultural development and cultural preservation, the questionnaires were adapted from the study of Banks and Banks (2019). It consisted of ten (10) statements with five questions evenly distributed to character development and cultural preservation. Evaluating the stability and consistency of a measurement tool, such as a survey, test, or questionnaire, is known as reliability testing (Cohen et al., 2018).

Data Analysis

This section describes the statistical procedure used to examine the information obtained from the survey questionnaires. After collecting the respondents' data, Microsoft Excel software was used to correctly encode, process, and analyze the completed questionnaire responses.

The following are the statistical tools used to answer the problems posed in this study: Mean and Standard Deviation were used to determine Kem Tutul's effectiveness in terms of content, organization, mechanics, and overall package. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to determine Kem Tutul's effect on the character development of T'boli learners at Lembotu Elementary School, and its effect on the cultural preservation of T'boli learners at Lembotu Elementary School.

To determine the significant relationship between character development and cultural preservation, the Pearson r correlation was used.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings according to the study's research questions.

Table 1. *Level of Effectiveness of Kem Tutul in content, organization, mechanics, and overall package*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Content	4.61	0.49	Strongly Agree
2. Organization	4.58	0.50	Strongly Agree

3. Mechanics	4.64	0.49	Strongly Agree
4. Overall Package	4.71	0.46	Strongly Agree
Mean	4.64		Strongly Agree (Very Highly Effective)

The effectiveness of Kem Tutul in content, organization, mechanics, and overall package are presented in Table 6. Relative to the effectiveness of Content, the teachers of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul is highly effective in Content ($\bar{x}=4.61$). On the other hand, in terms of Organization, the Teachers of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul is highly effective in terms of Organization ($\bar{x}=4.58$). Relative to Kem Tutul's effectiveness in terms of Mechanics, the teachers of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul is highly effective in mechanics ($\bar{x}=4.58$). This is all the same with Kem Tutul's effectiveness in terms of Overall Package, where the teachers of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul is highly effective in terms of Overall Package ($\bar{x}=4.58$).

The teachers of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul is highly effective in Content, Organization, Mechanics, and Overall Package ($\bar{x}=4.64$). The result conforms to the study of Bruner (1996), Banks & Banks (2019), and Gay (2018), which found that storybooks that are culturally relevant and thoughtfully structured play a significant role in increasing student engagement. These storybooks help students better understand cultural values and contribute to shaping their sense of identity. By aligning the content with students' cultural backgrounds, organizing it in familiar ways, presenting it appealingly, and promoting active learning, such storybooks become effective tools for preserving culture and advancing education.

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Table 2. *Impact of Kem Tutul on the Character Development in Lembotu Elementary School*

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. Attitude	4.79	Strongly Agree
2. Responsibility	4.79	Strongly Agree
3. Empathy	4.79	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.79	Strongly Agree (Very High Impact)

Table 2 presents the impact of Kem Tutul on the Character Development of T'boli learners in Lembotu Elementary School in terms of Attitude, Responsibility, and Empathy. Regarding the implications for Attitude, the Pupils of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul greatly impacts Attitude ($\bar{x}=4.79$). On the other hand, regarding responsibility, the pupils of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul has a very high impact on responsibility ($\bar{x}=4.79$). This is all the same with Kem Tutul's impact on empathy, where the Pupils of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul has a very high impact in terms of Overall Empathy ($\bar{x}=4.79$).

The pupils of LES strongly agree that Kem Tutul has a very high impact on character development regarding attitude, responsibility, and empathy ($\bar{x}=4.79$). This result conforms to the study of Kumar and Pani (2018), which emphasizes the significant role contextualized storybooks play in preserving the cultural identity of young learners. Their research in India revealed that incorporating Indigenous stories into these materials fostered students' pride in their cultural heritage and supported their educational goals.

Similarly, Daniel (2016) demonstrated that children exposed to storybooks with cultural and moral themes experienced notable improvements in honesty, respect, and empathy. These findings highlight the vital role of storytelling in instilling ethical values in children, especially when the narratives are closely tied to their real-life experiences.

Research also suggests contextualized materials in values education greatly enhance students' moral reasoning and ethical behavior. Santos and Cruz (2021) found that learners exposed to contextualized teaching strategies exhibited greater empathy and better ethical decision-making than those taught with generic content. Storytelling has long been recognized as an effective approach for teaching values and morals. Bennett (2015) noted that stories provide a safe and imaginative platform for learners to engage with complex ethical dilemmas, fostering empathy, decision-making skills, and a deeper understanding of moral principles. By drawing on local experiences and cultural history, contextualized storybooks ensure their moral lessons resonate more strongly with students' everyday lives.

Indigenous stories into educational content helps preserve cultural heritage while fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Likewise, Zepeda (2020) emphasized that narrative-based learning motivates students to connect with their traditions, deepening their understanding and appreciation of their community's history and values.

Table 3. *Impact of Kem Tutul on the Cultural Preservation of T'boli learners in Lembotu Elementary School*

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. Practices	4.78	Strongly Agree
2. Values	4.79	Strongly Agree
3. traditions	4.80	Strongly Agree
Mean	4.79	Strongly Agree (Very High Impact)

Table 3 presents the impact of Kem Tutul on the cultural preservation of T'boli learners in LES in terms of practices, values, and traditions. Regarding the effect of practices, the Pupils of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul has a very high impact on Practices ($\bar{x}=4.78$). On the other hand, regarding Values, the Pupils of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul has a very high impact on Values ($\bar{x}=4.79$).

This is all the same with Kem Tutul's impact on Traditions, where the Pupils of LES and LBNE strongly agree that Kem Tutul has a very high impact on Traditions ($\bar{x}=4.80$).

These storybooks mirror students' experiences, bridging academic learning with their cultural heritage through familiar symbols and narratives. This approach supports both character development and the preservation of cultural identity. One effective strategy for promoting cultural conservation in education involves using storybooks incorporating traditional stories, folklore, and moral lessons deeply rooted in learners' cultural backgrounds.

Ong (2019) emphasized that contextualized storybooks, especially those featuring Indigenous narratives, enhance students' appreciation of their cultural identity. Such storybooks not only pass on cultural knowledge and values but also contribute to preserving local traditions and languages.

Bruner (1996), Banks and Banks (2019), and Gay (2018) argue that well-designed, culturally relevant storybooks improve student engagement, enrich their understanding of cultural values, and support identity formation.

By tailoring content to resonate with students' cultural experiences, aligning structures with familiar patterns, and presenting materials engagingly and interactively, these storybooks serve as effective tools for education and artistic preservation.

Indigenous storytelling is recognized as a valuable means of preserving culture and enhancing education. Ong (2019) noted that incorporating Indigenous narratives into educational materials protects cultural heritage while fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Similarly, Zepeda (2020) demonstrated how narrative-based education encourages students to explore their traditions, fostering a deeper appreciation for their community's history and values. Zepeda (2020) further found that storybooks featuring Indigenous folklore helped students understand the significance of their cultural roots, inspiring them to engage in artistic activities like festivals and rituals. The preservation of cultural identity was closely linked to students' exposure to these heritage-based stories.

Lynch (2016) emphasized that culturally relevant materials, such as contextualized storybooks, not only support academic learning but also play an important role in preserving a community's cultural narratives and practices. These storybooks are cultural artifacts, transmitting important moral and ethical values across generations. A well-crafted, contextualized storybook does more than just educate—it is a dynamic platform that connects students to their heritage, imparts moral lessons, and fosters personal growth while safeguarding cultural values and traditions for future generations.

Table 4. *Relationship between Character Development and Cultural Preservation of T'boli Learners in Lembotu Elementary School*

Variables Correlated	Mean	R	p-value	Extent of Relationship	Remark
Character Development	4.8	.7451	5.440697268379E -10	High	Significant
Cultural Preservation	4.8				

Table 4 presents the relationship between the Character Development and Cultural Preservation of T'boli learners in Lembotu Elementary School. Results reveal that there is a significant relationship between these two variables. This is supported by an r-value of .7451 with a p-value of 5.440697268379E -10. Since a p-value of less than .05 ($p = 5.440697268379E -10 < .05$) indicates that the relationship between these two variables is significant. This implies that the impact of Kem Tutul on cultural preservation influences the character development of T'boli learners in LES. This result conforms to the study of Aziz and Adnan (2019), who found that teaching students about cultural preservation—through materials delivered in schools and during learning sessions—notably impacts shaping their character. Suyanto (2013) highlighted that embedding local culture in educational curricula helps students internalize moral values more effectively due to its contextual and relatable nature.

Culture, encompassing local educational values, traditions, and norms, is a relatable foundation for character education. It significantly influences students' behavior and shapes their character (Anwar, 2017). Moreover, the extent of the relationship between the variables is high. The r-squared value of .7451 indicates that 74.51% of the changes in the impact on Character Development are attributed to the effects on cultural preservation.

This study aimed to explore the effects of Kem Tutul, a contextualized storybook, on the character formation and cultural preservation of T'boli students at Lembotu Elementary School. The research focused on assessing whether including locally meaningful narratives could enhance students' moral reasoning and deepen their cultural identity, ultimately addressing ongoing challenges in values education. The focus on T'boli learners highlights the importance of preserving Indigenous communities' unique cultural heritage while ensuring that students develop essential ethical principles and life skills. By emphasizing narratives and lessons rooted in their cultural context, this study also aimed to promote a deeper understanding of how education can serve as a tool for personal growth and safeguarding and transmitting cultural knowledge to future generations. The study was conducted in February 2025, during the fourth quarter of the 2024-2025 school year. The respondents were thirty (30) Teachers and fifty (50) T'boli Learners of Lembotu Elementary School and Lembotu Be Nef Extension. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data of this study, the following findings were: The teachers of LES and LBNE strongly agreed that Kem Tutul is highly effective in content, organization, mechanics, and overall package. It is related to learners' grade level, provides a clear story overview, sets expectations for the reader, and uses clear and easy-to-read texts with appropriate font size and style. The T'boli Learners of LES strongly agreed that Kem Tutul greatly impacts character development, attitude, responsibility, and empathy. It helps the Learners build character, shows a greater willingness to follow school rules and policies, and becomes a responsible learner. The T'boli Learners of LES strongly agreed that Kem Tutul greatly impacts their practices, values, and traditions. They discovered that Kem Tutul inspires them to practice the cultural traditions they learned from my community, helps them understand the importance of community and family in their culture, and highlights the importance of passing cultural traditions to younger generations.

There was a significant relationship between the character development and cultural preservation of T'boli learners in LES. The impact of Kem Tutul on cultural preservation influences the character development of T'boli learners in LES. Furthermore, the extent of the relationship between the variables was high.

Conclusion

The teachers of LES and LBNE strongly agreed that Kem Tutul is highly effective in content, organization, mechanics, and overall package. The T'boli Learners of LES strongly agreed that Kem Tutul has a very high impact on character development regarding attitude, responsibility, and empathy. The T'boli Learners of LESs strongly agreed that Kem Tutul has a very high impact on cultural preservation in terms of practices, values, and traditions. The effect of Kem Tutul on cultural preservation influenced the character development of the T'boli Learners of LES.

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