

Perception and Attitude of Stakeholders towards Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education: A Systematic Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) is essential to promote inclusive as well as equitable education in multilingual cultures, but it faces mixed perception from stakeholders namely teachers, parents, administrative personnel and students because of various socio-economic and ideological issues.

Purpose: The purpose of this systematic review is to analyze stakeholders' perception and attitude towards MTB-MLE, highlighting the cause of both support and opposition as well as underlying the difficulties and potential challenges associated with its implementation.

Method: A systematic review of related literature was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review (PRISMA). Five databases were searched to find out 26 research articles closely related to perception and attitude of stakeholders towards MTB-MLE published between 2012 to 2024, covering a wide range of geographic regions as well as educational context.

Results: The result shows that MTB-MLE as a medium of instruction at formative years of education among children is widely recognized for its cognitive and cultural advantages. However, there were significant challenges persist including resistance due to superiority of global languages such as English, insufficient teacher training, limited learning resources and other socio-political barriers. Stakeholders' perception and attitude are influenced by a complex interaction of socio-economic variables, linguistic ideologies and the practical realities of multilingual classrooms.



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1. Introduction

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has become an essential approach to promote inclusive as well as equitable education in multilingual societies. The fundamental idea behind MTB-MLE is that students learn best when they are taught in their native language, especially in the early years of their schooling. This methodology not only improves comprehension and cognitive abilities but also enhances students' cultural and language identities, making education more culturally relevant and inclusive (Kalu, 2021; Zaidi, 2020). Globalization and migration have dramatically reshaped the demographic makeup of many countries, which has resulted in more bilingual and monolingual classrooms. In such settings, the monolingual education model fails to address the linguistic and cultural diversity of students, possibly marginalizing those who do not speak the

dominant language at home. MBT-MLE offers a promising alternative option, which is aligning with global educational policies that advocate for linguistic variety and inclusion (Cantone, 2020; Rizova *et al.*, 2020; European Union, 2020). In this connection, research studies indicate that mother tongue education can improve better academic outcomes, particularly in the early years of education. Children who are taught in their mother tongue tend to show stronger cognitive abilities and better academic performance compared to their counterparts, those who are taught in a second language from the beginning (Nishanthi, 2020; Mizza, 2014). Furthermore, mother tongue-based education fosters a deeper understanding of cultural heritage, which in turn promotes self-esteem and identity formation among students (Bilgin, 2017; Leite, 2021).

However, despite the benefits of MTB-MLE, its implementation encounters numerous challenges. One of the main issues is the perception and attitude

of stakeholders—teachers, parents, policy makers, and students—towards mother tongue-based instruction. These perceptions are frequently influenced by broader socio-political and economic factors such as the perceived importance of dominant and global languages in the job market and the confining position of minority languages in the local or national context (Herzog-Punzenberger *et al.*, 2017; Kalu, 2021). Many stakeholders, particularly parents and policymakers, believe that proficiency in a dominant or global language is essential for social mobility and economic success. This notion of stakeholders has become a hindrance for mother tongue-based instruction rather than an enabler of academic and professional success. This belief is especially common in countries where national and international languages dominate public life and the benefits of MTB-MLE are not widely recognized (Martin *et al.*, 2019; Tsai, 2019; Rizova *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, the implementation of the MTB-MLE program requires adequate, culturally relevant learning materials, trained human resources, and institutional support. In many cases it is found that schools and teachers are not competent enough to manage the complexity of multilingual classrooms. Multilingual education programs are routinely overlooked in teacher training programs, and instructional resources in minority languages are in low supply (Sánchez, 2016; Cantone, 2020). Furthermore, the integration of MTB-MLE in the national curriculum is often hampered by a lack of political will and the marginalization of minority languages in public discourse (Edgar, 2017; Mizza, 2014).

Resistance to MTB-MLE also reflects broader cultural views towards linguistic diversity. In many countries, minority languages are not given the same recognition as regional, national, or global languages, and there is also a lack of appreciation for the educational and cultural benefits of multilingualism. This has resulted in the devaluation of mother tongue-based instruction. On the other hand, preference for monolingual instruction deprives students from minority language backgrounds (Edgar, 2017; Scanlan *et al.*, 2019). Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of MTB-MLE are significant. Research studies have shown that MTB-MLE not only bridges the gap between home and school environments but also encourages language and cultural variety, which is essential for fostering global citizenship in an increasingly interconnected world (Leite, 2021; Lim *et al.*, 2019). In order to fully realize the benefits of

MTB-MLE, it is crucial to address the concerns and perceptions of stakeholders. This requires a planned as well as collaborative effort among the policymakers, administrative personnel, educators, and community members to promote the value of mother tongue-based education. As several research studies have found that changing attitudes regarding MTB-MLE can lead to considerable increases in educational performances and contribute to the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity (Herzog-Punzenberger *et al.*, 2017; Kirsch *et al.*, 2020).

2. Methodology

Marangunic and Granic (2015) underline the significance of literature review in building a solid knowledge base, suggesting that they are necessary for improving theories and filling research gaps. Following this approach, a systematic review was undertaken in accordance with Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA). This systematic literature review involved selecting, identifying, and analyzing research articles to address a specific research issue. As the purpose of this paper is to analyze the existing research on stakeholders' perception and attitude towards Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) to answer specific research questions: What are the key factors influencing stakeholders' perception and attitude towards MTB-MLE? How do stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of MTB-MLE? What are the gaps and thrust areas for further investigation in the field of MTB-MLE? We have searched ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, EBISCO, and others (SCISPACE, Springer Open Access, Mendeley Reference Manager, and Research Gate). For articles relating to the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The identification phase, screening phase, eligibility phase, and inclusion phase are all involved.

2.1. Identification Phase

The database used for this systematic literature review included ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, EBISCO, and others (SCISPACE, Springer Open Access, Mendeley Reference Manager, and Research Gate). Five related search keywords were used to access the research studies from the above-mentioned electronic databases, as shown in Table 1.

Table1: Literature Search Key Words

Database	Key words
ERIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MTLE) • Stakeholder Perceptions in Education • Multilingual Education Attitudes • Language Policy in Education • Effectiveness of Mother Tongue Education
Google Scholar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MTLE) • Stakeholder Perceptions in Education • Multilingual Education Attitudes • Language Policy in Education • Effectiveness of Mother Tongue Education
Pro-Quest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MTLE) • Stakeholder Perceptions in Education • Multilingual Education Attitudes • Language Policy in Education • Effectiveness of Mother Tongue Education
EBISCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MTLE) • Stakeholder Perceptions in Education • Multilingual Education Attitudes • Language Policy in Education • Effectiveness of Mother Tongue Education
Others (SCISPACE, Springer Open Access, Mendeley Reference Manager and Research Gate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MTLE) • Stakeholder Perceptions in Education • Multilingual Education Attitudes • Language Policy in Education • Effectiveness of Mother Tongue Education

2.2. Screening Phase

The titles and abstracts of the research studies were screened in all five databases, namely ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, EBISCO, and others (SCISPACE, Springer Open Access, Mendeley Reference Manager, and Research Gate). The titles were screened based on how closely they matched the keywords. The abstracts of each study were then scanned and skimmed.

2.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Subsequently, the results obtained underwent filtering according to the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. A study was excluded if:

- The original written language is not English;
- Non-peer-reviewed sources;
- Non-empirical studies; and
- The full text is not available online.

The following typologies of studies were included:

- Peer-reviewed journal research articles;
- Review papers;
- Chapters in edited books; and
- Published master's and Ph.D. theses.

2.4 The Final Selected Papers

From 2012 to 2024, a total of 457 research studies were found from five databases, including Google Scholar (n=68), ERIC (n=77), ProQuest (n=140), EBSCO (n=93), and others (SCISPACE, Springer Open Access, Mendeley Reference Manager, and Research Gate) n=79. During the screening process, 151 duplicate research studies were removed, leaving 306 research articles. After screening research titles and abstracts, 168 articles were excluded from the obtained results. Then, 5 articles were removed because they did not have access to the full text. Then during full-text screening, 107 articles were excluded with the following reasons (review article & meta-analysis (n=38), wrong population (n=26), bibliometric studies (n=3), non-English language (n=6), and not addressing the research question (n=34)). Finally, 26 articles that met the inclusion criteria were selected for this systematic review. The process of study selection was documented using the following PRISMA diagram.

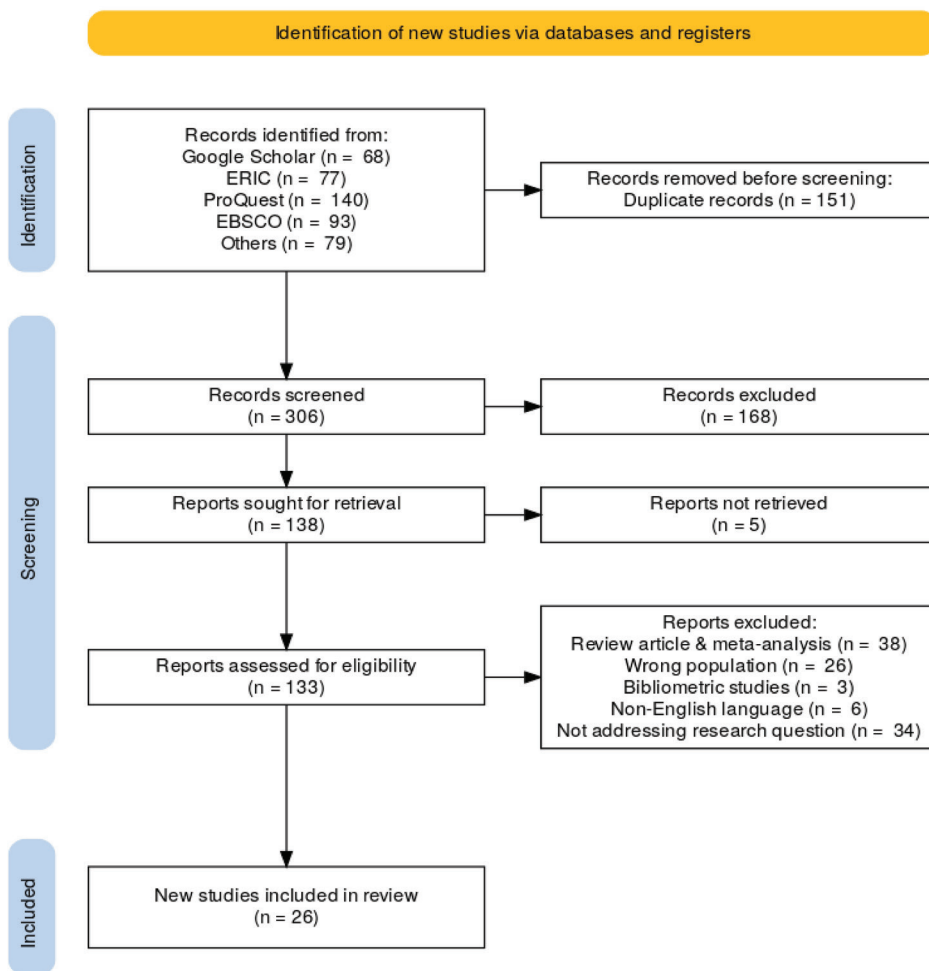


Figure 1: Prisma Flow Chart of the Systematic Review Process (Source: Authors)

3. Analysis of Results

Table 2 provides an overview of characteristics of the selected research studies i.e., name of the authors,

research methods, research participants and citation index.

Table 2: Characteristics of Research Studies

S.No.	Authors	Affiliation	Research Method	Research Participants	Citation Index
1	(Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski, 2012)	University of Zagreb, Croatia	Qualitative	Auto-biographical	15
2	(Ziegler, 2013)	DICA-lab, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg	Mixed Method	106 participants: Language teaching professionals, policymakers, teacher educators, and directors of teacher training institutions, primarily from Europe	86

3	(Hlatshwayo & Siziba, 2013)	North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, South Africa	Mixed Method	500 first-year undergraduate students from the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus	18
4	(Naom & Sarah, 2014)	United States International University, Kenya	Qualitative	Teachers, parents, and language specialists	30
5	(Bhuvaneswari & Bai, 2014)	A.M.E.S. College of Education, Tamilnadu, India	Quantitative	College students	02
6	(Bin-Tahir, 2015)	English Education Department, University of Iqra Buru, Ambon, Indonesia	Quantitative	788 Santries and 51 Ustadzs	117
7	(Bin-Tahir <i>et al.</i> , 2017)	Universitas Iqra Buru, Maluku, Indonesia	Quantitative	100 students from three pesantren schools in Makassar	82
8	(Küçükler & Tosuncuoglu, 2018)	Balıkesir University, Turkey	Quantitative	University Students	07
9	(Putjata, 2018)	University of Münster, Germany	Qualitative	teachers in the Israeli education system	11
10	(Parba, 2018)	University of Hawai, Mānoa, HI, USA	Qualitative	Elementary teachers and students in a predominantly Cebuano-speaking public elementary school in Northern Mindanao, Philippines	56
11	(Dalton <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	Marymount University, USA	Qualitative	Teachers and administrators	05
12	(Cekiso, 2019)	Department of Applied Languages, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa	Qualitative	Foundation Phase teachers	28
13	(Jimenez & Acosta, 2019)	Universidad El Bosque, Bogotá, Colombia	Qualitative	Teachers	14

14	(Belvis & Morauda-Gutierrez, 2019)	De La Salle Araneta University, Philippines / Philippine Normal University	Qualitative	Not specified	03
15	(Ezeokoli & Ugwu, 2019)	Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria	Quantitative	211 literate parents, 195 teachers, 237 SSII students	19
16	(Mandillah, 2019)	University of Venda, South Africa	Qualitative	10 head teachers and 10 Grade 3 teachers	33
17	(Nkoala, 2020)	Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa	Mixed methods	Journalism students	09
18	(Esteron, 2020)	University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines	Quantitative Survey	50 trilingual children from a small barangay elementary school in Pangasinan, Philippines	11
19	(Fang & Liu, 2020)	Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, College of Liberal Arts, Shantou University, Shantou, Guangdong, China	Mixed-method	Teachers and students at a Chinese university	175
20	(Onivehu <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria	Quantitative	162 Basic School Science Teachers	02
21	((Bhatt, 2022)	Assistant Professor, Department of English Education, Far Western University, Nepal	Qualitative	Three English language teachers from Kanchanpur district, Nepal	02
22	(Ibáñez <i>et al.</i> , 2023)	Departament o de Innovación y Formación Didáctica, Universidad de Alicante, 03690 Alicante, Spain;	Mixed Method	Primary school teachers	

23	(Katukula <i>et al.</i> , 2023)	Social Sciences Division, Centre for Research Services, University of Namibia	Qualitative	Parents' and Teachers	02
24	(Berame <i>et al.</i> , 2023)	College of Education, Caraga State University, Butuan City, Philippines	Qualitative	1 Teacher-in-Charge, 1 Male Teacher, 3 Female Teachers, Tribal Leader, Parents (Total 8 Participants)	02
25	(Sultana & Fang, 2024)	Department of English Language, Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh	Qualitative	50 Undergraduate students from 4 universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and 8 teachers from various disciplines 6 teachers from 2 international universities in China's Greater Bay Area	02
26	(Choi & Poudel, 2024)	Southampton Education School, University of Southampton, UK	Qualitative	3 Headteachers, 12 Teachers, 15 Students	04

3.1. Year Wise Number of Publications

Figure 2 displays that during 2012-2015, a very small number of studies were conducted, with just one publication each in 2012 and 2015 and two publications each in 2013 and 2014. During 2016-2018, there was a slight increase in interest starting from 2017, where the number of publications increased to one in 2017 and three in 2018. This could indicate growing awareness and interest in MTB-MLE

among stakeholders. But the number of publications peaked in 2019 with six publications, indicating a significant surge in research activity. This could be attributed to the increased adoption of MTB-MLE. Further, the number of publications fluctuated slightly in the recent years with a drop to zero in 2021, but it again rose to two in 2022, three in 2023, and two in 2024. This suggests that while the interest in the topic remains, the intensity of research may have plateaued.

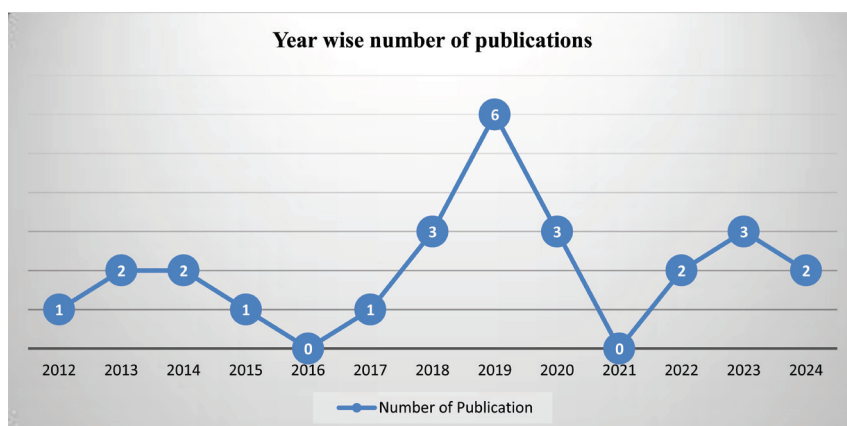


Figure 2: Time Distribution of Selected Studies

3.2. County Wise Number of Publications

The figure 3 displays the number of research publications on Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) across different countries. South Africa and the Philippines stand out with the highest number of publications, each having around four and three publications respectively. The USA, Indonesia, and Nigeria, also show a notable number of publications, with having around two publications each. A cluster of countries, including the UK, Spain, Kenya, Croatia, Namibia, Colombia, Turkey, India, Germany, Luxembourg, Nepal, Bangladesh, and China, all have lower levels of research publications, typically around one or slightly more. This suggests either emerging interest or limited research focus on MTB-MLE in these regions. The chart indicates that research on MTB-MLE is geographically diverse, with particular hotspots of activity in certain countries, but generally, the level of research varies widely, with many countries having only minimal contributions.

Kenya, Croatia, Namibia, Turkey, India, Germany, Luxembourg, Nepal, Bangladesh, and China, all have lower levels of research publications, typically around one or slightly more. This suggests either emerging interest or limited research focus on MTB-MLE in these regions. The chart indicates that research on MTB-MLE is geographically diverse, with particular hotspots of activity in certain countries, but generally, the level of research varies widely, with many countries having only minimal contributions.

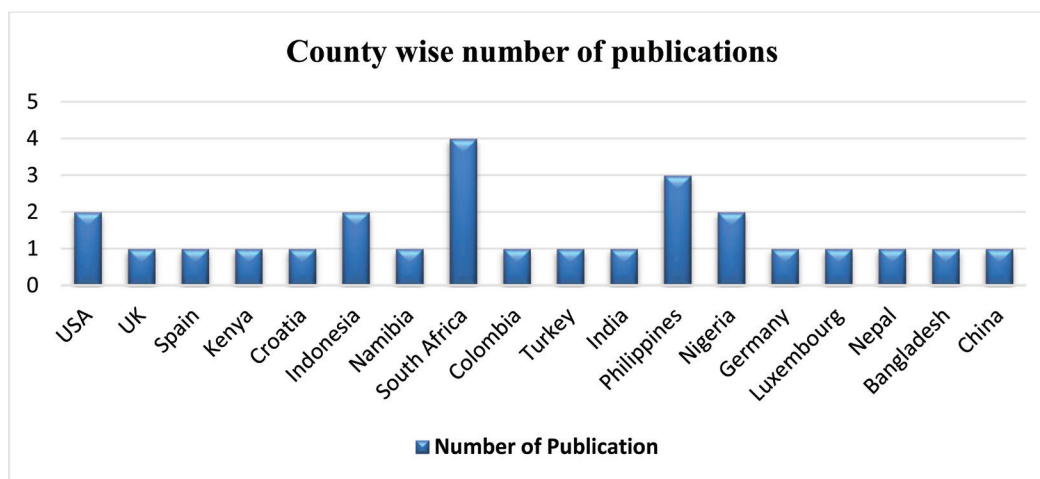


Figure 3: Country Wise Publication from 2012 to 2024

3.3. Research Method of Selected Studies

The pie chart displays the distribution of research methods used in studies on the perception and attitude of stakeholders towards the Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE). The largest portion (54%) of the studies utilized qualitative methods, indicating that researchers preferred exploring in-depth perspectives, experiences, and insights from stakeholders regarding MTB-MLE. This approach is likely chosen to understand the nuanced and contextual factors that influence attitudes and perceptions. A considerable portion (27%) of research studies employed quantitative methods. This indicates that a fair number of research studies attempted to quantify perception and attitude through surveys or other quantitative data-gathering techniques. This method is useful for identifying trends and generalizing findings across larger populations. On the other hand, the smallest portion of research studies (19%) used a mixed-method strategy, which merged quantitative as

well as qualitative techniques. This approach is valuable as it gives a comprehensive perspective by leveraging the strengths of both methods, though it requires more resources and expertise. The dominance of qualitative methods shows a strong focus on understanding the complexities and depth of stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes towards MTB-MLE. However, the presence of quantitative and mixed methods also indicates a balanced interest among researchers across the globe in assessing and validating these findings with empirical data.

Table 3 provides an overview of the average number of citations per article for research on stakeholders' perception and attitude towards Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE). China and Indonesia have the highest average citations per article with 175 and 99.5 citations respectively. This suggests that articles from these countries are highly influential and widely referenced in the academic community. Luxembourg, with an average of 86 citations per

article, also stands out as a significant contributor, followed by the USA (30.5), Kenya (30), and South Africa (22). These countries have produced work that is reasonably well-cited, indicating strong recognition of their research. Countries like the UK (4), Namibia (2), India (2), Nepal (2), and Bangladesh (2) have much lower average citations per article. This could indicate either newer research that hasn't yet been widely cited

or less impactful studies. Spain, with zero citations, stands out as a potential outlier, possibly indicating a publication that either hasn't gained traction or is very recent. The results show significant variability in the perception and attitude towards Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) research across different countries.

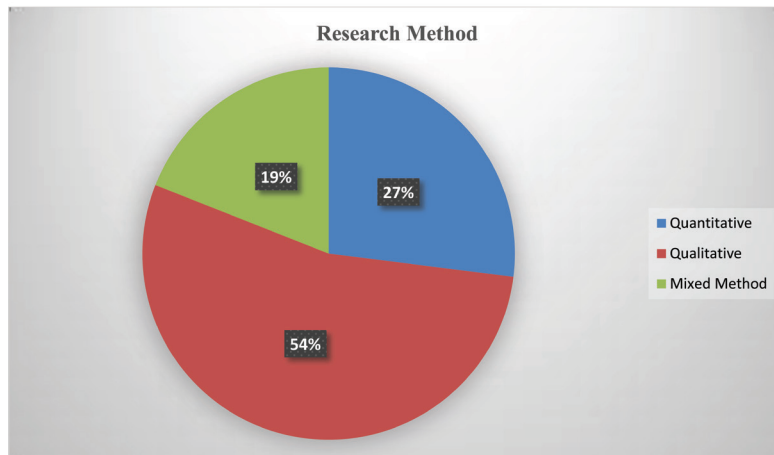


Figure 4: Research Methods of Selected Studies

Table 3: Country-Wise Average Citation per Article

Country	No. of Publications	Citation	Average Citation per Article
USA	2	61	30.5
UK	1	4	4
Spain	1	0	0
Kenya	1	30	30
Croatia	1	15	15
Indonesia	2	199	99.5
Namibia	1	2	2
South Africa	4	88	22
Colombia	1	14	14
Turkey	1	7	7
India	1	2	2
Philippines	3	16	5.33
Nigeria	2	21	10.5
Germany	1	11	11
Luxembourg	1	86	86
Nepal	1	2	2
Bangladesh	1	2	2
China	1	175	175

Horvat and Muhvić-Dimanovski (2012) conducted a study to explore the perceptions of teachers towards the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in a multilingual region. The findings show that many instructors acknowledge multilingualism and recognize its importance in cultural and personal identity. However, they also encounter various problems, namely limited resources and training of teachers, as well as social attitudes that favor dominant languages.

Ziegler (2013) investigates the obstacles to adopting multilingual education in Europe as well as its impact on language teacher training. The article emphasizes the complexities of multilingualism and its diverse realities across European contexts. Further, he recommends a common framework for language teacher education. The research identifies major challenges such as the necessity for integrating a multilingual perspective in teacher training, developing intercultural competence, and involving student bodies by critically evaluating the European profile for language teacher education.

Hlatshwayo and Siziba (2013) the article explores the attitudes of first-year university students towards multilingual education. The study finds that students generally favor English as the medium of instruction due to its perceived global relevance, although they acknowledge the potential benefits of learning in their mother tongue.

Naom and Sarah (2014) the study examines the attitudes and implementation challenges of Mother Tongue-Based Education (MTBE) in Kenya. Stakeholders, including teachers, parents, language specialists, and policy makers, identify several obstacles: the multiplicity of languages and dialects, societal skepticism, insufficient financial resources, pedagogic challenges, and conflicting ethnic loyalties. Data collected through interviews, focus groups, and document analysis highlight mixed feelings about the relevance and feasibility of MTBE. Teachers, while recognizing the educational benefits of mother tongue instruction, often struggle with inadequate training and resources. Parents express concern about their children's future job prospects if not proficient in English, contributing to resistance against MTBE.

Bhuvanewari and Bai (2014) the study examines the relationship between college students' attitudes towards multilingualism and multiculturalism in Tamil Nadu, India. The findings reveal no significant

difference in attitudes towards multilingualism between male and female students or between urban and rural students. However, there is a significant difference in attitudes towards multiculturalism, with male and urban students showing more favorable attitudes than their female and rural counterparts. Additionally, the study identifies a positive correlation between attitudes towards multilingualism and multiculturalism, suggesting that students who favor multilingualism are also likely to have a positive attitude towards multiculturalism.

Bin-Tahir (2015) has undertaken a study to assess the perspectives of students (Santri) and teachers (Ustadz) in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) on multilingual education. The quantitative data were collected from 100 participants through a questionnaire. The findings indicate that around 44% of respondents had a negative attitude towards bilingual education and only 24% showed a positive attitude. This negativity is attributed to a lack of awareness about the benefits of multilingual education, limited belief in its effectiveness, and absence of clear-cut governmental policies that support multilingual programs.

Bin-Tahir *et al.* (2017) investigated the impact of knowledge, educational level, perception, and attitude of pesantren students on the implementation of the Multilingual Simultaneous-Sequential Model (MSSM) in Makassar, Indonesia. The required data were collected from 100 students of three Pesantren schools, finding that collectively these factors positively impact MSSM. However, individually their impact varies. The educational level of students and their attitude have a stronger impact in comparison to knowledge and perception.

Kucukler and Tosuncuoglu (2018) compared learners' perceptions of monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism at Hoca Ahmet Yesewi University (AYU) and Balikesir University (BAU). The findings revealed that the vast majority of students believe that bilingualism improves cognitive abilities and social integration. The study concluded that learners' attitudes towards language learning are influenced by their multilingual surroundings. Therefore, clear-cut educational policies are necessary to promote multilingual education in order to maximize these advantages.

Putjata (2018) the study examines the attitudes of Santri and Ustadz towards multilingual education

at pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. Findings reveal that while there is an acknowledgment of the importance of multilingual education, there is a significant lack of motivation to develop such a system due to stringent government regulations concerning curriculum, national examinations, and school accreditation. This regulatory environment fosters a compliance-oriented attitude, thereby limiting the initiative to innovate and incorporate multilingual education effectively.

Parba (2018) explored how elementary school teachers' language practices and language ideologies have changed after the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual policy in the Philippines. The researcher used the ethnographic method and collected data over 14 weeks in a public elementary school where Cebuano is predominantly spoken. Firstly, teachers had a negative attitude towards mother tongue-based multilingual education, but their attitudes gradually changed in a positive direction. Because they realized the learning and pedagogical advantages of MTB-MLE. Further, the study revealed that both the teachers and students frequently used translanguaging to navigate and challenge language standardization.

Dalton *et al.* (2019) have conducted a qualitative case study to explore the perspectives of 13 teachers and administrators in the IXIL community of Guatemala regarding language revitalization and Mother Tongue-Based Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE). Teachers perceive their roles as crucial in preserving the IXIL language, emphasizing the significance of bilingual education in fostering cultural identity and students' linguistic and cognitive development. They perceived that teaching through IXIL helps students to comprehend and learn while also empowering them to handle broader societal contexts through Spanish.

Cekiso *et al.* (2019) investigated the Foundation Phase (FP) teachers' experiences with using isiXhosa as a medium of instruction in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The findings of the study highlighted that a high majority of teachers had not received sufficient training to teach content-specific subjects in isiXhosa, which created substantial obstacles in classroom instruction, particularly in Mathematics and Life Skills. Teachers reported difficulties due to a lack of appropriate isiXhosa vocabulary for certain specific subjects. This resulted in a translation from English, which they found hard.

Jimenez and Mora Acosta (2019) explored the perspective of two culturally diverse groups of teachers, one indigenous and one Western, on Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE). They found that both groups view that the bilingualism approach is essential for communication and empowerment. Furthermore, indigenous teachers highlighted its significance in protecting their rights and enhancing recognition. Interculturality was perceived as an interactive process that promotes mutual respect and understanding. They suggested inclusive educational methods that can integrate minority groups' cultural and language demands as well as encourage respect and interaction between diverse communities.

Belvis and Morauda-Gutierrez (2019) proposed the concept of "amorphous language" as an alternative to the existing serial monolingual approach in the Philippines' MTB_MLE policy. They highlighted the structural and theoretical challenges faced by MTB-MLE, such as hierarchies in language and preference for English and Filipino. This model supports translanguaging practices, which blend linguistic resources from different languages in practical communications. They concluded that strong educational reforms are necessary to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of MTB-MLE practices in multilingual communities.

Ezeokoli and Ugwu (2019) explored the belief of parents, teachers, and students about the use of mother tongue in selected secondary schools in Akinyele Local Government Area. The findings revealed that all three groups believe that mother-based instruction will help students to learn English and other courses more effectively, increase classroom participation, and foster cultural identity among students. Parents and teachers strongly support the inclusion of the mother tongue as a school subject to preserve cultural heritage and develop a positive attitude towards Nigerian culture.

Nkoala (2020) conducted a study to explore the perception of journalism students towards multilingual teaching-learning practices at South African University of Technology. The findings show that multilingual teaching-learning practices have the potential to improve academic performances as well as career prospects. However, students expressed mixed views on its efficacy. They underscored the necessity of more comprehensive and integrated multilingual strategies to promote inclusivity and support their academic and professional development as future journalists.

Esteron (2020) investigated the language attitudes and identity construction of trilingual learners in a rural school in the Philippines. The study focused on students' perception from the perspective of their native language (Ilocano), the national language (Filipino), and English. The results indicated that a high majority of students have a positive attitude towards all three languages and also acknowledged their significance in communication, education, and cultural identity. However, some negative attitudes were identified, particularly towards the use of these languages in different contexts, which may provide educational challenges. Additionally, the study also highlighted the complex interplay between language attitudes and identity construction, which suggested that these attitudes significantly influence learners' motivation and involvement in language learning.

Fang and Liu (2020) explored the complicated interplay between teachers' perception and the implementation of multilingual education within a mother-based multilingual education context. The findings revealed that the majority of the teachers initially opposed the transition from a monolingual to a multilingual educational environment due to strongly embedded linguistic ideologies and a lack of proper training and learning resources. But gradually over a period of time, some teachers showed a more supportive approach when they found its positive impact on students' cognitive and social development.

Onivehu *et al.* (2022) investigated science teachers' perceptions towards the use of the home language of students for instruction in basic schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The result showed that teachers usually had a negative attitude towards the use of the home language of students for instruction, raising the issue of insufficient instructional materials in indigenous language. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes were not significantly influenced by gender, type of school, or teaching experience but were affected by education.

Bhatt (2022) examined the perceived differences between Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) and Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The findings revealed that teachers believed that the MTB-MLE approach is more beneficial for preserving cultural identities, improving cognitive abilities, and producing plurilingual individuals with multiple competencies.

del-Olmo-Ibáñez *et al.* (2023) have undertaken a study to examine future Spanish primary education teachers' perceptions about multilingual competencies and the sustainability of the educational system. The findings indicated that teachers were well aware of the need to establish multilingual competencies in order to facilitate effective communication and integration of non-native students. Furthermore, respondents acknowledged that proficiency in multiple languages is necessary for maintaining an inclusive and adaptive educational environment.

Katukula *et al.* (2023) undertook a case study to explore language ideologies and the use of mother as a medium of instruction in Namibian junior primary schools. The study findings reflected that there were strong preferences for English as a medium of instruction because of its perceived socio-economic advantages over mother tongue-based instruction, which resulted in the marginalization of mother tongue. Further exploration revealed that the hegemonic position of English as a medium of instruction was perceived as essential for academic as well as professional success. On the other hand, local languages were often viewed as barriers, and this tendency perpetuates monolingual ideological attitudes and becomes a hindrance to the implementation of multilingual education policies at the national level.

Berame *et al.* (2023) investigated the challenges and viewpoints of stakeholders about the implementation of MTB-MLE in Sinaka IPED school in the Philippines. Findings indicated that lack of training of teachers as well as inadequate relevant learning materials to teach the Manobo language discouraged teachers from adopting the MTB-MLE approach. Moreover, the dominance of the Visayan language as a medium of instruction poses a threat to the preservation of the Manobo language.

Sultana and Fang (2024) investigated the challenges and opportunities for adopting English as a mother tongue-based translanguaging and medium of instruction (EMI) in university education in China and Bangladesh. The findings revealed that teachers had accepted the limits of EMI in fostering critical thinking skills and inclusivity; at the same time, they were also doubtful about the feasibility of implementing mother-tongue-based translanguaging in tertiary education. The study concluded that established monolingual prejudice and financial benefits associated with English impede the acceptability of mother tongue-based instruction.

Choi and Poudel (2024) conducted a study to examine the medium of instruction in an under-resourced multilingual public school in Nepal. The findings of the study concluded that the school had deliberately chosen English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) for practical reasons such as increasing employment chances and raising equality concerns. Teachers and students had frequently used the translanguaging approach to overcome language and subject problems, which enhanced students' comprehension with poor English competence.

4. Discussion of Results

4.1 Perception of Stakeholders towards Multilingual Education

Perception among stakeholders—parents, students, teachers, and policymakers—towards multilingual education differs greatly depending on the context and geography. But the majority of stakeholders, particularly teachers and teacher educators, have a positive view about multilingual education because of its ability to enhance cognitive capacities and foster cultural diversities (Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski, 2012; Bhatt, 2022). In the context of higher education, the perceived benefits extend to preparing students for global participation and fostering effective communication (Jimenez & Mora Acosta, 2019; del-Olmo-Ibáñez *et al.*, 2023).

However, in certain regions, there is a noticeable tension between the perceived benefits of multilingual education and the preference for a dominant language, particularly English. For instance, in the Philippines and Kenya, English is often favored due to its global relevance and economic advantages, even though stakeholders recognize the importance of preserving local languages (Hlatshwayo & Siziba, 2013; Adriano *et al.*, 2021; Katukula *et al.*, 2023). This tension highlights a complex perception where the potential benefits of multilingual education are acknowledged, but the practicality and economic utility of a dominant language like English still drive decision-making.

4.2 Attitude of Stakeholders towards Multilingual Education

Attitudes towards multilingual education among stakeholders reflect a mixture of support and resistance, often shaped by local contexts, cultural beliefs, and

systemic factors. In many cases, educators and students express supportive attitudes toward multilingual education due to its role in enhancing cultural identity and cognitive development (Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski, 2012; Dalton *et al.*, 2019; Bhatt, 2022). For instance, studies in the Philippines and Indonesia demonstrate that over time, teachers can shift from initial resistance to support as they witness the positive impacts of mother tongue-based instruction on student learning (Fang & Liu, 2020; Parba, 2018).

On the other hand, there is also significant resistance to multilingual education in certain contexts. This resistance often stems from deeply ingrained language ideologies and practical concerns. For example, in Nigerian and Kenyan schools, teachers and parents exhibit negative attitudes toward mother tongue instruction, primarily due to concerns about its impact on English proficiency and future job prospects (Naom & Sarah, 2014; Onivehu *et al.*, 2022). In these cases, the attitudes are influenced by the perceived socio-economic advantages of English, leading to a preference for monolingual instruction even in multilingual settings.

4.3 Challenges in Implementing Multilingual Education

The implementation of multilingual education faces several significant challenges, which vary across regions but generally revolve around resource limitations, teacher preparedness, and societal attitudes. A recurring issue is the lack of adequate training for teachers to effectively deliver multilingual education, especially in regions where there is a shortage of instructional materials in local languages (Naom & Sarah, 2014; Mandillah, 2019; Cekiso *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, indigenous language is very often marginalized in educational setups due to threats posed by the hegemonic position of English or other main languages (Berame *et al.*, 2023; Zanasi *et al.*, 2023). The hierarchical ordering of language in the educational system frequently handicaps the indigenous languages, which causes their neglect or underuse (Belvis & Morauda-Gutierrez, 2019). In Namibia and other comparable situations, the preference for English is due to perceived economic benefits further exacerbating the marginalization of indigenous languages and making it impossible to implement successful multilingual education policy (Katukula *et al.*, 2023). The problems

underline the importance of more comprehensive and context-sensitive techniques for overcoming multilingual education hurdles.

4.4. Educational Reforms and Policy Implications

The findings across these research studies highlight the need for substantial educational reforms and policy adjustments to address the challenges and leverage the potential benefits of multilingual education. One of the key areas of reform is the development of more inclusive and adaptive educational policies that acknowledge the linguistic diversity of students as well as integrate multilingual abilities (Ziegler, 2013; del-Olmo-Ibáñez *et al.*, 2023).

Furthermore, there is a strong call for policies that move beyond monolingual belief and embrace translanguaging practices that integrate linguistic resources from various languages into practical communication (Parba, 2018; Choi & Poudel, 2024). These practices have been shown to improve understanding and inclusion in multilingual classrooms, particularly in under-resourced settings. To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of multilingual education, it is important to address the systemic issues related to teacher training and resource accessibility. Educational policies should prioritize organizing continuous professional training programs for teachers. There is also a need to create and distribute teaching-learning materials in local languages to help teachers and students in multilingual settings (Mandillah, 2019; Zanasi *et al.*, 2023).

Finally, the reform of language education policies must consider the socio-economic background as well as the cultural significance of language. In the regions where English or other dominant languages are perceived as platforms to economic advantages, the policy planners should balance these languages and preserving the indigenous languages (Katukula *et al.*, 2023; Sultana & Fang, 2024). By doing so, the educational system can become more inclusive, equitable, and capable of promoting both language diversity and economic development. The successful implementation of multilingual education practice needs a multidimensional strategy that addresses the stakeholders' perception, attitude, and challenges while advocating for educational changes that promote language diversity and cultural identity.

5. Educational Implications

- **Need for Comprehensive Teacher Training Programs:** The most pervasive and common challenge for the implementation of multilingual education programs is the lack of trained teachers. Therefore, a comprehensive and focused professional development program should be organized on a priority basis, which can equip teachers with necessary skills and methodologies to address multilingual classrooms.
- **Development and Distribution of Multilingual Instructional Materials:** The shortage of instructional materials in local languages in many educational contexts underscores the need for creating and disseminating high-quality learning materials. In this connection, academic agencies must emphasize the development of culturally and linguistically relevant materials to facilitate effective teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms.
- **Incorporation of Translanguaging Practices:** The positive impact of translanguaging practices in multilingual classrooms advises that educational policies should properly incorporate and encourage these practices. Recognizing and supporting the use of several languages in the classroom allows teachers to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, which improves student comprehension and involvement.
- **Balancing the Promotion of Dominant Languages with Indigenous Language:** The economic advantages of dominant languages over indigenous languages highlight the need for educational planners to promote these languages while also preserving and uplifting indigenous languages. This balance is essential for promoting both language diversity and economic opportunity, which can prepare students for global citizenship while retaining their cultural identities.
- **Reforming Language Education Policies to Reflect Local Context:** The disparities in perception and attitude among stakeholders towards multilingual education across different regions suggest that language education programs must be context-specific. The educational policy planning should be customized to reflect the unique linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic realities of different regions, which can support the full-fledged implementation of a multilingual education program.

6. Conclusion

This systematic review of related literature has given an in-depth understanding of stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes towards Mother Tongue-Based

Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The findings disseminate a complex perspective in which the advantages of MTB-MLE are widely acknowledged in terms of cognitive development, preservation of cultural identity, and improvement of academic performance. However, significant challenges restrain its widespread adaptation and successful execution. Stakeholders usually intimate concerns about the practical consequences of MTB-MLE, particularly in environments where global languages such as English or another dominant language are prevalent. The perceived economic and social benefits of competencies in these languages often pose a threat to the large-scale implementation of MTB-MLE. This conflict emphasizes the need for a balanced strategy that can successfully address stakeholders' aspirations while preserving and developing local languages and traditions. The review of related literature clearly stipulates the importance of adequate teacher training, culturally applicable learning materials, and strong institutional and political support. Without addressing these critical dimensions, the implementation of MTB-MLE is likely to remain inconsistent and have limited impact. To move forward, fundamental educational modification must be executed to provide a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for MTB-MLE. These changes should try to improve awareness of the long-term benefits of multilingual education and provide necessary training and resources to teachers. Further, it envisages policies that maintain a balance between global languages and preserving local languages. In concluding the third research question, the gaps for further investigation in the field of MTB-MLE include insufficient instructional resources in local languages, limited teacher training, and biases favoring dominant languages like English that should be explored. Thrust areas for further research include developing inclusive practices, exploring socio-economic impact on MTB-MLE, and integrating trans language practices to enhance multilingual outcomes, which will accelerate the use of MTB-MLE in the whole system of education.

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Authorship Contribution

The first author, Purana Chandra Sahu conceptualized the study and formulated the research questions, laying the foundation for the systematic review. He collected literature from multiple databases, supervised the entire review process, and meticulously verified the accuracy of extracted data. His leadership ensured the study's comprehensive design and alignment with systematic review standards. The second author, Dr. Sudarshan Mishra reviewed the abstracts of the collected literature, defining the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic review. He also undertook language editing to enhance the manuscript's clarity and coherence. His critical analysis and decision-making significantly streamlined the review process, ensuring a high-quality and focused selection of studies. The third author, Dr. Sarat Kumar Rout contributed as an independent peer reviewer, utilizing RAYYAN software to screen and validate selected studies. He analyzed and interpreted the final reviewed papers, providing valuable insights. Additionally, he edited the content to ensure precision and alignment with the research objectives, strengthening the study's analytical and interpretative rigor. The fourth author, Jateendra Das played a vital role as an independent peer reviewer, employing RAYYAN software for screening. He collaborated closely with Dr. Sarat Kumar Rout in creating visual representations such as figures and supporting data interpretation. His efforts contributed to a comprehensive and visually engaging presentation of the systematic review findings. The fifth author, Bikkshyatsib Sardar served as an independent reviewer, utilizing RAYYAN software for study selection. He provided critical assistance in proofreading and data analysis, ensuring the article's accuracy and consistency. His meticulous attention to detail and commitment to refining the manuscript contributed significantly to the overall quality and readability of the research article.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Declaration

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