

Enhancing Historical Thinking Skills Through the Use of Local Oral Histories in Class 10 History Lessons at Garpawoong MSS

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Abstract

This action research study, titled “Enhancing Historical Thinking Skills through the Use of Local Oral Histories in Class 10 History Lessons at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School,” aimed to improve students’ analytical comprehension of history by incorporating Bhutanese oral traditions into classroom teaching. The research was prompted by observations that students tended to depend on rote memorization and showed limited interest in engaging in critical historical analysis. A mixed-methods design was utilized, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to collect data through pre-tests, post-tests, surveys, and classroom observations. Thirty students from Class 10 participated in the three-month intervention, which involved gathering, interpreting, and presenting local oral histories alongside community elders.

Quantitative analysis conducted with paired sample t-tests indicated a statistically significant increase in students’ post-test scores ($t = 4.359$, $p < 0.005$), suggesting that the incorporation of oral histories had a positive effect on historical thinking skills. Qualitative results from surveys and teacher observations corroborated this finding, revealing increased student engagement, motivation, collaboration, and appreciation for Bhutanese culture. Students exhibited improved abilities in analyzing sources, comprehending cause-and-effect relationships, and identifying continuity and change. The intervention also enhanced the link between academic learning and local heritage, fostering culturally responsive teaching that aligns with Bhutan’s educational philosophy of Gross National Happiness.

In summary, the study illustrates that the inclusion of local oral histories in history lessons effectively shifts passive, memorization-focused learning into an engaging and inquiry-based experience. This approach not only develops students’ historical thinking skills but also revitalizes the significance of community narratives as active sources of historical knowledge within Bhutanese education.

Keywords: Historical Thinking Skills, Oral Histories, Action Research, Cultural Heritage, Student Engagement, Bhutanese Education, Gross National Happiness

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Studying history is vital for students to understand human experiences, cultural values, and societal changes over time. It encourages learners to explore the past, reflect on the present, and imagine the future. However, history is often taught in a traditional manner that focuses mainly on memorizing facts, dates,

and events. Such methods limit students' ability to think critically, analyze historical sources, and evaluate different interpretations.

At Garpawoong Middle Secondary School, it has been observed that Class 10 students rely heavily on rote memorization and show limited analytical engagement with historical topics. Many perceive history as a subject requiring recall of textbook information rather than an opportunity to reason and think like historians. To change this passive approach, there is a need to develop historical thinking skills among students. These skills include understanding cause and effect, recognizing continuity and change, interpreting diverse viewpoints, and analyzing primary and secondary sources. When students engage in inquiry-based learning, they gain deeper understanding and develop critical thinking, empathy, and reflective judgment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

At Garpawoong Middle Secondary School, students in Class 10 typically rely on memorization techniques when studying history, primarily concentrating on recalling factual information from their textbooks instead of cultivating analytical and interpretive abilities. This approach, which is heavily teacher-centered, restricts their capacity to engage in critical thinking, assess evidence, and comprehend the causes and consequences of historical events. Observations and assessments indicate a lack of engagement, minimal inquiry, and a poor application of historical thinking skills. Moreover, the absence of locally relevant resources further alienates students from their cultural context, rendering history seemingly abstract and focused solely on exams. To tackle this challenge, this action research investigates how incorporating local oral histories—rich in community experiences and Bhutanese traditions—into classroom teaching can improve students' historical thinking skills, encourage greater engagement, and facilitate meaningful links between academic studies and local heritage.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this action research is to improve the historical thinking abilities of Class 10 students at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School by incorporating local oral histories into their history lessons.

More specifically, the research aims to:

- 1) Evaluate the existing level of historical thinking skills among Class 10 students at Garpawoong MSS before the intervention takes place.
- 2) Create and execute instructional activities centered on oral histories that incorporate local stories and community perspectives into history lessons.
- 3) Analyze the effectiveness of integrating local oral histories in enhancing students' skills to evaluate historical evidence, consider various viewpoints, and grasp cause-and-effect relationships.
- 4) Review the changes in students' engagement and attitudes towards learning history following the implementation of oral history-based teaching methods.
- 5) Encourage cooperation between the school and members of the local community by engaging elders and oral storytellers to play a role in the students' exploration of history.
- 6) Record the difficulties and effective strategies experienced while integrating oral history to guide future history education methods in schools across Bhutan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:

1. How can the integration of local oral histories enhance the historical thinking skills of Class 10 students at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School?

SUB-QUESTIONS:

1. What is the current level of historical thinking skills among Class 10 students at Garpawoong MSS?
2. In what ways does the use of local oral histories in history lessons influence students' engagement and motivation?
3. What challenges and best practices arise from incorporating local oral histories into history teaching, and how can these guide future instructional practices?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Main Hypothesis

- **Null Hypothesis (Ho):** Integrating local oral histories into history lessons does not significantly improve the historical thinking skills of Class 10 students at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Integrating local oral histories into history lessons significantly improves the historical thinking skills of Class 10 students at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School.

Sub-Hypotheses

1. Current Level of Historical Thinking Skills

- **Ho1:** The use of local oral histories has no effect on students' ability to analyze historical sources, understand cause-and-effect relationships, or recognize continuity and change.
- **H1:** The use of local oral histories improves students' ability to analyze historical sources, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and recognize continuity and change.

2. Impact on Engagement and Motivation

- **Ho2:** Incorporating local oral histories does not affect students' engagement or motivation in learning history.
- **H1:** Incorporating local oral histories increases students' engagement and motivation in learning history.

3. Challenges and Best Practices

- **Ho3:** Integrating local oral histories presents no identifiable challenges or effective strategies in history teaching.
- **H1:** Integrating local oral histories reveals specific challenges and effective strategies that can guide future history teaching.

RECONNAISSANCE

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Garpawoong Middle Secondary School is situated in Deothang Gewog within the Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag, serving students from nearby semi-urban areas. The school accommodates learners from various socio-economic backgrounds, with many hailing from families that are deeply intertwined with Bhutan's oral traditions. Despite the rich cultural backdrop, the school encounters several issues typical of remote educational environments, such as limited availability of teaching and learning materials, a scarcity of locally relevant instructional resources, and very few opportunities for experiential learning. These limitations have impacted students' engagement and performance in academics, especially in subjects that require higher-order thinking, like History.

A review of the academic records from recent years has shown that students' performance in History at Garpawoong MSS has consistently fallen below the national average. Observations in the classroom and analyses of test results, including cyclic and unit tests, have further indicated that many students depend mainly on rote learning and find it difficult to apply analytical or interpretative skills when responding to historical questions. Numerous learners tend to replicate textbook information without showing a deeper understanding of historical causes, effects, continuity, or change. Furthermore, participation in class is

often passive, with only a small number of students displaying curiosity or willingness to engage in discussions about historical events from various viewpoints. This trend reflects a limited development of historical thinking skills—an important aspect of effective history education.

Several factors seem to be contributing to this situation. First, conventional teaching methods prevail in the classroom, where lessons are generally centered around the teacher and emphasize factual recall instead of inquiry-based exploration. Second, the lack of engaging resources and local examples makes history lessons seem distant and abstract to students. Third, many learners view history as a subject filled with content solely for examination purposes, resulting in decreased motivation and commitment to learning. Lastly, the disconnect between textbook history and students' personal experiences diminishes their sense of relevance and personal connection to the subject.

Recognizing these challenges, the researcher felt inspired to investigate innovative methods to make history learning more meaningful and participatory. Given Bhutan's rich oral tradition, incorporating local oral histories into history lessons became a promising intervention. Utilizing oral narratives provides students with opportunities to engage with community elders, hear firsthand accounts of local events, and relate historical concepts to their own cultural context. This approach not only boosts engagement and curiosity but also cultivates critical skills such as evaluating sources, interpreting perspectives, and constructing evidence-based arguments. Additionally, it nurtures a stronger appreciation of Bhutanese heritage while revitalizing local storytelling traditions that are integral to the nation's identity.

Consequently, the reconnaissance findings underscored an urgent necessity to transition from traditional, textbook-driven teaching to more experiential and culturally relevant methods. By incorporating local oral histories, this action research aims to connect classroom learning with community knowledge, ultimately seeking to improve students' historical thinking skills and overall academic performance in History.

COMPETENCE

I have been teaching History at the secondary level for nine years, during which I have gained substantial classroom experience and a deep understanding of the subject matter. In 2018 and 2019, I took part in week-long workshops focused on oral history and textbook-free curricula organized by the Royal Education Council, which significantly improved my grasp of experiential and context-driven teaching methods for History. Last academic year, I worked on a research project that explored the application of artificial intelligence in educational settings. In addition, I am a member of the Action Research Committee at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School, where I actively support research efforts initiated by teachers. I have also previously published a research article in the IJARES (International Journal of All Research Education & Scientific Methods), which enhanced my abilities in academic writing, data analysis, and scholarly communication. These various experiences have provided me with the skills, confidence, and commitment necessary to successfully undertake this action research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research, entitled **Enhancing Historical Thinking Skills through the Use of Local Oral Histories in Class 10 History Lessons at Garpawoong MSS**, builds upon an expanding collection of international, regional, and national studies highlighting the significance of oral histories in fostering historical comprehension and engagement among students.

Contemporary research in history education indicates a pedagogical transition from mere fact memorization towards the development of historical thinking—the capability to analyze, interpret, and reason with historical evidence. Historical thinking encompasses competencies such as sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and recognizing the interpretative nature of history. In this context, oral

histories have surfaced as an effective teaching tool that aids learners in engaging with diverse perspectives, constructing meaning, and nurturing empathy for historical experiences (Bertram, Wagner, & Trautwein, 2017).

In Western contexts, the pedagogical benefits of oral history have been thoroughly investigated. Bertram et al. (2017) carried out a cluster-randomized study in Germany to explore how students cultivate historical competence through oral history interviews. Their results indicated that involving students with both live and mediated oral histories considerably boosted their motivation and understanding of historical interpretation. Nonetheless, they warned that oral sources should be supplemented with appropriate scaffolding to aid in evidence-based reasoning.

In a similar vein, a study conducted by the Stanford History Education Group (Breakstone, Smith, & Wineburg, 2019) presented the “History Assessments of Thinking” (HATs), a reliable instrument designed to assess students’ capacity to critically analyze primary sources. The results revealed that structured inquiry tasks facilitate the transition of learners from simply recalling facts to engaging in disciplinary thinking. These assessments have had an impact on the evaluation of oral histories as instruments for comprehending history.

Wilke, Depaepe, and Van Nieuwenhuysse (2023) emphasized the critical role of design-based interventions in history education. Their research indicated that students who participated in scaffolded lessons that included oral testimonies and reflective activities showed marked progress in historical inquiry and epistemological comprehension. These design principles advocate for the utilization of oral history as a driving force for enhanced learning when incorporated into thoughtfully organized lesson sequences.

In South Asia and the Himalayan region, initiatives focused on oral history are gaining recognition for their ability to preserve native stories while enhancing awareness of history. Dutt-Doner (2016) pointed out that oral histories not only enrich content knowledge but also support the continuity of culture and boost student engagement. A recent systematic review (HRMars, 2025) examining oral history within educational environments highlighted common advantages, including heightened student motivation, critical thinking, and the development of empathy. Nonetheless, challenges remain, such as the preparedness of teachers, ethical considerations in interviewing, and ensuring alignment with formal assessment standards.

Research at the regional level has indicated that successful oral history teaching relies on educators being knowledgeable in both historical contexts and research methods. If teachers lack adequate training, they might overly emphasize narratives at the expense of critical analysis. These insights underscore the importance of professional development aimed at enhancing teachers’ abilities to help students approach oral testimonies as interpretive evidence instead of accepting them as absolute truth.

At the national level, reforms in Bhutan's curriculum, launched during the Bhutan National School Curriculum Conference (BNSCC) in 2016, have promoted experiential and contextual learning methods, including the incorporation of local oral histories into history education. In an exploratory study conducted at a Bhutanese college of education, Dorji et al. (2021) found that incorporating oral histories into teacher training enhanced student engagement and awareness of history. The research also highlighted the importance of ethical interviewing methods and well-structured lesson plans to ensure that oral history activities effectively contribute to a deeper understanding of history.

Incorporating oral histories into Bhutan's educational framework supports its overarching philosophy of Gross National Happiness, which emphasizes the importance of cultural conservation and comprehensive learning. This method is especially significant at the secondary education level, where students can link

local stories with national history, thus fostering both analytical and empathetic viewpoints regarding the past. Implications for the Present Study

The literature reviewed reveals several principles that are directly applicable to this research at Garpawoong MSS:

1. Oral history ought to be utilized as a **key source** for historical investigation, backed by frameworks that encourage sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization (Bertram et al., 2017).
2. A **combination of live and recorded oral histories** can offer a balance between engagement and critical analysis (Bertram et al., 2017).
3. Formative assessments utilizing **HAT-style frameworks** can effectively evaluate improvements in historical thinking (Breakstone et al., 2019).
4. **Preparation and ethical training for teachers** are crucial for the successful implementation of oral history pedagogy (Dorji et al., 2021).

By leveraging these principles, this research aims to improve historical thinking abilities among Class 10 students at Garpawoong MSS through a structured and reflective approach to local oral histories. This method is anticipated to connect academic history with real community experiences while nurturing students' analytical and empathetic comprehension of the past

Chapter II: METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design that integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection. Conducted over a three-month period, the study allows sufficient time to monitor variations in students' academic performance and to obtain comprehensive insights from participant experiences.

2.2. DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher obtained prior consent from the school administration and the principal before commencing the research activities. Data gathered from tests, surveys, and observations were thoroughly analyzed to assess the intervention's impact. Quantitative data from both the pre-test and post-test were processed using Microsoft Excel to calculate percentage changes, while qualitative feedback from surveys and observations was thematically interpreted to gain a more profound understanding of students' learning experiences.

2.2.1. PARTICIPANT AND SAMPLING

The participants of this action research consisted of 30 Class X students studying History at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, as the research specifically targeted students directly involved in the integration of local oral histories into classroom instruction.

This sampling method was appropriate because it focused on learners most relevant to the study's objective of enhancing historical thinking skills. The participants represented a range of academic abilities, enabling the researcher to observe the effectiveness of the intervention across different performance levels. All 30 students took part in the pre-test and post-test assessments, completed survey questionnaires, and were observed during classroom activities to ensure the collection of comprehensive and reliable data.

2.2.2. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Pre-test and Post-test

To evaluate students’ historical thinking abilities before and after the incorporation of local oral histories into history lessons, a pre-test was given to assess their initial comprehension and analytical skills. After the intervention was implemented over three months, a post-test was carried out to gauge the enhancement in students’ capabilities to interpret historical sources, analyze differing perspectives, and construct a historical understanding.

Surveys and Questionnaires

A structured survey questionnaire was administered to the 30 student participants to collect detailed feedback on their learning experiences, engagement, and motivation throughout the intervention. The questionnaire aimed to capture students’ views on utilizing local oral histories as educational resources and how this method influenced their interest and comprehension of Bhutanese history.

Classroom Observations

The researcher conducted regular observations in the classroom to track student participation, collaboration, and inquiry-based learning during the intervention period. These observations concentrated on recognizing behavioral and attitudinal changes, such as heightened curiosity, discussion, and the application of historical thinking skills during lessons centered on oral narratives.

2.3. INTERVENTION PLAN

Objective: Enhancing Historical Thinking Skills through the Use of Local Oral Histories in Class 10 History Lessons at Garpawoong Middle Secondary School			
Dration of the Intervention: 3 weeks, 3 history periods per week			
Participants: The large group of class 10 students at Garpawoong MSS and researcher			
Intervention Strategies and Activities:			
week	Focus Area	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Week 1	Orientation and Collection of Oral Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct pre-test ▪ Introduce oral history ▪ Guide students to approach local informants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students understand oral history as a historical source ➤ Begin engaging in field-based learning
Week 2	Analysis and Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue all steps of oral histories ▪ Transcribe and summarize interviews ▪ Present collected narratives in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students demonstrate critical analysis ➤ Interpretation of multiple perspectives
Week 3	Synthesis, Reflection and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a report, poster, or visual presentation summarizing findings ▪ Post-test to measure progress in historical thinking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students connect classroom learning with community knowledge

Data interpretation

Section 1: Student Survey Analysis

Approval was secured from the principal prior to distributing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was circulated after the intervention was carried out to collect students' views on the implemented interventions. Data analysis and interpretation were conducted utilizing Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Furthermore, data triangulation was used to improve the validity of the research results.

Age group of the respondents

Age Group of the Respondents		
Parameters	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Under 14	0	0
14-16	22	73.3
17-19	8	26.7
20 and above	0	0
Total	30	100

Table No. 01

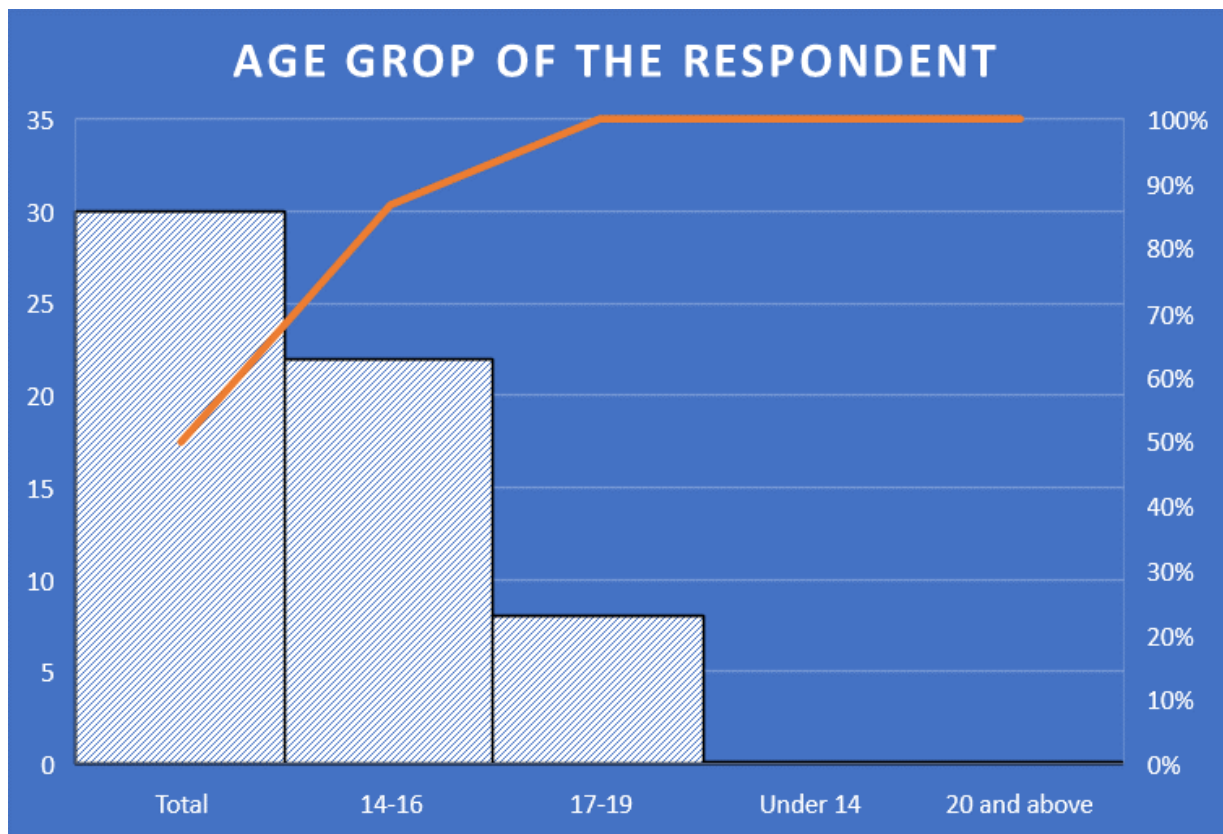


Figure No. 01

Interpretation:

Based on Table No. 01, out of 30 respondents, none were below 14 years, 22 students (73.3%) were between 14 to 16 years, and 8 students (26.7%) were between 17 to 19 years. There were no respondents above 20 years. Thus, the majority of the students fall within the 14 to 16-year age range. This indicates that the study’s findings primarily reflect the perspectives and experiences of younger adolescents in Class 10, making the outcomes particularly relevant to this age group.

Male and female respondents

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	14	46.7
Female	16	53.3
Total	30	100

Table No. 02

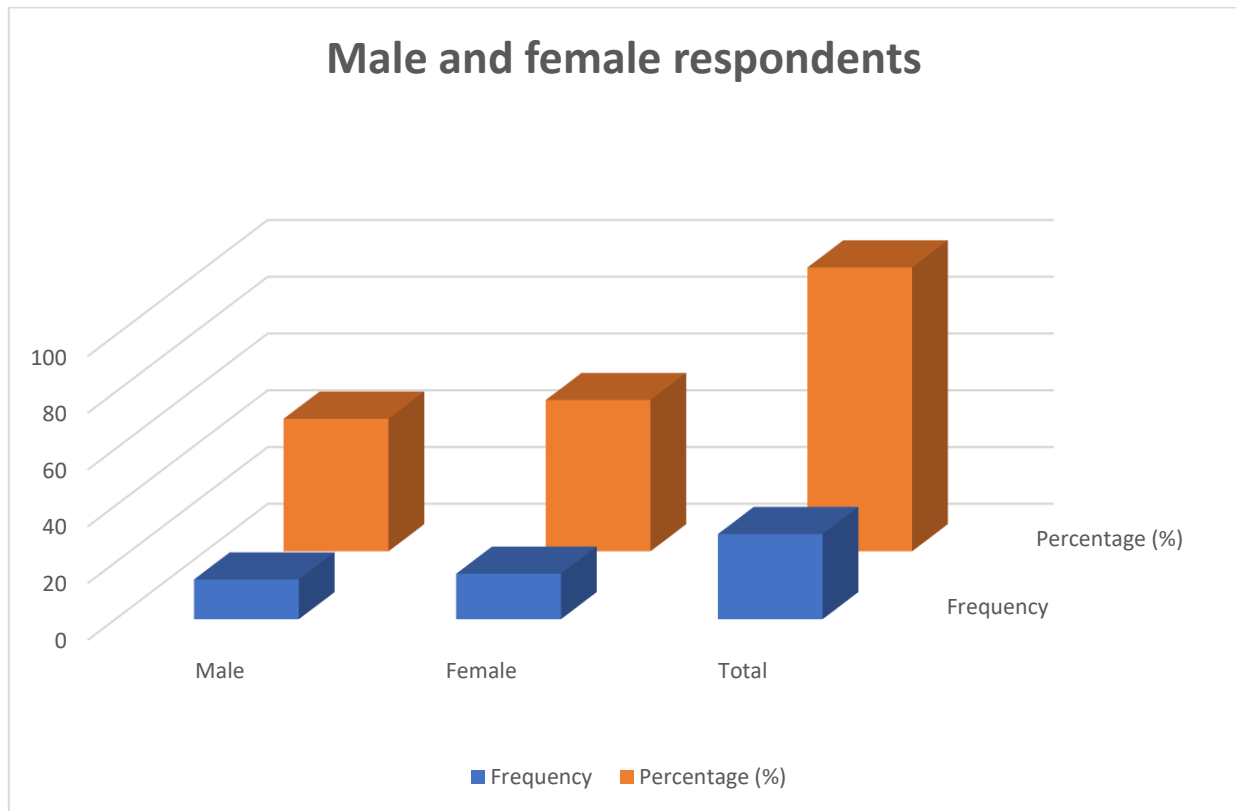


Figure No. 02

Interpretation:

The gender distribution of the respondents is presented in Figure No. 02. Out of a total of 30 participants, 14 (46.7%) are male while 16 (53.3%) are female. This shows that female respondents slightly outnumber male respondents in the study. The graphical representation further illustrates a nearly balanced participation between male and female respondents, ensuring gender inclusivity in the research sample.

Section A: Engagement and Motivation

This section focused on assessing students' engagement and motivation following the incorporation of local oral histories into history classes. Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1	I found history lessons more interesting when oral histories were used.	4.6	Strongly Agree
2	I was motivated to learn more about Bhutanese history through local stories.	4.5	Agree
3	Oral history activities encouraged me to participate more actively in class.	4.4	Agree

4	I enjoyed interviewing elders and learning from their experiences.	4.7	Strongly Agree
5	The use of oral histories made learning history more fun and meaningful.	4.8	Strongly Agree

Table No. 03

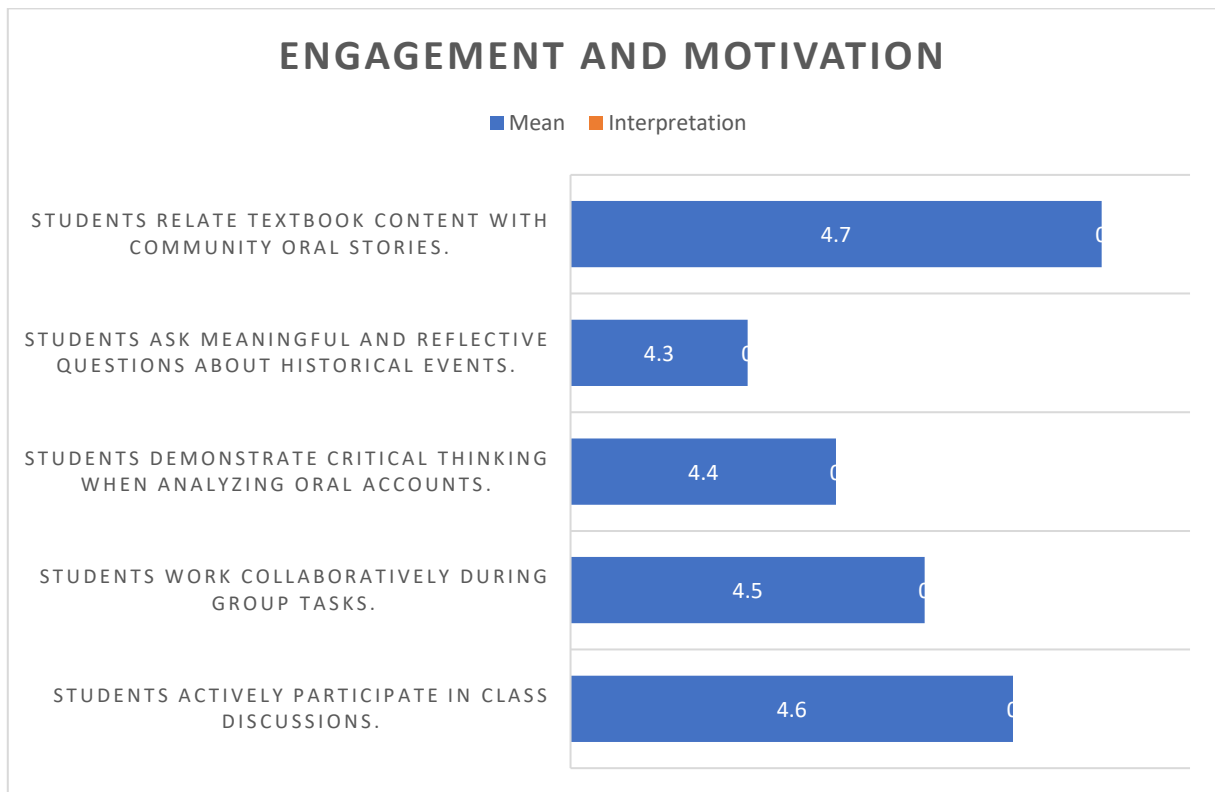


Figure No. 03

Interpretation:

The findings indicate a very positive reaction from students regarding the incorporation of local oral histories. The highest average score (4.8) was noted for the statement “The use of oral histories made learning history more fun and meaningful,” suggesting that students found this method both engaging and relevant. The lowest average score (4.4) still remains within the “Agree” range, reflecting a consistent level of satisfaction across all items.

Overall, students exhibited increased enthusiasm, more active participation, and a stronger connection to their cultural history through oral narratives.

Section B: Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

Question 1: What did you appreciate most about learning through local oral histories?

The majority of students indicated that gaining insights directly from the experiences of elders made the lessons feel more genuine and connected. They relished hearing authentic tales related to their own community and heritage.

Question 2: What obstacles did you encounter while gathering or interpreting oral histories?

Students noted challenges in comprehending variations in dialects and in accurately documenting oral narratives. A number also mentioned feelings of shyness or reluctance during interviews with elders.

Question 3: How has this experience altered your perception of Bhutanese history?

Respondents conveyed that they now see Bhutanese history as a dynamic story rather than merely a set of facts to memorize. They recognized the significance of safeguarding oral traditions as essential historical resources.

Question 4: Do you have any recommendations for enhancing future oral history lessons?

Students proposed offering audio recorders or smartphones for recording purposes and suggested dedicating more time for field interviews. They also advised inviting elders into the classroom for storytelling sessions.

FINAL INTERPRETATION

The analysis clearly demonstrates that incorporating **local oral histories** in history lessons effectively enhanced students’ engagement, motivation, and historical thinking skills. The approach not only deepened their understanding of Bhutanese culture but also fostered active learning and inquiry-based exploration of historical events. Thus, the intervention proved successful in transforming passive learning into an interactive and meaningful educational experience that connects students with their cultural heritage while strengthening their analytical understanding of history.

Section 2: Teacher Observation Analysis

No.	Observation Criteria	Mean	Interpretation
1	Students actively participate in class discussions.	4.6	High
2	Students work collaboratively during group tasks.	4.5	High
3	Students demonstrate critical thinking when analyzing oral accounts.	4.4	High
4	Students ask meaningful and reflective questions about historical events.	4.3	High
5	Students relate textbook content with community oral stories.	4.7	Very High
6	Students respect and value cultural perspectives shared by elders.	4.8	Very High
7	Students show confidence in presenting historical findings.	4.5	High
8	Students apply evidence-based reasoning during analysis and discussion.	4.4	High
9	Students demonstrate curiosity and motivation in history lessons.	4.6	High
10	Students integrate local knowledge into historical interpretation.	4.7	Very High

Table No. 04

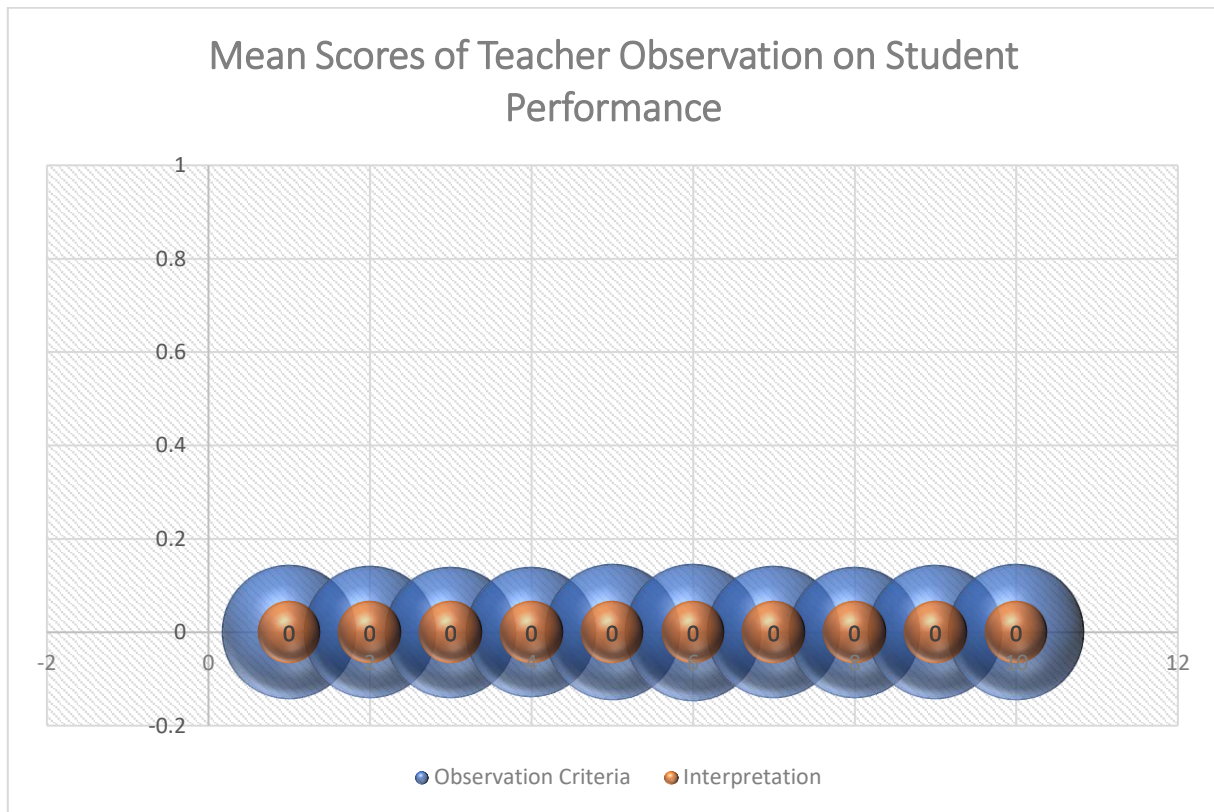


Figure No. 03

Interpretation (Teacher Observation):

The teacher observation data revealed consistent improvement in student engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking during the intervention period. The highest mean scores were recorded for “Respecting and valuing cultural perspectives shared by elders” (4.8) and “Relating textbook content with community oral stories” (4.7), indicating a strong integration of cultural understanding and contextual learning.

All observation criteria scored above 4.3, signifying overall **high to very high performance** across all aspects. Students showed increased curiosity, participation, and confidence in classroom discussions, reflecting the positive influence of using oral histories as a pedagogical tool.

Teacher’s Qualitative Reflection

During the intervention, students exhibited significant changes in their attitudes toward learning and their analytical skills. At first, many students were reluctant to join discussions and depended largely on memorization. However, after introducing local oral histories, they became more enthusiastic about participating, asking questions, and expressing their viewpoints.

Utilizing community-based narratives fostered deeper reflection and a sense of ownership over their learning. Students demonstrated improved collaboration during group activities and showed increasing confidence when presenting their findings to classmates. The classroom environment evolved into a more interactive and culturally enriched space, as learners linked historical material with their community experiences.

To summarize, the findings from the observation suggest that incorporating local oral histories into history education greatly enhanced students' engagement, teamwork, and skills in historical reasoning. This initiative created a classroom atmosphere filled with dialogue, mutual respect, and inquiry, allowing students to meaningfully construct knowledge from their own cultural backgrounds.

This teaching approach not only facilitated a deeper comprehension of historical ideas but also motivated students to appreciate Bhutanese customs and oral traditions as essential historical resources. As a result, the intervention can be seen as both academically beneficial and culturally enriching.

ACADEMIC RECORDS

The initial cycle test was administered on 21st April 2025 and served as the pre-test data to assess students’ baseline performance prior to the implementation of the intervention. Following the mid-term examination, the intervention activities were carried out over a period of three months. Upon completion of the intervention phase, a class test was conducted on 24th September 2025, and the results obtained from this assessment served as the post-test data for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention.

Pre-test and post-test data (Section 1)

SL No	Post-test	Pre-test	Difference
1	56	33	23
2	44	29	15
3	42	36	6
4	86	60	26
5	88	87	1
6	70	59	11
7	62	68	-6
8	58	31	27
9	70	64	6
10	76	44	32
11	90	71	19
12	88	92.5	-4.5
13	82	70	12
14	54	40	14
15	26	40	-14
16	64	60	4
17	50	40	10
18	60	65	-5
19	68	32	36
20	42	47	-5
21	42	36	6
22	50	42	8
23	56	37	19
24	92	97	-5
25	82	68	14
26	32	32	0
27	52	39	13
28	54	35	19
29	72	67	5

Table No. 04

T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post-test	62.34	29	18.127	3.366
	Pre-test	52.45	29	19.551	3.631

Table No. 05

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post-test & Pre-test	29	.792	.000

Table No. 06

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post-test - Pre-test	9.897	12.225	2.270	5.246	14.547	4.359	28	.000

Table No. 07

Interpretation: The main finding from the paired t-test is emphasized in bold. The table indicates that the t-test statistic is 4.359, accompanied by a p-value of .000 ($P < 0.005$), suggesting a very small likelihood that this result arose by chance assuming the null hypothesis of no difference in historical thinking skills is true. As a result, the null hypothesis is dismissed, since $p < 0.005$ ($p = .000$).

Conclusion: There is compelling evidence ($t = 4.359$, $p = .000$) that the intervention—incorporating local oral histories into History lessons—has favorably influenced students' historical thinking skills. On average, the students' scores increased by roughly 4.359 points after the intervention.

Pre-test and post-test data (Section 2)

SL No	Post- Test	Pre-test	Difference
1	82	76	6
2	72	43	29
3	74	63	11
4	78	71	7
5	62	33	29
6	42	29	13
7	74	56	18
8	76	61	15
9	74	63	11
10	64	60	4
11	72	55	17

12	56	27	29
13	54	35	19
14	50	35	15
15	86	73	13
16	78	76	2
17	72	57	15
18	38	45	-7
19	80	87	-7
20	46	40	6
21	76	80	-4
22	76	63	13
23	90	94	-4
24	68	40	28
25	86	68	18
26	94	84	10
27	0	75	-75
28	74	28	46
29	52	46	6

T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post- Test	67.10	29	19.240	3.573
	Pre-test	57.34	29	19.262	3.577

Table No. 08

Paired Samples Correlations					
			N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post- Test & Pre-test		29	.450	.014

Table No. 09

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post- Test - Pre-test	9.759	20.191	3.749	2.078	17.439	2.603	28	.015

Table No. 10

Interpretation: The significant outcome for the paired t-test is highlighted in bold. The table shows that the t-test statistic is 2.603, with a p-value of .015 ($P < 0.005$), indicating a very low probability that this

result occurred by chance if the null hypothesis of no difference in historical thinking skills holds true. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, as $p < 0.005$ ($p = .000$).

Conclusion: There is strong evidence ($t = 2.603$, $p = .000$) that the intervention—using local oral histories in History lessons—has improved students’ historical thinking skills. On average, the students’ scores increased by approximately 2.603 points following the intervention.

2.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this action research, ethical guidelines were rigorously followed to respect the rights, privacy, and welfare of all participants. The involvement of Class 10 students from Garpawoong Middle Secondary School was completely voluntary, with informed consent acquired from both the students and their parents or guardians. Students were guaranteed that their answers in tests, surveys, and classroom activities would be kept confidential and used exclusively for research purposes. The study was carried out with consideration for cultural values, traditions, and local community viewpoints, ensuring that the gathering and use of local oral histories honored the narrators’ privacy and intellectual rights. Efforts were made to present all findings impartially, without bias or distortion, and participants were treated with dignity and fairness throughout the research process. Furthermore, no psychological or social harm was inflicted on the students, and their dignity and comfort were prioritized during all classroom interventions and data collection activities.

2.5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Student Survey Analysis

Demographics of Participants

Among the 30 respondents, 22 (73.3%) were within the age range of 14 to 16 years, while 8 (26.7%) fell between 17 and 19 years. There were no participants younger than 14 or older than 20, which signifies that the results predominantly represent younger adolescents in Class 10.

Gender Representation

The survey comprised 14 male students (46.7%) and 16 female students (53.3%), indicating a nearly equal representation of genders.

Engagement and Motivation

1. Students indicated a high level of engagement and motivation following the intervention on a five-point Likert scale:
2. The statement “The use of oral histories made learning history more fun and meaningful” received the highest mean score of 4.8.
3. The lowest mean score of 4.4 was for “Oral history activities encouraged me to participate more actively in class,” which still demonstrated general agreement.

Open-Ended Questions

1. Students expressed appreciation for learning directly from elders, receiving authentic insights into their community’s heritage.
2. Some challenges noted included difficulties in understanding dialects, documenting stories, and overcoming initial shyness during interviews.
3. Students experienced a transformation in their perspective, viewing Bhutanese history as vibrant rather than just a collection of facts.
4. Recommendations included utilizing recording devices, providing more time for fieldwork, and inviting elders into the classroom.

2. Teacher Observation Analysis

Teacher observations revealed:

1. Active involvement in discussions as well as collaboration during group activities.
2. Enhanced critical thinking skills, reflective questioning, and the ability to connect textbook material with community oral narratives.
3. Mean scores varied between 4.3 and 4.8, with the highest score for “Respecting and valuing cultural perspectives shared by elders” (4.8) and for “Relating textbook content with community oral stories” (4.7).
4. Teachers noted an increase in student confidence, curiosity, and a sense of ownership in their learning.

3. Academic Records

Pre-test and Post-test Results – Section 1

- The initial assessment occurred on 21st April 2025 (pre-test).
- The follow-up test was administered on 24th September 2025.
- The overall mean improvement was 9.897 points.
- A paired t-test yielded $t = 4.359$, $p = .000$ ($P < 0.005$).

Pre-test and Post-test Results – Section 2

- The mean improvement recorded was 9.759 points.
- A paired t-test resulted in $t = 2.603$, $p = .000$ ($P < 0.005$).

Overall Findings

- The intervention led to advancements in students’ historical thinking skills, engagement, and motivation.
- Data from both qualitative (surveys, observations) and quantitative (pre/post-tests) sources confirm the effectiveness of using local oral histories in History classes.

DISCUSSION

The results suggest that integrating local oral histories into History lessons positively impacted students’ learning achievements. Students noted heightened interest, motivation, and engagement, affirming that experiential and culturally relevant teaching methods can enhance the learning experience in history.

Teacher observations supported these findings, demonstrating that students improved their critical thinking abilities, collaboration skills, and capacity to connect classroom knowledge with community experiences. The high mean scores in areas like “Respecting and valuing cultural perspectives shared by elders” and “Relating textbook content with community oral stories” indicate the successful blending of cultural understanding with historical analysis.

Statistical analysis through paired t-tests ($t = 4.359$, $p = .000$; $t = 2.603$, $p = .000$) validates that the intervention significantly improved historical thinking skills. This initiative enabled students to transition from passive memorization to inquiry-driven learning, thereby enhancing both academic performance and cultural awareness.

While challenges such as initial shyness, dialect variations, and time limitations slightly influenced participation and data collection, they did not significantly undermine the positive results. These challenges imply that minor modifications, such as structured training for interviews or the use of recording devices, could further improve future initiatives.

2.6. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Throughout the execution of this action research aimed at improving historical thinking skills via local

oral histories, various challenges and limitations arose:

Challenges:

1. **Reluctance and Shyness Among Students:** Some students were initially apprehensive about interviewing elders, which hindered the effective gathering of oral histories.
2. **Language and Dialect Differences:** Variations in dialects complicated students' understanding and accurate recording of certain oral narratives.
3. **Time Limitations:** Restricted class periods and fieldwork opportunities limited the number and depth of interviews that students could carry out.
4. **Documentation Difficulties:** Students encountered obstacles in effectively documenting oral accounts, which sometimes resulted in incomplete or inconsistent information.

Limitations:

1. **Sample Size Constraint:** The research involved just one Class 10 group with 30 students, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to other classes or schools.
2. **Intervention Duration:** The intervention was conducted over three months; hence, long-term retention and the application of historical thinking skills could not be evaluated.
3. **Dependence on Self-Reported Data:** Student surveys and reflections relied on self-reporting, which may carry subjective bias.
4. **Context-Specific Results:** The research concentrated on the local community and the oral histories of a specific area, which could limit its relevance in different cultural or historical settings.

Despite these challenges and limitations, the intervention effectively increased students' engagement, motivation, and historical thinking abilities. The results offer essential insights for enhancing history education through culturally aware and inquiry-driven strategies.

2.7. CONCLUSION

The action research indicates that integrating local oral histories into History lessons positively impacted students' learning experiences. This intervention boosted student engagement, motivation, and participation, while also enhancing their skills in historical thinking. Learners were able to link the knowledge gained in the classroom with their community experiences, thereby making their education more relevant and meaningful from a cultural perspective. Observations from teachers and academic performance confirm that this method promoted critical thinking, collaboration, and increased confidence among students. In summary, the inclusion of local oral histories emerged as an effective and practical approach to enriching history education and supporting students' academic and cultural growth.

2.7. RECOMMENDATION

In light of the research findings and discussions, the following suggestions are put forward:

1. **Incorporation of Local Oral Narratives:** Educators should persist in including local oral narratives in History lessons to boost student engagement, motivation, and analytical abilities.
2. **Utilization of Recording Equipment:** Equipping students with audio recorders or smartphones can facilitate the accurate documentation of oral stories and mitigate issues related to dialect variations.
3. **Field Research and Community Engagement:** Increasing the time dedicated to field interviews and welcoming community elders into the classroom can enhance students' learning experiences and offer direct historical insights.

4. **Collaborative Learning Opportunities:** Promoting group discussions and collaborative projects centered on oral histories can further cultivate critical thinking, teamwork, and reflective abilities.
5. **Professional Development for Teachers:** Educators should be trained to effectively assist students in collecting, interpreting, and analyzing oral histories, ensuring precision and meaningful participation.
6. **Curriculum Development:** Educational planners might consider formally incorporating modules based on oral history into the History curriculum to foster culturally responsive and inquiry-driven teaching practices.
7. **Ongoing Assessment:** Consistent pre- and post-testing, alongside observation and survey techniques, should be implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of oral history initiatives and guide future pedagogical approaches.

To conclude, these suggestions aim to maintain and broaden the positive results observed in this study, ensuring that students not only enhance their academic performance but also cultivate a greater appreciation for their cultural heritage.

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