

Cultivation of Intercultural Sensitivity among Students and Teachers in the Tertiary Level

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.908000585>

Received: 16 August 2025; Accepted: 23 August 2025; Published: 22 September 2025

ABSTRACT

Globalization has heightened the necessity for intercultural sensitivity in education, particularly for engineering students who must navigate multicultural professional environments. This study employed a descriptive-quantitative approach to assess intercultural sensitivity levels among students at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology. 392 students and 33 English teachers participated, selected through purposive and simple random sampling to ensure diverse representation across engineering disciplines. Results indicated that students exhibited moderate intercultural sensitivity, demonstrating openness to cultural engagement but facing challenges in confidence and enjoyment. Teachers displayed high levels of cultural awareness and inclusivity, though they encountered difficulties in addressing cultural misunderstandings and integrating diverse cultural perspectives in teaching. The findings highlight the need to enhance intercultural competence in engineering education through targeted curricular interventions, including integrating cultural sensitivity training into English courses and expanding exposure to multicultural experiences. These insights serve as a foundation for educators, administrators, and policymakers in developing strategies to better equip students for cross-cultural interactions in their academic and professional careers.

Keywords: Intercultural Sensitivity, Engineering Students, Higher Education, Cultural Competence, English Teaching

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly connected world, intercultural sensitivity is essential for promoting mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration in a pluralist educational setting. Among the tertiary settings where students and tutors communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, the ability to operate and appreciate cultural differences plays a critical role in creating an inclusive and effective learning environment. Intercultural sensitivity refines communication and reduces biases while enhancing one's global competence needs; it is indispensable for academic and professional success.

Higher education institutions are melting pots for different cultures, ideas, and perspectives. Because of this, globalization is shaping educational landscapes, thus exposing students and educators to various cultural norms, values, and communication styles. Yet sometimes, cultural differences lead to misunderstanding, stereotyping, or even conflict, thereby limiting meaningful engagement and learning opportunities. Intercultural sensitivity in students and instructors is, thus, necessary to create mutual respect, equity, and a better learning environment for everyone.

This study delves into the development of intercultural sensitivity among students and teachers in higher education institutions. It explores factors that influence their intercultural awareness, problems they face while interacting with cultures, and the strategies that may be used to increase their sensitivity toward cultural diversity. In addition, the research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing intercultural education programs and initiatives and identify best practices that can be integrated into teaching and learning processes.

This research sought valuable insights into the different dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, fostering policies and programs that work towards a more culturally responsive and globally competent educational

system. The findings will benefit educators, administrators, and policymakers in designing interventions for inclusive and adaptive learning spaces where students and teachers can thrive in a multicultural academic setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Significance of Intercultural Sensitivity in Academic and Professional Settings

Several studies were conducted to assess students' intercultural competence, primarily investigating the development of students' intercultural competence through various resources, including teaching programs and living abroad experiences. For instance, Tran and Seepho (2016) explored EFL learners' attitudes toward intercultural communicative language teaching and their ICS development in the Vietnamese context. The study revealed that EFL learners' attitudes towards intercultural competence learning were positively transformed, and their ICS developed accordingly. Specifically, the findings demonstrated that students' intercultural competence improved in terms of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and intercultural awareness, albeit with slight differences in the degree of each component.

Previous studies have shown that individuals with a higher level of intercultural sensitivity could effectively communicate with people from other cultures, display leadership skills, and possess high social and cultural intelligence, a high tolerance for uncertainty, high academic and work performance, effective conflict resolution skills, and less ethnocentrism (Bosuwon, 2017). Moreover, some reports indicated that teachers and preservice teachers with higher intercultural sensitivity had higher levels of intercultural awareness, intercultural knowledge, and intercultural skills.

Since the 21st century, the climate of foreign language teaching in China has changed significantly, making it increasingly important for foreign language education to assume the responsibility of intercultural education (Zhang, 2012). In 2000, the English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors in Higher Educational Institutions was promulgated, emphasizing the importance of "focusing on the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence" for the first time. This push forward in the research on intercultural education in foreign language teaching has led to an increasing number of studies on intercultural competence analysis and cultivation models. For example, Pan (2018) argued that scientific exploration of the connotation of intercultural competence should precede its cultivation. Scholars have defined and elaborated on the composition of intercultural competence from various perspectives (Xu, 2020; Yang & Zhuang, 2017), proposed models for developing intercultural competence (Pan, 2018), and constructed frameworks for cross-language intercultural communication competence (Liu, 2022).

In terms of cultivating intercultural competence, domestic scholars advocated the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence through the levels of "crossing" and "transcending" based on the characteristics of China's English language teaching (Gao, 2022). Four cultivation methods—strengthening teacher training, improving teaching materials, cultivating awareness, and emphasizing practical training—were suggested (Ge & Wang, 2016), along with two cultivation models: theoretical and practical (Gu, 2017).

Regarding intercultural foreign language teaching strategies, scholars explored new concepts and classroom teaching methods, such as "ESA" (Yang & Zhao, 2018), and methods including network and multimedia teaching, intercultural training, and ethnographic intercultural foreign language teaching (Sun & Xu, 2014; Fu & Zhang, 2017). Additionally, innovative classroom teaching models, such as the process cultural teaching model, transnational cooperative teaching model, output-based language and culture integration teaching model, and blended teaching model, were developed (Sogefei & Chi, 2018).

Research showed that foreign language education was the most active context for intercultural competence research (Suo & Kulich, 2019; Peng, Zhu, & Wu, 2020). The relationship between foreign language education and intercultural competence remained a dominant research topic (Dai, 2018). The ultimate goal of language learning was to achieve appropriate and effective intercultural communication (Corbett, 2018; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2018; Zhang, 2019; Sun, 2019).

Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity was the affective dimension of intercultural communication competence, reflecting one's attitudes towards intercultural communication. Chen and Starosta (2018) proposed that intercultural sensitivity is an individual's active desire to understand, appreciate, and accept cultural differences. This manifested in the emotional experience when interacting with others from different cultures. Bennett (2020) proposed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), a theory of how individuals respond to cultural differences, with stages ranging from ethnocentric to ethnorelative worldviews.

In the global context of education and professional settings, cultivating intercultural competence, sensitivity, and communication skills among students was an academic exercise and a strategic necessity for enhancing international collaboration and ensuring the success of China's new education initiatives.

Cultural Awareness

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of cultural awareness in education, particularly in multicultural classrooms. According to García et al. (2021), culturally aware teaching practices enhance students' academic engagement and performance by creating a more inclusive learning environment. The study found that when teachers are culturally aware, they can better address the needs of diverse students, leading to improved educational outcomes. A study by Jones and Smith (2020) highlighted that culturally aware professionals are better equipped to communicate with clientele, leading to improved satisfaction and outcomes.

Cultural Inclusivity

Cultural inclusivity has been linked to higher employee satisfaction and productivity in the workplace. According to a study by Brown et al. (2022), organizations prioritizing cultural inclusivity benefit from a more cohesive and collaborative work environment. The research found that inclusive workplaces reduce discrimination and bias, leading to better organizational performance. Cultural inclusivity is essential in schools to create a supportive environment for all students. A study by Nguyen (2023) explored the impact of culturally inclusive curricula on student engagement. It found that students who see their cultures represented in the curriculum are likelier to participate actively in class and feel a sense of belonging. The study recommended that schools implement culturally inclusive teaching materials and practices to foster a more inclusive educational environment.

Cultural Communication

Research has shown that cultural communication is crucial in interpersonal relationships, particularly in multicultural settings. A study by Chen and Lee (2021) found that individuals skilled in cultural communication can better navigate cross-cultural interactions, reducing misunderstandings and conflicts. The study also highlighted the importance of cultural communication training in improving interpersonal relationships in diverse communities. With the rise of digital communication, cultural communication has also evolved. A study by Patel and Johnson (2023) examined the impact of social media on cultural communication and found that while digital platforms can facilitate cross-cultural interactions, they can also lead to miscommunication due to differences in cultural norms and values. The study recommended developing digital literacy programs that emphasize cultural sensitivity to improve online cross-cultural communication.

While significant progress has been made in understanding cultural awareness, inclusivity, and communication, several gaps remain in the literature. There is a lack of longitudinal studies that examine the long-term impact of cultural awareness and inclusivity initiatives on individuals and organizations. Future research should focus on tracking these effects over time to provide more comprehensive insights. Many studies have focused on cultural factors in isolation, without considering the intersectionality of culture with other identity factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status. Research that explores the intersectionality of these factors is needed to understand the complexities of cultural awareness and inclusivity fully. While theoretical research on cultural communication is abundant, there is a need for more practical

studies that provide actionable strategies for improving cultural communication in various contexts, including education, healthcare, and business.

Research Problem

This research sought to assess intercultural sensitivity among students and teachers in the tertiary level.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. How may the Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) of the student respondents be described in terms of the five constructs:
 - 1.1. interaction engagement;
 - 1.2. respect for cultural differences;
 - 1.3. interaction confidence;
 - 1.4. interaction enjoyment, and
 - 1.5. interaction attentiveness?
2. How may the teachers' perception towards intercultural sensitivity of students be described in terms of:
 - 2.1. cultural awareness;
 - 2.2. cultural communication, and
 - 2.3. cultural inclusivity?

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study utilized a descriptive-quantitative research design to assess the intercultural sensitivity of students and teachers at the tertiary level. The research provided insights for refining teaching strategies that enhance students' intercultural communicative competence.

The study was conducted at the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, during the Academic Year 2023-2024. The respondents of this study included 392 college students from the different programs and departments and 33 English teachers, selected through purposive and simple random sampling to ensure diversity in disciplines and teaching expertise.

Data were gathered using survey questionnaires. The survey questionnaire was validated, with Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.86 and 0.72 ensuring reliability.

Data Analysis Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27, employing Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation). A four-point Likert scale measured intercultural sensitivity levels, with verbal interpretations for scores. The study ensured data accuracy, anonymity, and confidentiality, using statistical techniques like factor analysis for validity checks. This structured approach provided a comprehensive understanding of intercultural sensitivity among students, informing targeted teaching improvements in university English courses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) of Students

The table below presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents' average score on ICS and five constructs of ICS.

Interaction Engagement

The first construct, Interaction Engagement, is concerned with people's feeling of participation in intercultural communication.

Table 1 Students' Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) in terms of Interaction Engagement

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I don't enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	1.89	Moderate
2. I tend to wait to form an impression of culturally distinct counterparts.	3.18	High
3. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.	2.47	Moderate
4. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.	2.61	High
5. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally distinct persons.	1.88	Moderate
6. I often show my culturally distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.	2.45	Moderate
7. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally distinct counterpart and me.	2.37	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.41	Moderate

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate; 1.00-1.74 – Low

The overall grand mean of 2.41, classified as moderate, suggested that students possessed an average level of Interaction Engagement. They exhibited moderate engagement with individuals from different cultures, displaying some positive behaviors such as withholding judgment and providing positive responses. However, there was also a noticeable level of discomfort and avoidance in certain situations, indicating areas where intercultural training and education could be beneficial. This implied that students had a moderate level of enjoyment when interacting with individuals from different cultures, indicating some reluctance but not outright aversion.

Specifically, Item 2 ("I tend to wait to form an impression of culturally distinct counterparts.") and Item 4 ("I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.") exhibited a high degree of agreement. This indicated that students strongly tended to withhold judgment and take their time to form impressions of people from different cultures, reflecting a more thoughtful and open approach. Additionally, students frequently provided positive feedback in intercultural interactions, demonstrating a high level of engagement and a willingness to build rapport.

Items 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7 exhibited moderate agreement, respectively. The students displayed moderate open-mindedness towards individuals from different cultural backgrounds, suggesting that while they were somewhat accepting, there was room for improvement in their openness. There was a moderate tendency among students to avoid interactions with culturally distinct individuals, indicating some discomfort but not complete avoidance. Students also moderately demonstrated understanding through verbal and nonverbal communication, suggesting they made some effort to connect but might have lacked consistency or depth in their engagement. Additionally, students felt a moderate enjoyment towards cultural differences, indicating they appreciated diversity to some extent but may not have fully embraced or celebrated it.

These results demonstrated that most participants were willing to engage in intercultural communication because they were open-minded, non-judgmental, and could interact—three essential components of intercultural sensitivity as proposed by Chen and Starosta (1997).

According to Chen and Starosta's (1997) review of the concept of ICS, open-mindedness indicated the willingness to recognize, accept, and appreciate different views and ideas, which was reflected in Items 1

and 5. High scores on Items 2, 3, and 4 suggested that the participants were non-judgmental because they tended to foster enjoyment towards cultural differences and did not hastily jump to conclusions without sufficient data in interactions (Hart & Burks, 1972). Participants who scored highly on Items 4 and 6 were better at receiving and understanding messages, taking appropriate turns, and initiating and terminating intercultural interactions more fluently and appropriately.

Respect for Cultural Difference

The second component, Respect for Cultural Differences, is concerned with how people orient to or tolerate their counterparts' cultures and opinions.

Table 2

Students' Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) in terms of Respect for Cultural Differences

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.	1.25	Low
2. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.	1.62	Low
3. I respect the values of people from different cultures.	3.35	High
4. I feel it necessary to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	2.86	High
5. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.	1.53	Low
6. I think my culture is better than other cultures.	2.19	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.13	Moderate

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate-1.00-1.74 – Low

The overall grand mean of 2.13 indicated moderate respect for cultural differences among students. While there were positive signs of respect and openness—such as high regard for cultural values and a proactive approach to understanding other cultures—areas still need improvement, particularly in reducing cultural superiority and enhancing the acceptance of diverse opinions.

Items 3 and 4 exhibited a high degree of respect for cultural differences. These high scores signified that those students had a strong respect for the values of people from different cultures, reflecting a significant appreciation and acknowledgment of cultural diversity. Additionally, students felt a strong need to gather information when interacting with culturally diverse individuals, indicating a proactive approach to understanding and respecting cultural differences.

Item 6 exhibited a moderate level of respect, suggesting that some students viewed their culture as superior. This reflected a potential improvement in fostering a more equal appreciation of all cultures. Items 1, 2, and 5 showed little respect for cultural differences. This low score suggested that students generally did not perceive individuals from other cultures as narrow-minded, reflecting a positive attitude and openness towards other cultures. Moreover, students did not have a strong aversion to interacting with people from different cultures, suggesting a basic level of comfort and willingness to engage with culturally diverse individuals. Students were generally open to accepting opinions from people of different cultures, which was crucial for effective intercultural communication and mutual respect.

As students were increasingly exposed to the different histories, values, and customs of other cultures through their courses (such as College English and other humanities courses), social media, and daily life, they became more capable of viewing cultural differences from an objective perspective and accepting them more easily.

This suggested that they were open-minded and developing intercultural sensitivity, progressing from a stage of ethnocentrism to an ethno-relative stage.

Interaction Confidence

The third construct, Interaction Confidence, concerns how confident participants feel in intercultural settings.

Table 3 Students' Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) in terms of Interaction Confidence

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I am pretty not sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.	2.24	Moderate
2. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.	2.17	Moderate
3. I always don't know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	2.34	Moderate
4. I can't be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.	2.41	Moderate
5. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.	2.32	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.30	Moderate

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate-1.00-1.74 – Low

The data reflects the respondents' self-assessed confidence and comfort levels when interacting with people from different cultures. All the indicators have been given a mean score, each falling within the "Moderate" verbal description range.

The indicator "I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures" received a mean score of 2.32, suggesting that respondents generally felt moderately confident in cross-cultural interactions. However, this confidence is not particularly strong, indicating room for improvement in building self-assurance in these situations.

The indicators "I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures" (mean of 2.17) and "I can't be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures" (mean of 2.41) also reflect a moderate level of social comfort. While respondents did not find engaging socially challenging, they still experienced some degree of difficulty, particularly in expressing themselves fully.

The indicator "I always don't know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures" (mean of 2.34) suggests that respondents occasionally struggle with finding the right words during cross-cultural interactions. This reflects a moderate level of uncertainty or hesitation in communication, which might impact the quality and effectiveness of their interactions.

The grand mean of 2.30 indicates that, overall, the respondents have a moderate self-perception regarding their ability to interact with people from different cultures. While they do not exhibit high levels of anxiety or discomfort, neither do they feel completely at ease or confident in these situations.

The data suggests that the respondents are moderately confident and comfortable interacting with people from different cultures. They show some positive engagement in cross-cultural interactions but also experience certain challenges, such as uncertainty in communication and limited social comfort. These areas could benefit from targeted interventions, such as intercultural communication training or confidence-building exercises, to help students become more self-assured and effective in diverse cultural settings.

Concerning this, Coleman (2002) pointed out that "the problem of confidence clearly needs addressing." He also found that anticipated worries and problems arose due to a lack of linguistic and personal confidence. Similarly, Rodgers and McGoven (2002) found that individuals often faced challenges related to language barriers and unfamiliar customs and cultures in various ways. These barriers often influence individuals' interactions with people from different cultures, resulting in a lack of confidence. Therefore, the participants' slightly low score on this construct was attributed to challenges related to both language and cultural barriers.

Interaction Enjoyment

Interaction Enjoyment is concerned with respondents' positive or negative reactions toward communicating with people from different cultures.

Table 4 Students' Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) in terms of Interaction Enjoyment

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.	1.69	Low
2. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.	2.21	Moderate
3. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.	2.06	Moderate
Grand Mean	1.99	Moderate

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate-1.00-1.74 – Low

The data reflect respondents' emotional responses when interacting with people from different cultures. Each indicator was assigned a mean score corresponding to a specific verbal description, providing insight into the respondents' emotional discomfort or distress levels in cross-cultural interactions.

The first indicator, "I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures," received a mean score of 1.69, which falls within the "Low" verbal description range. This suggests that respondents generally did not experience significant emotional distress or upset when interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. They likely maintained a relatively calm and composed demeanor during such interactions.

The second indicator, "I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures," had a mean score of 2.21, classified as "Moderate." This suggests that while respondents occasionally felt discouraged in cross-cultural settings, this feeling was not overwhelming or frequent. They may have experienced some challenges that led to discouragement, but it was not a pervasive issue.

The third indicator, "I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures," received a mean score of 2.06, also within the "Moderate" range. This indicates that respondents sometimes felt ineffective or inadequate during cross-cultural interactions, although this feeling was not dominant. They may have faced situations where they struggled to contribute meaningfully, but it was not a consistent problem.

The overall grand mean of 1.99 falls within the "Moderate" range, suggesting that respondents experienced moderate emotional discomfort or distress when interacting with people from different cultures. While they did not frequently feel upset, discouraged, or useless, these emotions were present to some degree, indicating areas where emotional resilience and confidence in cross-cultural interactions could be strengthened.

Overall, the data suggest that while respondents generally managed their emotions well in cross-cultural interactions, there were instances where they experienced moderate levels of discouragement and feelings of

inadequacy. Targeted support, such as intercultural communication training or emotional resilience programs, could help reduce these negative emotions and enhance their comfort and effectiveness in diverse cultural settings.

Jettmer and Nass (2002) proposed that interaction enjoyment is composed of the interaction's pleasantness, productiveness, enjoyment, and cooperative nature. The results suggest that most participants experience a relatively high enjoyment during intercultural interactions. However, nearly half of the participants are uncertain about the three items, indicating that they are unsure of their feelings and do not react positively when encountering problems in intercultural interactions.

Interaction Attentiveness

The last component is Interaction Attentiveness, which concerns participants' effort to understand what is going on in intercultural interaction.

Table 5 Students' Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) in terms of Interaction Attentiveness

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.	2.41	Moderate
2. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	3.13	High
3. I am sensitive to my culturally distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.	2.29	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.61	High

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate-1.00-1.74 – Low

Interaction Attentiveness within intercultural sensitivity is evaluated using three specific indicators. The mean scores for these indicators range from "Moderate" to "High," with the grand mean indicating an overall high level of attentiveness among students during intercultural interactions.

Specifically, the mean score for "Observant in Interactions" (Indicator 1) is 2.41, suggesting that students are moderately observant when interacting with people from different cultures. This reflects a fair level of awareness and attentiveness to cultural nuances. "Respect for Cultural Behaviors" (Indicator 2) has a mean score of 3.13, indicating that students exhibit a high level of respect for the behaviors of people from different cultures, showing a strong appreciation and acceptance of cultural differences. The mean score for "Sensitivity to Subtle Meanings" (Indicator 3) is 2.29, demonstrating that students are moderately sensitive to the subtle meanings conveyed by their culturally distinct counterparts during interactions. This suggests a reasonable level of perceptiveness, though there is room for improvement.

Overall, the data indicate that students generally demonstrate a high level of attentiveness in intercultural interactions. They excel particularly in respecting cultural behaviors, which significantly contributes to their overall intercultural sensitivity. However, there is still a need to enhance their observant and perceptive abilities to achieve even greater attentiveness.

Teachers' Perception Towards Intercultural Sensitivity of Students.

This presents teachers' perceptions of students' intercultural sensitivity, highlighting how educators view students' awareness, understanding, and responsiveness to cultural diversity.

Cultural Awareness

This table presents the levels of cultural awareness and sensitivity reported by teachers, highlighting their approaches and attitudes toward understanding and integrating cultural diversity into their teaching practices.

Table 6 Teachers' Perception Towards Intercultural Sensitivity of Students Regarding Cultural Awareness

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I am aware of cultural differences among my students.	3.33	Very High
2. I recognize the importance of understanding my students' cultural backgrounds.	3.64	Very High
3. I actively seek to learn about the cultural traditions of my students.	3.36	Very High
4. I am sensitive to cultural issues that may arise in the classroom.	3.39	Very High
5. I consider cultural diversity when planning my lessons.	3.27	Very High
Grand Mean	3.40	Very High

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate-1.00-1.74 – Low

The data reflects a high level of cultural sensitivity and awareness among respondents regarding their approach to teaching and interacting with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Each indicator has received a mean score in the "Very High" range, with the grand mean also falling within this category.

The indicator "I am aware of cultural differences among my students." received a mean score of 3.33. Respondents reported a very high level of awareness of cultural differences among their students. This suggests that they are highly conscious of the diverse cultural backgrounds present in their classrooms.

The indicator "I recognize the importance of understanding my students' cultural backgrounds." (mean of 3.64) reported the highest mean score. It indicates that respondents place a significant emphasis on understanding their students' cultural backgrounds. They recognize this understanding as crucial for effective teaching and interaction.

The indicator "I actively seek to learn about the cultural traditions of my students." (mean of 3.36) indicates that respondents actively seek to learn about the cultural traditions of their students, reflecting a proactive approach to integrating cultural knowledge into their teaching practices.

The indicator "I am sensitive to cultural issues that may arise in the classroom." With a mean of 3.39, indicates that a very high level of sensitivity to cultural issues suggests that respondents are attentive to potential cultural challenges and are likely to address these issues effectively when they arise.

"Consideration of Cultural Diversity in Lesson Planning" with a mean of 3.27, reported that respondents make a concerted effort to consider cultural diversity when planning their lessons, ensuring that their teaching materials and methods are inclusive and relevant to students from various cultural backgrounds.

The grand mean of 3.40 reinforces that, overall, respondents exhibit a very high level of cultural sensitivity and engagement. They demonstrate strong awareness, respect, and adaptability in their teaching practices concerning cultural diversity. This high level of sensitivity indicates a solid commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

These findings align with the research by Gay (2010), who emphasizes the importance of cultural responsiveness in teaching. Gay argues that effective educators must be culturally competent, which involves recognizing and valuing cultural diversity, understanding students' cultural backgrounds, and integrating this

knowledge into teaching practices to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment. This aligns with the high levels of cultural sensitivity reported by respondents in this study.

Cultural Communication

This table illustrates the degree of sensitivity and responsiveness teachers demonstrate in their communication with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, reflecting their ability to effectively engage and adapt their communication styles.

Table 7 Teacher's Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) Regarding Cultural Communication

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I adapt my communication style to be more effective when interacting with students from different cultural backgrounds.	3.39	Very High
2. I encourage open dialogue about cultural differences in my classroom.	3.58	Very High
3. I feel confident in addressing cultural misunderstandings that may occur in the classroom.	3.09	High
4. I am able to communicate effectively with students whose first language is not the same as mine.	3.24	High
5. I use culturally appropriate examples and references in my teaching.	3.27	Very High
Grand Mean	3.31	Very High

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate-1.00-1.74 – Low

The data presented reflects a high level of intercultural communication sensitivity among teachers, particularly in adapting their communication styles and addressing cultural differences in the classroom. Each indicator received a mean score ranging from "High" to "Very High," with the grand mean falling within the "Very High" category.

The indicator "I adapt my communication style to be more effective when interacting with students from different cultural backgrounds" received a mean score of 3.39, reflecting a very high level of adaptability in communication. This suggests that teachers are highly responsive in effectively modifying their communication methods to engage with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The indicator "I encourage open dialogue about cultural differences in my classroom" scored the highest, with a mean of 3.58, indicating a high commitment to fostering open discussions about cultural differences. This demonstrates that teachers actively promote an environment where students feel comfortable discussing cultural issues.

With a mean score of 3.09, "I feel confident in addressing cultural misunderstandings that may occur in the classroom" falls into the "High" category. This suggests that teachers generally feel confident in managing and resolving cultural misunderstandings, though there may still be room for further improvement.

The indicator "I can communicate effectively with students whose first language is not the same as mine" received a mean score of 3.24, also categorized as "High." This shows that teachers effectively communicate with students with different first languages, indicating their ability to bridge language barriers.

"I use culturally appropriate examples and references in my teaching" scored 3.27, reflecting a very high level of effort in incorporating culturally relevant examples into teaching. This indicates that teachers are attentive to ensuring their teaching materials are inclusive and resonate with students from various cultural backgrounds.

The grand mean of 3.31, which falls in the "Very High" range, underscores that teachers generally exhibit a strong sensitivity and effectiveness in intercultural communication. They are highly committed to adapting their communication styles, encouraging open dialogue, and using culturally appropriate references, contributing to an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

According to Deardorff (2009), intercultural communication competence involves the ability to adapt communication styles and address misunderstandings effectively, which aligns with the high scores in adapting communication and addressing cultural misunderstandings observed in this data. Additionally, Chen and Starosta (2005) emphasize the importance of open dialogue and culturally appropriate examples in fostering effective intercultural communication, which is supported by the high scores on encouraging dialogue and using culturally relevant examples in this study.

Cultural Inclusivity

Table 18 presents the data on teachers' intercultural sensitivity with respect to cultural inclusivity, highlighting their practices and attitudes towards creating an inclusive and culturally diverse learning environment.

Table 8 Teacher's Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) Regarding Cultural Inclusivity

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I create an inclusive environment that respects and values cultural diversity.	3.42	Very High
2. I ensure that all students, regardless of their cultural background, feel included in classroom activities.	3.39	Very High
3. I incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into my teaching materials.	3.21	High
4. I actively promote equality and inclusivity in my classroom.	3.42	Very High
5. I adjust my teaching strategies to accommodate the cultural needs of my students.	3.45	Very High
Grand Mean	3.38	Very High

Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Very High; 2.5-3.24 – High; 1.75-2.49 – Moderate-1.00-1.74 – Low

The data reflect a strong commitment to cultural inclusivity among teachers, as indicated by the mean scores for each indicator and the grand mean, all of which fall within the "Very High" range.

Indicator 1, "I create an inclusive environment that respects and values cultural diversity," received a mean score of 3.42. This score suggests that teachers are highly successful in fostering an environment where cultural diversity is respected and valued.

The indicator, "I ensure that all students, regardless of their cultural background, feel included in classroom activities," scored 3.39. This result shows that teachers make significant efforts to include all students in classroom activities, promoting a sense of belonging for everyone, regardless of cultural background.

Indicator 3, "I incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into my teaching materials," received a mean score of 3.21. This score reflects a high level of integration of various cultural perspectives into teaching resources, though it is slightly lower compared to other indicators.

The indicator 4, "I actively promote equality and inclusivity in my classroom," achieved a mean score of 3.42. This indicates that teachers are very effective in promoting equality and inclusivity within their classroom settings.

Indicator 5, "I adjust my teaching strategies to accommodate the cultural needs of my students," received the highest mean score of 3.45. This result indicates that teachers are highly proactive in adapting their teaching methods to meet the cultural needs of their students.

The grand mean of 3.38 reinforces that, overall, teachers demonstrate a very high level of sensitivity and commitment to creating an inclusive classroom environment. They excel in ensuring that cultural diversity is respected, all students feel included, and teaching strategies are adjusted to accommodate cultural differences. This suggests a robust approach to integrating cultural inclusivity into their teaching practices.

According to Deardorff (2009), effective intercultural communication requires the ability to create inclusive environments and accommodate diverse cultural needs, aligning with the very high scores in creating inclusive environments and adjusting teaching strategies observed in this data. Additionally, Chen and Starosta (2005) highlight the importance of integrating diverse cultural perspectives and promoting equality in educational settings, which is supported by the high scores in incorporating cultural perspectives and promoting inclusivity in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

Students demonstrate a moderate level of intercultural sensitivity, with strengths in engagement, respect, and attentiveness but concerns in confidence and enjoyment. These moderate scores indicate an openness to cultural interactions but reveal a need for targeted interventions to build confidence and enhance enjoyment in intercultural exchanges. Teachers exhibit a strong commitment to cultural diversity in their teaching practices, showing high levels of awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness. However, there is room for improvement in addressing cultural misunderstandings and more fully integrating diverse cultural perspectives into teaching materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen intercultural competence development among students, it is recommended that intercultural modules, case studies, and collaborative projects be integrated into courses such as College English and Humanities. For instance, literature classes may include cross-cultural comparative analysis, while communication courses can design role-play activities that simulate multicultural workplace scenarios. Moreover, continuous evaluation should not only rely on quantitative surveys but also incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and reflective journals with both students and teachers. These approaches would uncover the underlying reasons for the difficulties and discomfort highlighted in the quantitative findings, providing deeper insights for curricular improvement. In addition, professional development for faculty should be prioritized through workshops on inclusive pedagogy, intercultural sensitivity training, and the use of culturally responsive teaching materials, supported by mentoring and peer-sharing sessions to sustain innovative practices. Interventions should also be tailored to the specific needs of different academic disciplines, such as using international case studies in business courses or emphasizing cross-cultural collaboration in science subjects to address global issues. Finally, future research should be expanded to other academic disciplines and universities to enhance the generalizability of the findings and ensure that the proposed strategies are broadly applicable across varied educational settings.

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