Cultural Echoes in Classrooms: The Influence of Cultural Backgrounds on Teaching Practices

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Abstract: This study explores how lecturers' cultural identities and international experiences influence their teaching in multilingual higher education classrooms. While diversity is often seen in terms of teacher competencies or students' backgrounds, this qualitative research highlights lecturers as culturally situated actors whose identities shape their pedagogical approaches. Based on written semi-structured interviews with 10 lecturers from two public universities in Estonia and Lithuania, and analysed through reflexive thematic analysis, four themes emerged: cultural identity as a pedagogical lens; openness and growth through international experience; adaptive strategies in culturally diverse classrooms; and limited institutional support for intercultural work. Findings reveal that lecturers' cultural backgrounds act as epistemic lenses affecting classroom dynamics, authority, and judgments about "appropriate" practice, while international experience serves as intercultural re-socialisation. Adaptation is viewed as an ongoing process of identity negotiation rather than a set of technical methods. The study argues that demographic internationalisation alone is inadequate and advocates for sustained, identity-centred professional development in ELT and higher education.

Keywords: Cultural identity, multicultural education, intercultural communicative competence, teacher identity, teacher education

1. Introduction

The internationalisation of higher education has profoundly altered the demographics within classroom settings. University classrooms now reflect greater multiculturalism, with students and faculty from diverse linguistic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. While inclusive teaching methodologies and multicultural education research have predominantly focused on learner diversity and on developing teachers' multicultural or intercultural teaching competencies (e.g., Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Siwatu, 2011; Tuncel & Paker, 2022), considerably less attention has been paid to how teachers' own cultural identities and lived experiences shape their pedagogical choices. This study addresses that gap by foregrounding the cultural identities and experiences of lecturers themselves and examining how these dimensions inform their classroom practices, thereby extending the existing literature beyond student-centred conceptions of diversity to include lecturers' cultural positioning as a central component of inclusive pedagogy.

In this vein, this study investigates the impact of lecturers' cultural identities and experiences on their teaching methods within culturally diverse learning environments. It specifically analyses how these cultural factors affect pedagogy, classroom communication, student interactions, and viewpoints on teaching and learning practices. This study contributes to the expanding body of literature on inclusive and reflective teaching in higher education, in

alignment with ongoing calls for culturally responsive teaching approaches (Gay, 2018; Ryan & Slethaug, 2019).

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to highlight the influence of lecturers' cultural identities on their pedagogical practices and beliefs within multicultural higher education classrooms. It is organised around the following objectives:

- to examine the influence of cultural backgrounds on lecturers' pedagogical practices,
- to explore lecturers' perceptions of the training on multicultural teaching competence and intercultural competence.

In this regard, this study addresses a significant gap in inclusive pedagogy research.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is based on theories of intercultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy. Intercultural competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with individuals from various cultural backgrounds (Deardorff, 2006). It includes the awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to navigate cultural complexities within educational settings (Banks, 2002).

Conversely, culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018) emphasises the significance of incorporating students' cultural references into the educational process. While a considerable portion of the existing literature focuses on adapting to students' cultures, this study examines an alternative perspective: the influence of lecturers' cultural frameworks on their classroom engagement, interpretation, and responses.

The study also incorporates teacher identity theory, which views teaching as primarily shaped by the interaction among personal, cultural, and professional identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This theoretical framework enables a deeper exploration of how an individual's personal background affects their professional behaviour within a multicultural academic setting.

2. Review of Literature

In multilingual classrooms, the influence of cultural backgrounds on teaching practices is both profound and multifaceted. Teachers' beliefs about language diversity and their pedagogical strategies are critical in shaping inclusive educational environments. Cultural and linguistic diversity poses both challenges and opportunities within educational frameworks and

understanding how to navigate these diverse backgrounds can ultimately enhance the learning experience.

One key dimension is the awareness that teachers must develop regarding the cultural and linguistic diversity in their classrooms. Research indicates that educators who employ varied instructional strategies—such as translanguaging, balanced literacy, and culturally responsive teaching—help bridge linguistic and cultural diversity (Li & Qin, 2025; White, 2023). For instance, teachers who adopt a positive perspective towards learners' backgrounds foster environments in which linguistic and cultural diversity is viewed as a richness rather than a deficit (Li & Qin, 2025; Alisaari et al., 2021). This mindset challenges the monolingual ideologies prevalent in many educational settings, promoting a culturally responsive approach that values the richness of multilingualism (Slaughter & Cross, 2021).

A significant body of literature further emphasises that educators' cultural backgrounds and experiences shape their attitudes, beliefs, and instructional methods (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Chaika, 2023; Guberina, 2023; Koukoulidis et al., 2024). Chaika's (2023) research on cultural sensitivity training demonstrates the need for explicit preparation that equips foreign language teachers to work effectively in culturally diverse classroom environments. Her three-stage model comprising *selection, training*, and *post-training* emphasises the continuous development of intercultural competence (p. 403).

Research on code-switching practices provides further insight into how teachers' cultural and educational backgrounds influence classroom language use. Studies indicate that teachers trained in conventional, grammar-focused environments are more likely to maintain monolingual standards, whereas those with multicultural experiences tend to employ more flexible, adaptive language strategies (Canagarajah, 2016; Levine, 2015).

Evidence from the EFL context supports these findings. Although teachers reportedly demonstrate a high level of multicultural awareness, they encounter challenges in integrating this awareness within centralised curricula and existing linguistic hierarchies (Kılavuz, 2023). This tension suggests that cultural awareness alone does not guarantee culturally responsive practice; systemic and structural factors also play an essential role in shaping classroom outcomes.

A parallel body of research on attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse learners in the United States suggests that deficit perspectives remain common and may stem from limited intercultural exposure or ethnocentric beliefs (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017). Conversely, teachers with international experiences, multicultural coursework, or direct engagement with diverse communities tend to display more inclusive pedagogical orientations (Gay, 2018).

Multilingual education theories on translanguaging conceptualise linguistic diversity as a valuable resource, moving beyond English-only ideologies to promote inclusivity and equity (Garcia & Kleyn, 2019). This approach recognises multilingualism as a dynamic strength, transforming ESL spaces by appreciating and utilising students' diverse language practices to support deeper learning and stronger identity formation. Garcia and Kleyn (2016) further argue that teachers' beliefs about language diversity are shaped by cultural factors: teachers who adhere to monolingual ideologies restrict students' linguistic repertoires, whereas culturally flexible teachers view them as assets.

Despite extensive research on learner diversity and teachers' multicultural or intercultural teaching competence, the literature has mainly conceptualised diversity in terms of students' characteristics and teachers' skills in addressing them. Much less focus has been given to how lecturers' own cultural identities, linguistic journeys, and lived experiences shape their pedagogical decisions and classroom practices. This represents a significant gap, as teachers' self-positioning within cultural and linguistic hierarchies can subtly influence expectations, interaction patterns, and the value placed on different language practices. To address this, the present study highlights lecturers' cultural identities and experiences and examines how these factors shape their teaching in multilingual higher education classrooms. By shifting the focus from students' diversity to the cultural embeddedness of lecturers, the study aims to expand existing models of inclusive and multicultural pedagogy and to develop more contextually relevant approaches to teacher education in English language teaching.

3. Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative exploratory research design using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). The study aimed to examine the influence of lecturers' cultural backgrounds on their pedagogical practices, investigate the challenges associated with culturally diverse classrooms, and explore the strategies lecturers employ to manage these classrooms effectively. A qualitative design was considered appropriate as the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of lecturers' experiences, beliefs, and reflections regarding culture and teaching. Exploring these subjective perspectives required a flexible and interpretive approach capable of capturing the complexity of culturally situated pedagogical practices.

Data were collected through online semi-structured interviews consisting of open-ended questions. This format allowed participants to reflect on their experiences in their own time and

provide detailed, considered responses. Conducting the interviews online facilitated access to participants working at universities in two different countries and made it possible to explore similarities and differences across institutional and national contexts.

The collected data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). This analytical approach supported the systematic identification and interpretation of patterns of meaning across participants' accounts, allowing for the development of themes related to the influence of cultural backgrounds on teaching practices and classroom management in culturally diverse higher education settings.

Participants

The study involved 10 experienced lecturers (six female, four male) from two public universities in two different countries: Vilnius University in Lithuania (six) and Talinn University in Estonia (four). Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure cultural diversity relevant to the research aims. In this context, the sample includes two Lithuanian, two Estonian, and one each of British, Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Serbian, and Swedish lecturers, providing culturally diverse perspectives aligned with the study's objectives. In addition to English, they also teach various other languages at their institutions. Their teaching experience ranges from 10 to 47 years across different educational contexts.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Participants

Nr.	Participant	Origin	Gender	Experience (years)	Languages Teaching
1	Sofija	Serbia	F	26	English, Serbian
2	Liepa	Lithuania	F	30	English, Lithuanian
3	Martin	Estonia	M	20	English, Estonian
4	Eva	Estonia	F	10	English, Estonian
5	Emilia	Lithuania	F	27	English, Lithuanian
6	Tomas	Hungary	F	22	English
7	Anna	Czech Republic	F	15	English
8	Theo	Britain	M	25	English,
9	Nelson	Sweden	M	47	English, Swedish
10	Hazel	Croatia	F	15	English

Data Collection

Data were collected through online semi-structured written interviews administered via Google Forms. The interview protocol consisted of 10 open-ended questions designed to explore how lecturers' cultural backgrounds shape their pedagogical beliefs, classroom practices, and experiences in culturally diverse learning environments. The use of written online interviews provided participants with the flexibility to reflect on their experiences in their own time and to produce detailed, considered responses. This format enabled lecturers to generate rich qualitative data by allowing them to articulate in depth personal and professional reflections on culture and teaching.

The interview link was distributed via email to potential participants working at two universities in Estonia and Lithuania. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained electronically prior to the interview. Participants were informed that they could skip any question or withdraw from the study at any point before submitting their responses.

All responses were collected through Google Forms and stored securely in a password-protected spreadsheet accessible only to the researcher. No identifying information was requested, and participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout the research process. Data collection took place over a five-week period, allowing participants sufficient time to provide thoughtful and reflective responses.

Data Analysis

Considering the study's objective to investigate the underlying assumptions and meaning-making processes influencing lecturers' classroom practices, a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019) was employed to analyse the data at a latent level. The themes, which represent socially constructed shared meanings, were systematically developed from the data through the researcher's interpretation.

In line with Braun and Clarke's six phases of reflexive thematic analysis (2006, 2019), the researcher carried out an iterative and recursive analytical process. This involved repeatedly reading semi-structured interview transcripts to develop thorough familiarity with the data, during which initial codes were created and then refined through continual rereading. Related codes were then clustered into potential themes, which were reviewed, compared, and adjusted to ensure they accurately reflected meaningful patterns across participants' responses. The themes were consequently clearly defined and named through ongoing reflexive engagement with the data. Finally, representative extracts from the interviews were selected to exemplify each identified theme.

The researcher adopted an active, interpretive methodology in the study, engaging in reflexive interaction with the data rather than pursuing detached objectivity. Extended and repeated interaction with the dataset, combined with a transparent, well-documented coding process, ensured analytical rigour and facilitated the development of coherent, theoretically grounded interpretations aligned with reflexive thematic analysis. Consequently, four interrelated themes emerged, which are examined in the findings section.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were provided with information about the study's objectives, were assured of their anonymity, and granted informed consent through a digital form. Pseudonyms were used to protect identities. Furthermore, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time, and all data were stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

4. Findings

The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews showed that lecturers' cultural backgrounds significantly influenced their teaching approaches, classroom behaviors, and views of culturally diverse educational settings. Four interconnected themes emerged:

- Cultural identity as a pedagogical lens
- Openness and transformation through international experience
- Adaptive strategies in culturally diverse classrooms
- Limited institutional preparation and the need for culturally responsive teacher education

These themes highlight both explicit and implicit ways in which lecturers' cultural backgrounds influence their professional identities and practices.

Cultural identity as a pedagogical lens

Participants consistently indicated that their cultural backgrounds influenced their perspectives, teaching philosophies, and classroom approaches. Their cultural identity served as an essential interpretive lens in understanding teaching, learning, and student interactions.

Some lecturers emphasised how their upbringing in local or traditional cultures influenced their professional views. One participant stated, "*I think I have the traditional views of Lithuania. I am local, and my worldview has been formed here*." Similarly, another explained that growing up with traditional values while receiving a cosmopolitan education enabled them to develop "*a universal perspective while maintaining my worldview rooted in local values*."

For several participants, there was a close association between professional approach and cultural identity. One lecturer stated, "[The] *education system is interrelated with culture, so the education I received is partly shaped by Estonian culture*." Another participant noted that their cultural background shaped their expectations of teaching methods, stating, "*Different cultures have different methods. My teaching mainly relies on my cultural understanding of how things should be taught*."

Cultural identity significantly influences the formation of classroom relationships and communication styles. A Swedish participant expressed a preference for a non-hierarchical approach, describing "*a relaxed relationship with the students… no hierarchy, a lot of conversation, debates, etc.*" Similarly, another lecturer associated cultural background with humanistic teaching principles, emphasizing values such as patience, inclusion, and the cultivation *of "an inclusive classroom environment that is free from hierarchy and open to diverse perspectives."*

However, not all participants perceived cultural background as a direct factor in teaching methods. One lecturer argued that instructional approaches were predominantly shaped by programme objectives and student needs, though recognising that exposure to diverse cultural environments had made them "*more adaptable and sensitive to different learning styles and classroom dynamics."* This suggests that cultural influence may operate more implicitly than explicitly for some lecturers.

Overall, it is clear that cultural identity serves as a fundamental yet adaptable factor that shapes pedagogical beliefs, interaction methods, and classroom expectations.

Openness and transformation through international experience

A prominent theme in participants' accounts was how international exposure promotes openness, empathy, and intercultural understanding. Many lecturers mentioned that living, studying, or teaching abroad changed their perspectives and improved their teaching practices. In this context, several participants directly linked international mobility with enhanced cultural awareness. One lecturer stated, "*I have lived in many different countries, and that makes me culturally aware and open-minded*." Another participant mentioned that working across various countries had made them "*more understanding, respectful*", and professional adaptability, thanks to their familiarity with multiple educational systems.

Teaching in multicultural environments also prompted deeper reflection on personal cultural assumptions. One participant noted that living abroad enables individuals to question what is considered "*normal*," explaining that "*it is only by living abroad that someone can really start*

understand their own cultural identity." Another reflected that multicultural teaching helped them realise that their national approach was not universally applicable, stating, "*I have become more aware that there are several ways to look upon things, and the Swedish way may not always the best one*."

For some, international experience fostered a cosmopolitan or hybrid identity. One lecturer described feeling like *"a global, European citizen,"* while another noted becoming *"more international than Swedish."* These evolving identities appeared to support flexible and inclusive pedagogical approaches.

Participants also reported that multicultural teaching contexts encouraged critical reflection on previously held beliefs. One lecturer acknowledged recognising that some past actions or expressions had been inappropriate, adding that working in multicultural environments had helped them gain a broader perspective.

Overall, international experience functioned as a transformative process that expanded lecturers' worldviews, enhanced intercultural sensitivity, and contributed to more reflective teaching practices.

Adaptive strategies in culturally diverse classrooms

Participants reported employing various adaptive strategies to manage culturally diverse student groups and classroom dynamics. They viewed adaptation as both essential and ongoing, particularly in multicultural or multilingual settings.

Several lecturers highlighted the importance of flexibility in teaching methods and materials. One participant stated, "Each group requires some kind of adaptation. The more diverse the group, the more adaptation might be needed." Another highlighted the importance of tailoring activities to cultural norms, describing how they modified tasks when a student's cultural background made certain topics inappropriate.

Pedagogical adaptation also included promoting inclusivity and enhancing student participation. Some lecturers integrated intercultural content into their courses, with one explaining that they "dedicate a specific session to teach… cultural issues and to enhance intercultural awareness." Moreover, another lecturer selected texts from diverse ethnic backgrounds and encouraged students to bring their own cultural references into classroom discussions.

Classroom management strategies were additionally affected by cultural differences in student expectations and behaviours. Participants noted challenges such as reluctance to participate in speaking activities, differing attitudes towards academic autonomy, and varying understandings

of academic integrity. For instance, one lecturer observed that some students perceived cheating as a form of helping peers, whereas another emphasised the importance of explicitly teaching responsibility and autonomous learning.

Balancing sensitivity with openness was a common concern. Participants emphasised the importance of creating safe environments where students could express their identities and viewpoints while engaging with potentially sensitive topics. One lecturer explained the significance of addressing political and minority rights issues in ways that promote tolerance and critical reflection rather than avoidance.

These findings indicate that culturally responsive teaching requires ongoing negotiation between lecturers' own cultural identities, students' expectations, and the needs of diverse classroom environments.

Limited institutional preparation and the need for culturally responsive teacher education

Despite extensive experience in multicultural contexts, many participants reported limited formal training in intercultural competence. Several indicated that their development in this area was largely self-directed or experiential.

Several lecturers participated in workshops, Erasmus courses, or engaged in independent research and reading. However, some reported that they received "*no training*" or "*none*," while one noted that their intercultural skills developed mainly through experience rather than formal training. This perceived gap led participants to emphasize the importance of more systematic preparation in both pre-service education and in-service teacher training. Many recommended incorporating intercultural education into undergraduate courses and professional development, including exposure to multicultural environments, opportunities for international teaching or study experiences, and direct interaction with diverse student groups.

Participants also highlighted the importance of combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience. One lecturer suggested that training programs should "*effectively merge theoretical knowledge with practical experience*" to help lecturers adapt to diverse classrooms. Another recommended providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their cultural identities and question stereotypes.

Overall, participants regarded intercultural competence as vital but inadequately supported by current institutional frameworks. They highlighted the importance of structured, continuous professional development to equip lecturers for increasingly diverse higher education contexts.

The analysis shows that lecturers' cultural backgrounds and international experiences significantly influence their pedagogical approaches and classroom practices. Cultural identity provides a dynamic perspective through which teaching is understood and practised, while international exposure fosters openness and critical self-reflection. At the same time, lecturers largely rely on personal experience rather than formal training to develop intercultural competence, underscoring the need for more systematic institutional support.

These findings emphasise the significance of integrating culturally reflective and responsive pedagogical training into teacher education and professional development programs within higher education institutions.

5. Discussion

The present study sought to examine the influence of lecturers' cultural backgrounds on their pedagogical practices in multilingual higher education settings, how they manage culturally diverse environments, and their perceived preparedness to do so. The reflexive thematic analysis identified four interconnected themes that illustrate the complex relationship between personal cultural positioning and professional practice. The results suggest that lecturers' cultural identities function as active influences on pedagogy rather than passive background attributes, that international experiences cultivate greater intercultural openness, and that adaptation constitutes an ongoing process of negotiation within diverse classrooms. Concurrently, the analysis uncovers a perceived deficiency in systematic training for culturally responsive teaching. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of lecturers' cultural embeddedness as a central yet underexplored component of inclusive pedagogy in higher education.

The prevailing focus in multicultural education research has traditionally centered on students' cultural backgrounds or on teacher competencies in these settings (Acar-Çiftçi, 2016; Banks, 2002; Gay, 2018; Yıldırım, 2019). By contrast, the present findings highlight lecturers' own cultural positioning as an interpretive framework that shapes and enacts pedagogical decisions. This transition advances the discourse beyond merely examining lecturers' responses to diversity, positioning them instead as culturally embedded actors within multilingual classrooms. Consequently, the study broadens the scope of culturally responsive pedagogy by emphasising teacher self-positioning as a foundational rather than peripheral aspect of inclusive practice. Moreover, the findings contribute to the expansion of teacher identity theory (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) by demonstrating how identity functions not solely as a

negotiated professional construct but also as an implicit framework that shapes expectations, authority, and classroom interactions. While aligning with Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) and Chaika (2023) regarding the impact of beliefs on practice, the current study illustrates that identity influences pedagogy at both conscious and subconscious levels, serving as an underlying structure of meaning-making rather than merely a collection of articulated beliefs.

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) assert that identity is a dynamic, constructed, and influential factor within pedagogical practices. Although many of these concepts remain theoretical, this study provides an empirical demonstration of how identity functions in real classroom environments. The findings indicate that identity operates both consciously and implicitly, illustrating that it pre-structures pedagogical interpretation. In this context, beyond serving as a professional narrative, the study depicts identity as an epistemic lens that frames perceptions of appropriateness, structures interpretations of behaviour, and mediates judgments regarding participation, discipline, and authority.

Gay (2018) and Sleeter and Carmona (2017) argue that exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity fosters inclusivity. The findings support this claim by demonstrating that international experience enhances pedagogical adaptability and shifts deficit perspectives. While much previous research views international experience as a background variable and a professional asset, the current study portrays it as a transformative process that influences worldview, authority positioning, and expectations. This indicates that international mobility functions as a form of intercultural re-socialisation. Nonetheless, exposure alone does not inherently lead to inclusivity, as it may also generate tension, self-awareness, and openness. To make a meaningful contribution to the development of professional identity, these experiences should engage more reflexively with identity to facilitate its reshaping. Consequently, the study suggests that international experience broadens the epistemic lens by expanding interpretative repertoires, destabilising taken-for-granted norms, or rendering invisible assumptions visible.

Garcia and Kleyn (2019; 2016) argue that translanguaging facilitates inclusion and that adapting methods, coupled with flexibility, enhances equity in multicultural classrooms. In this context, the findings suggest that adaptation constitutes relational work rather than a mere pedagogical technique. Rather than simply modifying instructional strategies, lecturers reposition themselves in relation to authority, institutional norms, and classroom expectations. Such repositioning reflects an ongoing identity-based negotiation between personal values and institutional demands, a process that can be emotional and occasionally uncomfortable. This underscores that skill-based training alone is insufficient, as adaptation entails identity

negotiation and therefore requires structured opportunities for reflexive identity work within teacher education.

The findings show that institutional support for intercultural engagement remains limited, leaving many lecturers to rely on their own lived and professional experiences to navigate diversity. In this context, intercultural competence tends to develop informally rather than through structured institutional support. Although higher education institutions increasingly promote internationalisation, this often appears to be demographic rather than pedagogically or epistemically grounded. Diversity is present, yet the deeper assumptions about knowledge, authority, and difference are not always systematically addressed.

The study also highlights the limitations of competency-based models that conceptualise intercultural development primarily as the acquisition of skills. In the present data, adaptation was not simply a matter of instructional flexibility; it involved ongoing identity negotiation shaped by institutional expectations and relational dynamics. This suggests that professional development cannot remain confined to technical upskilling. Instead, teacher education needs to create sustained and structured opportunities for reflexive engagement with identity, positionality, and power. Only then can internationalisation move beyond structural expansion toward more meaningful transformation in practice.

6. Conclusions

This study explored how lecturers' cultural orientations influence their pedagogical practices and modifications within multicultural higher education environments. Through a reflexive thematic analysis of lecturers' narratives, the results indicate that cultural background influences epistemic positioning, and international experience functions as a process of re-socialisation. The study proposes that internationalisation without epistemic reflection risks remaining superficial in transforming practice.

Professional identity in higher education serves as a framework through which lecturers interpret classroom interactions, diversity, and their authority. The findings indicate that international experience functions as a process of intercultural re-socialisation, gradually changing basic assumptions and expanding interpretative skills. In this process, adaptation goes beyond just changing teaching methods; it involves an ongoing negotiation of identity within relational and institutional settings. Overall, these insights show that professional identity in multicultural environments is neither fixed nor purely individual; it is instead continually reconstructed in response to contextual demands and engagements with diversity.

These findings bear significant implications for higher education institutions progressively involved in internationalisation. The study indicates that demographic diversity alone does not inherently promote inclusive or transformative pedagogical practices. When institutional support is limited, lecturers tend to rely primarily on their personal histories and international experiences to navigate multicultural classrooms. While such experiences may be valuable, dependence on them informally shifts the burden of adaptation onto individuals rather than onto structured institutional frameworks. Professional development initiatives may therefore benefit from establishing sustained environments conducive to critical reflection on identity, positionality, and power within teaching contexts.

While the study offers comprehensive insights into lecturers' identity negotiation across culturally diverse backgrounds, it is based on a relatively small sample and relies predominantly on self-reported narratives. The findings, therefore, illuminate how participants interpret and understand their experiences, rather than how these dynamics manifest in observed classroom practices. Future research could augment such narrative accounts with classroom observations or student perspectives to further investigate how identity negotiation manifests pedagogically. Additionally, expanding the inquiry across various institutional contexts may enhance understanding of how internationalisation interacts with professional identity in higher education.

7. References

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