

Multicultural communication in education: Stakeholder perspectives in a school community

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to examine teachers', parents', and students' perspectives on multicultural communication within a school community and to determine how stakeholder characteristics influence perceptions of multicultural interaction in educational settings.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive-comparative research design. A total of 90 respondents composed of teachers, parents, and students were selected using stratified sampling to ensure balanced representation among stakeholder groups. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire measuring the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral dimensions of multicultural communication. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics including the t-test and analysis of variance were applied to determine significant differences at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results: Findings revealed that teachers ($M = 3.29$) and parents ($M = 3.53$) rated multicultural communication practices as very true, while students ($M = 2.83$) rated them as true. Across all dimensions, students demonstrated comparatively lower perceptions of multicultural communication than teachers and parents. Statistical analysis further showed a significant difference in respondents' assessments when grouped according to profile variables ($p = 0.000$), indicating that demographic characteristics influence perceptions of multicultural communication.

Conclusion: The study concludes that multicultural communication is present within the school community but is more strongly recognized and practiced by teachers and parents than by students. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening multicultural communication initiatives that actively engage students while promoting collaborative interaction among teachers, parents, and learners to support inclusive educational environments.

Keywords: *multicultural communication, school community, stakeholder perspectives, cognitive dimension, attitudinal dimension, behavioral dimension, descriptive-comparative research*

INTRODUCTION

As schools become more diverse, effective multicultural communication is crucial. Varied cultures, languages, and backgrounds offer opportunities and challenges (Pilus & Nguyễn, 2023). Schools bring together teachers, parents, and students to share viewpoints and build understanding. Strong multicultural communication builds relationships, supporting appreciation and collaboration (Abacioglu et al., 2023).

Effective communication in schools extends beyond information sharing; it forges relationships, shapes classroom dynamics, and influences school culture (Smith, 2021). In diverse educational settings, varying communication norms and styles heighten this complexity. Strong communication among all stakeholders builds a positive school culture, enables collaboration, reduces misunderstandings, and promotes equitable access to educational resources and services. Culturally responsive pedagogy is essential here, recognizing that cultural understanding is integral to communication and the shaping of thought processes. Thus, multicultural education must adapt to the diverse communication styles present across student, staff, and parent communities (Nayir, 2022; Rusu, 2021).

The Philippine archipelago encompasses over 7,000 islands, each characterized by distinct customs, practices, and traditions. These regional differences contribute to a rich ethnolinguistic diversity within the Culture and Languages of the Philippines, while simultaneously facilitating the country's exposure to global influences. In the context of public

education, the varied socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of learners underscore the necessity for effective cross-cultural communication. This is a fundamental requirement for advancing the objectives of the education system, particularly inclusiveness and equity. Although the integration of inclusive education policies and diversity-sensitive practices represents progress, many education systems continue to face challenges, including insufficient communication, culturally incongruent communication styles, inadequately prepared staff, and untrained teachers. These issues have led to reduced stakeholder engagement, increased communication barriers, and greater obstacles to promoting a genuinely inclusive education system. While existing literature has explored the complexities of cross-cultural communication and its effects on educational institutions, most studies have focused on communicative practices or teacher-student interactions within predominantly Western contexts. Multicultural communication within Philippine schools remains an under-researched domain.

Despite efforts to foster effective communication and a positive school culture, multicultural communication in schools poses persistent challenges, including communication breakdowns due to differing norms and non-participation (Mersin et al., 2022; Cotman et al., 2023).

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Respondent Profile and Communication Context

Literature suggests that personal characteristics play a vital role in the perception and practice of communication in multicultural contexts. Dimensions such as age, sex, educational attainment, and professional experience affect how people understand cultural variances and adapt to different communication situations.

Studies indicate that age is an important factor in shaping communication style and the willingness to embrace diversity. Younger individuals tend to be more flexible in working in multicultural settings, whereas older individuals are more likely to work within traditional cultural frameworks (Dombai & Verwey, 2022). Gender also influences communication style, particularly the degree of articulation and the style of interactive communication, although the differences noted in the literature are generally small and less pronounced in multicultural contexts (Langaas & Mujtaba, 2023). The higher the level of education, the greater the cultural sensitivity and awareness. People with higher levels of education also tend to be more open to and better understand diversity. The length of service of teachers determines their experience in managing diverse learners. (García & Pantao, 2021). The more experienced teachers are, the more practical techniques they develop for effective cross-cultural communication.

Dimensions of Multicultural Communication

Multicultural communication is a multidimensional construct generally understood to encompass cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral dimensions (Nadeem & Zabrodska, 2023). These combined dimensions shape the understanding, appreciation, and practice of communication in diverse cultural settings.

Teachers, parents, and students are all important stakeholders in the communication process in multicultural communication. Although each group has its own roles, they all contribute to the school's communication climate. In the classroom, teachers act as communication channels. Their strategies impact students' communication and the inclusiveness of the learning atmosphere. Good teaching demonstrates and practices courteous communication and the inclusion of diverse cultures in teaching (Ellis-Robinson & Coles, 2021). Parent involvement in school activities and communication with teachers is important. Good parent involvement with the school creates effective school-home communication. Parent involvement in school activities bridges cultures and promotes understanding (Hussein, 2025). Students communicate with one another in the classroom. Interactions in school influence students' ability to communicate with people from diverse cultures. Good communication among students enhances a sense of community and belonging.

Synthesis and Research Gap

The existing body of knowledge conceptualizes multicultural communication as a multidimensional phenomenon comprising knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Its literature documents the positive influence of multicultural communication on the school climate and relationships among the stakeholders. However, in the same school system, literature is scant on the comparative analyses of the different stakeholders. Most of the literature is based on studies that focus only on teachers or students, and far fewer include parents as core stakeholders. Likewise, there is a scarcity of studies that have examined the communication gap in cross-profile assessments of the various role players. This glaring gap underscores the need for a study that consolidates the views of teachers, parents, and students while accounting for their socio-demographic variables.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework appropriately anchors the study in Intercultural Communication Theory, drawing on the work of Edward T. Hall and Geert Hofstede, which focuses on how people from different cultures engage with one another and the meanings they create and assign in communication. This theory suggests that to communicate successfully with people from different cultures, one must understand those cultures, the various perspectives that inform them, and the different ways to communicate across them. In classrooms, this theory is applied because they are microcosms of society. The classroom is where students, teachers, and parents from multicultural, multilingual, and diverse socio-economic backgrounds interact. The essence of the theory is that communicating is more than an information transfer. In addition to the communicative act, cultural elements, traditions, and communicators' experiences shape and influence how the message is constructed, encoded, and decoded. This is especially true of communicative acts that differ from the socially accepted, average, or predominant styles. These communicative acts can cause misunderstandings, reduce participation and engagement, and create barriers to communication.

Using this theory in the study helps define participants' perceptions of multicultural communication within the school system. It provides a framework for developing inclusive, collaborative, and communicatively effective communication strategies for all participants.

Conceptual Framework

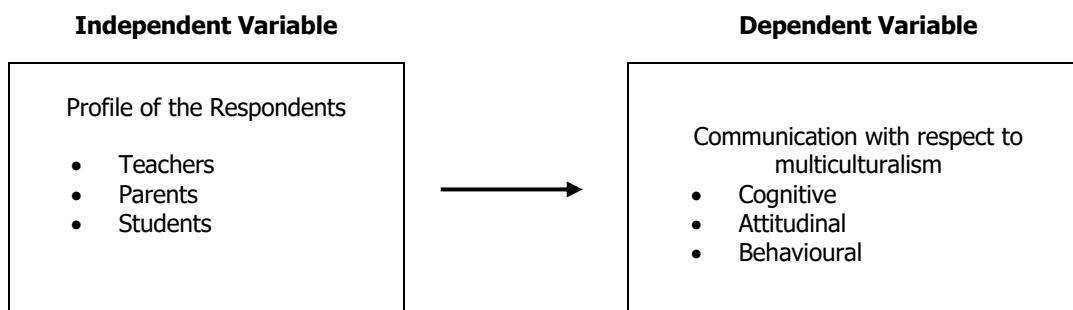


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

In this framework, the study examines the relationship between respondents' profile variables and their assessment of multicultural communication. The included profile variables are age, sex, educational attainment, marital status, length of service, and section. These variables are profile attributes that may contribute to the differing perception and practice of communication. Multicultural communication is the dependent variable of this study. It has three dimensions: cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral. The framework proposes that differences in stakeholders' profile attributes will result in varying assessments of the communication practice.

Statement of the Problem

Multicultural communication has become increasingly important in contemporary educational environments where learners, teachers, and families come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Effective multicultural communication in schools promotes inclusive learning environments, strengthens collaboration among stakeholders, and supports the development of intercultural understanding among students. However, differences in cultural perspectives, communication styles, and social experiences may influence how members of the school community perceive and practice multicultural communication.

In many school communities, communication among teachers, parents, and students plays a vital role in shaping the overall learning climate and supporting inclusive educational practices. Despite efforts to promote culturally responsive communication in schools, variations in stakeholder perceptions and experiences may affect the effectiveness of multicultural interactions. Differences in demographic characteristics such as age, sex, educational attainment, and social roles may further influence how multicultural communication is understood and practiced within the school environment.

Understanding how different stakeholders perceive multicultural communication is therefore essential in identifying areas for improvement in school communication practices and in strengthening inclusive educational



environments. This study seeks to examine the perspectives of teachers, parents, and students on multicultural communication within a school community and to determine whether differences exist in their assessments when grouped according to selected profile variables.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To determine the perspectives of teachers, parents, and students on multicultural communication in a school community.

Specific Objectives

This study aimed to:

1. Determine the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Teachers
 - 1.1.1. Age
 - 1.1.2. Sex
 - 1.1.3. highest educational attainment
 - 1.1.4. length of service
 - 1.2. Parents
 - 1.2.1. Age
 - 1.2.2. marital status
 - 1.2.3. highest educational attainment
 - 1.3. Students
 - 1.3.1. Age
 - 1.3.2. Sex
 - 1.3.3. section
2. Assess the respondents' communication with respect to multiculturalism in terms of:
 - 2.1. cognitive dimension
 - 2.2. attitudinal dimension
 - 2.3. behavioral dimension
3. Determine whether there is a significant difference in the respondents' assessment of communication with respect to multiculturalism when grouped according to their profile variables.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Teachers
 - 1.1.1. Age
 - 1.1.2. Sex
 - 1.1.3. highest educational attainment
 - 1.1.4. length of service
 - 1.2. Parents
 - 1.2.1. Age
 - 1.2.2. marital status
 - 1.2.3. highest educational attainment
 - 1.3. Students
 - 1.3.1. Age
 - 1.3.2. Sex
 - 1.3.3. Section
2. How do the respondents assess communication with respect to multiculturalism in terms of:
 - 2.1. cognitive dimension
 - 2.2. attitudinal dimension
 - 2.3. behavioral dimension

3. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' assessment of communication with respect to multiculturalism when grouped according to their profile variables?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the respondents' assessment of communication with respect to multiculturalism when grouped according to their profile variables.

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative survey research design, using a descriptive-comparative approach, was employed to examine multicultural communication among stakeholders in the school community. The use of this design was justified because it provided an organized way to describe the current state of multicultural communication and enabled comparisons among the different respondent groups. In this case, the descriptive part focused on the extent to which teachers, parents, and students exhibited cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral aspects of multicultural communication. The comparative part of the study sought to determine whether there were differences in respondents' perceptions across profile variable classifications.

Population and Sampling

The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants who had firsthand interactions with the school's communicative processes. The study was conducted in a public school in the Schools Division of Cavite. Each group included 30 teachers, 30 parents, and 30 students, as these groups were considered the primary stakeholders shaping the school's communication climate.

Specific inclusion criteria were established for sampling. Teachers were required to have at least 1 year of teaching experience at the school and to be able to handle a range of diverse learners. Parents were those with a child currently enrolled and with prior involvement in school-related communications. Students, on the other hand, were selected from multicultural classroom settings. All participants provided informed consent, and, for student participants, parental consent was obtained. This sampling method enabled the researchers to select participants who could provide meaningful, experience-based insights into multicultural communication within the school context.

Research Instruments

The main data collection tool used in the study was a researcher-structured questionnaire designed to measure multicultural communication among the respondents. The instrument was researcher-developed, based on relevant literature and constructs of multicultural communication. To ensure its validity, the questionnaire underwent content validation by three subject-matter experts. Furthermore, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents, like the study participants, to assess clarity and applicability. The instrument's reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted in accordance with strict ethical standards. It began with securing the necessary approvals from school authorities to ensure compliance with institutional policies and ethical guidelines.

Participants were informed about the study's purpose and their role in the research process. They were provided with clear instructions to help them complete the questionnaire accurately. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any time. To uphold ethical principles, all responses were kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Participants were given the questionnaire and allowed to complete it in a safe and pressure-free environment. Upon completion, they were requested to review their responses for completeness before submitting the questionnaire for data processing.

Treatment of Data

Data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to ensure accuracy and consistency of the results. Statistical analysis was conducted to address the research questions based on the collected data.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the respondents' profiles, including frequency and percentage distributions for the demographics of teachers, parents, and students. For each dimension—cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral—the mean and standard deviation were computed to determine the central tendency and variability of

responses. Inferential statistical techniques were used to examine differences across profile variables. An independent-samples t-test was used for comparisons between two groups, while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for comparisons among three or more groups. These tests were conducted to determine whether the observed differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The following scale was used to interpret respondents' assessment of communication with respect to multiculturalism:

Range	Descriptive Interpretation
4.00-3.25	Very True
3.24-2.50	True
2.49-1.75	Moderately True
1.74-1.00	Least True

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical guidelines designed to protect participants throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including students, who were required to obtain consent from their parents and/or school officials. Data were collected only after school officials granted the researchers permission.

All participants had the right to voluntarily participate and to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. Participants were not coerced into joining the study, and no undue influence was applied. Anonymity was fully preserved, and no identifying information was provided in the study. The collected data was for academic purposes only and stored in a secure location to prevent misuse. The questionnaire items were carefully reviewed to ensure that they did not contain potentially sensitive or harmful content that could cause discomfort to the respondents. Throughout the study, the researcher upheld the participant's dignity, privacy, and cultural background. The researcher remained truthful and transparent in reporting the data, without any fabrication or manipulation. These ethical considerations, in addition to demonstrating the researcher's integrity, illustrate the full consideration of the rights and concerns of the study participants.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the study based on research questions. Findings are interpreted in relation to learning theory and relevant empirical studies to explain observed outcomes.

Table 1.1
Profile of the teachers

Teachers	f	%
Age		
21-29	11	37
30-39	17	57
40-49	2	7
Total	30	100
Sex		
Male	15	50
Female	15	50
Total	30	100
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's degree	2	7
with Masteral Units	10	33
with MA/MS/MST degree	16	53
with EdD/PhD units	2	7
Total	30	100

Length of Service

<10	5	17
11-20	16	53
21-30	8	27
31-40	1	3
Total	30	100

Demographic data for teacher respondents (N = 30) are presented in Table 1.1. The results indicate that most teachers belong to the young-to-mid-career age group, suggesting a relatively dynamic and active workforce. The equal distribution of male and female respondents reflects gender balance among the participants. In terms of educational attainment, most teachers possess graduate-level qualifications, indicating a generally high level of academic preparation. Furthermore, most respondents have considerable teaching experience, particularly in the mid-range of service, suggesting that the group is composed largely of experienced practitioners.

Table 1.2
Profile of the parents

Parents	f	%
Age		
21-29	9	30
30-39	19	63
40-49	2	7
Total	30	100
Role		
Mother	18	60
Father	12	40
Total	30	100
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	23	77
High School	6	20
College Undergraduate	1	3
Total	30	100

Demographic details of parent-respondents (N = 30) are presented in Table 1.2. The results show that most parents fall within the typical age range for child rearing. Mothers comprise a larger proportion of respondents than fathers, indicating greater maternal representation in the study. In terms of educational attainment, most parents have relatively low levels of formal education, having completed only elementary schooling, while only a few have reached higher levels.

Table 1.3
Profile of the students

Students	f	%
Age		
15	14	47
16	12	40
17>	4	13
Total	30	100

Sex		
Male	15	50
Female	15	50
Total	30	100
Section		
1	15	50
2	8	27
3	7	23
Total	30	100

Demographic data of student-respondents (N = 30) are presented in Table 1.3. The results indicate that most students are within the expected age range for their grade level. The equal distribution of male and female participants reflects balanced representation by sex. In terms of the section, a larger proportion of students came from one section, while the remaining respondents were distributed across other sections.

Table 2.
Assessment of the respondents on the communication with respect to multiculturalism

Dimensions	Teachers		Parents		Students	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
Cognitive	3.30	Very true	3.73	Very true	2.88	True
Attitudinal	3.21	True	3.24	True	2.79	True
Behavioral	3.48	Very true	3.67	Very true	2.83	True
Overall Mean	3.29	Very true	3.53	Very true	2.83	True

The respondents assessed their perceptions of communication regarding multiculturalism from cognitive, affective, and behavioral perspectives. Generally, teachers (M = 3.29) and parents (M = 3.53) tended to communicate multiculturalism as very true, while students had a lower overall mean (M = 2.83), which is interpreted as true. This suggests that students have a weaker perception of multicultural communication practices than fellow teachers and parents.

In the cognitive dimension, parents had the highest mean (M = 3.73, very true), followed by teachers (M = 3.30, very true), while students scored lower (M = 2.88, true). This shows that, for better or worse, adults have better cognitive awareness and understanding of multicultural communication. This finding reinforces previous studies that said teachers and parents, because of their positions, hold more cultural knowledge than students (Bal, 2022).

Within the attitudinal dimension, all groups considered communication to be true, with parents (M = 3.24) and teachers (M = 3.21) rating it higher than students (M = 2.79). Although all groups were willing to communicate with parents, and teachers preferred multicultural communication, the weaker will was evident in the cognitive and behavioral dimensions. There is evidence that, while attitudes toward diversity are generally positive, especially among younger people still forming their outlook, the depth of these attitudes and the behavioral aspects that support them are often lacking (Moreu et al., 2021).

Regarding the behavioral dimension, teachers (M = 3.48) and parents (M = 3.67) once again rated practices as very true, while students rated them much lower (M = 2.83, true). This means that adults show more visible multicultural communication than younger people. This tendency is well documented, with the majority emphasizing that teachers and parents often serve as exemplars of inclusive and culturally responsive behaviors in the school community (Doğru & Demirbaş, 2021).

Student engagement in multicultural communicative practices needs to be reinforced in light of these findings. Teachers and parents demonstrate high levels of awareness and the corresponding behavioral manifestations; however, students have not internalized multicultural principles, as evidenced by the student ratings. Schools can close this gap by employing culturally responsive pedagogy, the multicultural infusion approach, and promoting inclusive

classroom interactions. Strengthening collaboration among teachers, parents, and students can further students' cognitive comprehension, attitudes, and behavioral responses toward multiculturalism. These practices align with the literature, which holds that meaningful exposure and active participation are core to developing students' intercultural competence (Budiana et al., 2022).

For teachers, this highlights the need to adopt culturally responsive pedagogy and create more inclusive classroom interactions that actively engage students in multicultural experiences. School leaders play a crucial role in fostering a supportive environment by promoting collaborative initiatives among stakeholders and integrating inclusive practices into school programs. For curriculum developers, there is a need to embed multicultural concepts across learning areas through a multicultural infusion approach to ensure consistent exposure. Moreover, education policymakers should strengthen policies that support inclusive education and the development of learners' intercultural competence.

Table 3.

Significant difference in the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to profile variables

Variable	N	df	Mean	SD	P-value	Remarks
Teachers						
Age	30	4	1.70	0.60		
Sex	30	4	1.50	0.51	0.000	Significant
Educ Attainment	30	4	2.60	0.72		
Length of Service	30	4	2.17	0.75		
Parents						
Age	30	3	1.77	0.57		
Role	30	3	1.40	0.50	0.000	Significant
Educ Attainment	30	3	2.27	0.52		
Students						
Age	30	3	1.77	0.57		
Sex	30	3	1.40	0.50	0.000	Significant
Section	30	3	2.27	0.52		

The findings in Table 3, which reveal statistically significant differences in the evaluation of multicultural communication among teachers, parents, and students, support the assumptions of the Intercultural Communication Theory. This theory posits that individuals interpret messages and communication practices based on their cultural backgrounds, experiences, and social contexts. The significant variation ($p = 0.000$) across all stakeholder groups indicates that each group perceives and evaluates communication differently, reflecting their unique cultural orientations and communicative experiences within the school environment.

This literature shows that communicative, multicultural awareness begins with a person's personal and social characteristics, such as age, sex, level of education, and social experience (Izquierdo, 2022). With higher levels of education and social experience in a diverse society, a person will have greater intercultural competence. On the other hand, personal characteristics such as age and social role will affect how an individual perceives a multicultural society. What is particular about students is that they will have a better understanding of multicultural societies if they are in a diverse classroom and engage with peers from diverse social backgrounds (Abacioglu et al., 2023).

These findings suggest the need to design targeted strategies to strengthen inclusive multicultural communication within the school community. Given the variation in perceptions, schools should implement differentiated approaches that address the distinct needs of teachers, parents, and students. This includes enhancing teacher professional development through training on culturally responsive communication, as well as promoting



curriculum development that integrates multicultural perspectives and inclusive practices. In addition, school leadership strategies should emphasize collaboration, inclusivity, and stakeholder engagement to foster a supportive communication environment. Strengthening multicultural learning policies can also guide consistent practices across the school, ensuring that diversity is recognized and valued. Furthermore, increasing parental involvement and implementing student-focused multicultural initiatives will help achieve greater alignment in understanding and practice.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that multicultural communication is generally practiced within the school community; however, teachers and parents demonstrate stronger perceptions of multicultural communication than students. Across the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral dimensions, teachers and parents assessed multicultural communication practices as very true, while students rated them as true, suggesting relatively lower recognition or practice among learners.

The results further reveal that demographic characteristics such as age, sex, educational attainment, role, length of service, and section influence stakeholders' perceptions of multicultural communication. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening multicultural communication initiatives that actively engage students while maintaining collaborative interaction among teachers and parents.

The study contributes to educational practice by emphasizing the role of effective multicultural communication in promoting inclusive school environments. Strengthening multicultural communication practices may support improved classroom interaction, culturally responsive teaching, and stronger partnerships between schools and families. These findings may also inform teacher professional development initiatives and school policies aimed at fostering intercultural understanding and inclusive learning communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Schools may develop student-centered multicultural communication programs to enhance students' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral understanding of cultural diversity.
2. Teachers may participate in professional development initiatives focused on culturally responsive communication and inclusive pedagogical practices to strengthen multicultural engagement in the classroom.
3. Schools may expand programs that encourage parent participation in school activities and communication processes to reinforce multicultural understanding within the school community.
4. School administrators may design differentiated communication and inclusion initiatives that consider stakeholder characteristics such as age, educational background, and professional experience.
5. Future researchers may conduct further investigations on multicultural communication in educational settings using larger sample sizes, additional variables, or different educational contexts to strengthen and validate the findings of the present study.

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