

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES WHILE
ADDRESSING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

by Juan Remy

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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APPROVED BY:

Grania Holman Ed.D., Committee Chair

Pattie Williams, Ed.D., Committee Member

Abstract

This transcendental phenomenological study sought to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle school and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses. A social constructivist research paradigm derived from Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory urged this study's theoretical framework. The approach of cross-cultural dimension from Geert Hofstede was applied as a lens to investigate the participants' views about their experience with cultural diversity. Teachers from middle school and high schools participated in the research. The participants were from different social backgrounds, races, lifestyles, countries, and organizations, which made each answer unique regarding cultural diversity and cross-cultural dimensions. The research includes 12 interviews. Interviews, transcriptions, questionnaires, memoing, and journaling produced the data that were thematically analyzed to reach a conclusion and create the findings. Purposeful, snowballing, and criterion sampling guided the selection process. The researcher applied epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation while formulating textural and structural descriptions to analyze the participants' interviews and capture their lived experiences without bias. The analysis produced seven themes focused on cultural diversity in the classroom. They are: 1) Cultural Diversity Implementation, 2) Teaching Methods and Practices facilitating Cultural Diversity, 3) Professional Development Ineffectiveness about Cultural Diversity, 4) Cross-Cultural Dimensions in the classroom, 5) Experience Level Importance in Cultural Diversity, 6) Fear of Reprisal and Being Incompetent, 7) Value of Parents' Voices for Cultural Diversity Integration.

Keywords: cultural diversity, cross-cultural dimension, social constructivism, constructivist learning environment, transcendental phenomenology

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, from whom all good things flow!

To my wife Bianka and my children, Calantha, Cameron, and Quentin, who support and inspire me to be a better person every day. May you practice wisdom, respect, humility, and search for knowledge as long as you can breathe.

To my parents, who allowed me to immigrate to the United States and pursue my personal, educational, and professional dreams.

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Second, I would like to thank my committee chair and methodologist for being my shepherd on a fruitful journey in conducting this research. Their constant guidance, advice, and interest in my work made it a life experience. Thank you!

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List of Abbreviations

Cultural Deprivation Paradigm (CDP)

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

Constructivist Learning Environment (CLE)

Multicultural Education (ME)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Personal Learning Environment (PLE)

Problem-based Learning (PBL)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Studying culture without experiencing culture shock is like practicing swimming without experiencing water (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. xiv).

The focus of the study was to describe and examine how teachers experience, understand, and address cultural diversity in middle and high school classrooms. I asserted that teachers must be conscious of cultural diversity in classrooms, particularly cross-cultural dimensions, to favor all students' advancement. This chapter establishes why I conducted the research, its structure, and its boundaries. I provide the contextual background for the investigated issue while explaining the study's purpose and the research problem. Then I emphasize the significance of the study while presenting the central and subsequent research questions. Finally, I describe relevant terms used in the study that are necessary for readers to understand certain concepts and frameworks.

Background

Balestra and Fleischer (2018) reported that the world would continue to become more blended and fused due to globalization and increased migrations, changing the education landscape. The National Center for Education Statistics (2020) reported that diversity will continue to grow among race, gender, and ethnicity in the nation. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (2021) goal is to create policies encouraging prosperity, fairness, opportunity, and welfare for all. The education department focuses on promoting inclusivity and diversity in education worldwide. The organization wants to eradicate inequality while ensuring global quality and equal access to education—the cultural context and environment of education impact learning and teaching (Ju et al., 2016). Teachers are vital in

acknowledging cultural diversity in their classrooms, including their cultural backgrounds, because they bring their beliefs, experiences, and attitudes while teaching and formulating educational strategies (Kaur & Noman, 2015). Multiple definitions of culture are associated with education (Foncha et al., 2016; Jensen et al., 2018; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008; Roy, 2020). However, the definitions of Hofstede (1980) and Fiske (2002) were the most appropriate for this study. They defined culture as transmitted social constructions and shared preconceived ideologies that impact the human environment and education. The definitions emphasize classrooms' interactions between teachers and students as constructed cultural transmissions and communications vital to learning success.

Jensen et al. (2018) explained that culture plays a vital role in how students learn at the middle and high school levels to prepare them for independent learning in college. They noted teachers' underestimation of how culture influences teaching and instructing. Whitaker (2019) clarified that teachers must know their culture and students' identities to support culturally diverse classrooms effectively. Finally, Jensen et al. concluded that the difference between students' and teachers' worldviews is an inevitable dynamic in the classroom and school; most teachers' interactions with students they observed were marginally connected to students' lives outside the school. Because of this disconnect, teachers can develop a curriculum under Western cultural perspectives while ignoring the multicultural aspect of classrooms or espouse a sense of individualism while ignoring students' collectivistic tendencies.

Students' personal and cultural identities translate to cross-cultural dimensions often ignored in the educational realm. From a cross-cultural perspective, a problem could exist in classrooms in collectivistic societies when teachers are individualistic and vice-versa. Therefore, teachers and educators must understand cross-cultural dimensions to implement proper teaching

methods to facilitate students' cognitive ability to learn (U.S. News & World Report, 2021; Vandello & Cohen, 1999). The cross-cultural dimensions matter very much to education. Individualism, collectivism, and the power relation between students and teachers matter how interactions, perceptions, and knowledge are constructed in education. Therefore, more studies must focus on the subcultural dimensions to increase teachers' understanding of their impacts on learning and classroom interactions.

Historical Context

An increase in the waves of migration since the industrial era in the 18th century and world wars in the 20th century precipitated cultural diversification. It necessitated the need for educational changes in multicultural countries and, recently, in monocultural nations (Dietz, 2007). In the United States, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Hart-Celler Act, also known as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, he reshaped the landscape of the nation and allowed over 30 million people from cultures with few members previously living in the country to enter, which affected the American educational system (Fass, 2020; Suárez-Orozco, 2020). From an academic standpoint, the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s produced ethnic studies during the Civil Rights Movement to counter racial oppression, which transitioned to multiethnic studies, then multicultural education to illuminate the positivity in recognizing cultural diversity as a strength in education while favoring representation and providing resources for minority students (Banks, 1993, 2013; Gay, 1975; Jordan, 1985). Banks (2016) affirmed that while assimilationist theories and tendencies had been the goal of national education, the theories revoked the products of cultural diversity and inclusion.

The United Nations (2021a) reported that in 2021 some 272 million people migrated to a different country, 51 million more than in 2010. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) aims to promote diversity and reduce inequality; the organization recognizes that education is the first step in supporting and advancing inclusivity worldwide (United Nations, 2021a). This stance puts teachers at the forefront of combating unfairness and discrimination by being aware of cultural diversity in their environment.

Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, while proclaiming 21 May 2002 as Culture Diversity Day, said in his message to the world,

Culture is the flower of the human being—the fruit of our minds, the product of our traditions, and the expression of our yearnings. Its diversity is wondrous, part of the rich tapestry of civilization. Culture is also a powerhouse—an employer of millions, an engine of economic progress, and a force for social cohesion. (as qtd. in Stenou, 2002)

This statement accentuates how teachers must acknowledge cultural diversity in education and promote inclusion. They are the gatekeepers of learning and are situated at the center of knowledge construction. As cultural tendencies, cross-cultural dimensions are integral in institutions in society such as schools and families (Hofstede, 1986). In the role-pair teacher–student, a problem could exist in education when teachers and students share various attitudes on the different spectrums of the cross-cultural dimensions but interact daily in teaching and learning. For example, in collectivistic societies, one can ask what approaches individualistic teachers use to instruct collectivistic students and vice-versa.

Social Context

The impact of cultural diversity has been recognized and documented in education, from Plato and Socrates to current mainstream ideologies (LeMoine, 2017). Much research worldwide has been conducted in multiple disciplines and levels of education to ascertain, identify, and provide solutions to the adverse effects that impact teaching if cultural diversity is ignored

(Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Civitillo et al., 2019; Giudici & Grizelj, 2017; Lozano & Escrich, 2017). Diversity in education has been constantly related to students' success, the achievement gap, discrimination, violence, and harassment at all school levels, in the US and abroad (Austin et al., 2019; Byrd, 2020; Hanson et al., 2020; Howard, 2019; Parmegiani, 2019; Suna, E. & Özer, M., 2021). Yu (2018) reported that a high drop-out rate among disadvantaged students is related to schools' cultural diversity and that a typical curriculum might not support the increase in immigration trends. Effectively and adequately teaching a culturally diversified student body relates to their positive attitudes to work later with associates, customers, and patrons from other cultures (Wells et al., 2020). This phenomenon requires teachers to be conscious of their classrooms' cultural composition to enable all students' success.

Theoretical Context

People share determinations, ambitions, motivations, and mental capacities within cultures; they live together within the same social environment and learn from and within their group (Hofstede, 2017). However, students from those social environments do not choose who to learn from. Teaching is naturally integrated into cultures, and cultures are part of teaching. Culture dominates classroom interactions and learning (Kaur & Noman, 2015). Therefore, studying cultural diversity is vital to understanding all components of students' and teachers' constant interactions while learning and teaching. Cultural generational shifts are inevitable, and evidence has shown evidence throughout research in many fields (Beugelsdijk, Kostova, Kunst, Spadafora, & van Essen, 2018; Beugelsdijk, & Welzel, 2018; Lee et al., 2022). Teachers must be ready to understand their students' culture to guide them through success during their academic years.

Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2014, 2021) and Gay (1975, 1980, 2002, 2010, 2013) have written extensively about culturally responsive teaching and cultural competence pedagogy. They both emphasized the practices to support multiculturalism and cultural diversity in education while introducing the theory of culturally relevant education, which bridges the gap between students' home cultures and schools. Furthermore, knowledge is not static or constructed, and specific criteria to implement the approaches must account for students' lives' racial, ethnic, and cultural aspects (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). For CRT to succeed in classrooms teachers must understand their students' individuality and cultural affiliation and instruct without prejudice (Archibald et al., 2020; Garces-Bacsal et al., 2021).

Banks (1990) introduced different approaches to implementing multicultural education. First, in the contributions approach, educators celebrate special ethnic days with lessons while introducing typical ethnic heroes. Second, in the ethnic adaptive system approach, educators add curriculum characteristics without modifying their specific constructions to introduce ethnic material to students. Third, the transformative process approach provides complementing and supplementing features or perspectives to current views while explaining how to implement multicultural diversity. Finally, in the decision-making and social action approach, teachers and students understand relevant ethnic issues while identifying solutions and taking appropriate actions to combat ethnic prejudice and discrimination in their environment, from the classroom to their homes. Multicultural education should not be omitted from any curriculum; the approach favor social justice and inclusion at all academic levels. Many researchers and educators emphasize the needs for teachers to provide an environment for all students to feel accepted, valued, and safe and multicultural education is the best approach to facilitate those applications (Kwok et al., 2020; Schuelka et al., 2019; Sengupta et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

The problem is that teachers in middle school and high schools are not aware of or prepared to address cultural diversity in their classrooms (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Glock et al., 2019; Juang & Schachner, 2020; Sarı & Yüce, 2020; Shedrow, 2017). Teachers do a disservice to students if they do not understand, manage, and address cultural diversity in their classroom to favor all students' educational attainment individually. The more diverse the United States becomes, the more schools will become multiracial, which necessitates teachers to be responsible and understand the impact of cultural diversity in their classrooms (Wachira & Mburu, 2019). In the last ten years, secondary and primary schools' composition has changed dramatically. While the percentage of White students decreased from 54 to 47, for Hispanics, it rose from 22% to 27%, and for Blacks, it decreased from 17% to 15%. Students of more than two races rose from 1% to 4%, which means that all minority (non-White students) students accounted for 75% of the public schools' population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Teachers not addressing cultural diversity can contribute to low performance, a higher achievement gap, and student failures. Teachers must be aware of all the harmful ways they can hurt students' cultural sensitivity. Students should feel free to exercise their positive cultural beliefs in schools without fear of reprisal or losing their sense of belonging (Melnik, 2017; Sarı & Yüce, 2020).

Wells et al. (2020) noted that cultural diversity can enhance intellectual skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Additionally, the quality of learning and teaching increases as diversity increases in the teacher workforce (Stevens & Motamedi, 2019). So far, during the literature review, most current research and publications have been focused on higher education and have been conducted in foreign countries. Even though there is much research on the effects

and impact of cultural diversity in education, there is little research addressing teachers' views, experiences, and perspectives on cultural diversity while understanding cross-cultural dimensions in their middle school and high school classrooms. The literature reveals clashes between teachers' cultural attitudes and their students' inclinations. The literature shows that teachers struggle with cultural challenges and are unprepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. Hence, in an inevitably racially diverse society, it is essential to understand how teachers understand, experience, or perceive cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools because their actions can impact students as lifelong learners.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle school and high schools. For this research, the most appropriate definition of cultural diversity was "the representation, in one social system of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance" (Mazur & Białostocka, 2010, p. 8). Furthermore, Hofstede's (1980) theory of cross-cultural dimensions amplified the need to assess teachers' views, experiences, and perceptions of their learning environment while emphasizing culture in the classroom.

Significance of the Study

I assumed that teachers should be equipped with the proper knowledge, training, and experience to overcome the challenges of teaching in culturally diverse settings. The study magnified the need to foster cross-cultural competency in teachers' education and classroom instruction. In addition, capturing cross-cultural perceptions and experiences of teachers could provide educators with a benchmark to gauge students' opinions, experiences, and learning needs

to benefit all stakeholders in schools and classrooms. Educators could use the study's results to re-evaluate (a) teaching degree programs produced from traditional teaching methods emphasizing cross-cultural dimensions, (b) schools' vision and mission, and (c) teachers' instructional strategies to teach effectively while creating inclusive classrooms.

Theoretical

The research provides a new understanding of how teachers experience cultural diversity from a cross-cultural perspective. It could help educators in multicultural environments to understand and account for cross-cultural dimensions analysis while formulating curricula to promote learning. Hence, this study in teacher education and teaching strategies builds on other studies (e.g., Khan et al., 2020; Pruitt, 2017; Wachira & Mburu, 2019) by adding knowledge and accentuating the need for teachers to understand the value of cross-cultural dimensions and their impact on teaching pedagogies in their classrooms practice.

Empirical

The research added data from middle and high school teachers to the body of knowledge on how cross-cultural dimensions affect teaching and learning experiences. Based on observations, interviews, and the participants' familiarity with classroom practice, the findings could allow educators to understand how it improves learning environments for students and teachers in culturally diverse settings. School administrators could devise professional development to instill the proper teaching methods to support cultural diversity. Finally, the research data provide substance to research on teachers' understanding of cross-cultural dimensions (Huppert et al., 2018) and reemphasizes the need to replace instructivist with constructivist cultures in education (Feyzi Behnagh & Yasrebi, 2020; Porcaro, 2011).

Practical

The study compared Yi's (2018) research on the cross-cultural dimensions to the participants' views of learning environments to determine the value of fostering such pedagogy. The study provides information on the participants' academic, educational, and personal aspects while instructing in multicultural schools. Educators and administrators in middle school and high schools could affect and implement change by applying the study's findings in their district or other schools with diverse demographics. Teachers in culturally diverse classrooms could identify and relate to similar challenges and benefit from the actions implemented by the participants to mitigate the issues.

Research Questions

The proposed research questions help to frame the study. They allowed me to set conditions to interview and observe the participants in multiple settings. The questions drove the goals of the focus groups and provided the objectives for the interviews and questionnaires. I derived them from the theoretical framework to collect the relevant data for the study.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms?

Sub-Question One

How do teachers perceive, define, and facilitate cultural diversity in their classrooms?

Sub-Question Two

What do teachers perceive as positive and negative aspects of culturally diverse classrooms?

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers recognize, acknowledge, and facilitate cross-cultural dimensions in their classrooms?

Definitions

The terms defined here provide context, background, and boundaries to their significance in the study.

1. *Constructivism*-Student-centered teaching model and learning environments in which students continually construct knowledge from previous experience (Clark, 2018).
2. *Constructivist learning environment*-Educational settings that emphasize collaboration and interactions to support efficient learning relating to students' and teachers' real-life and authentic conditions to promote problem-solving (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008).
3. *Culture*-The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group's members from another's (Hofstede, 1980).
4. *Cultural dimensions*-These dimensions indicate how significant and relevant interactions between students and teachers translate to their lives outside the school (Jensen et al., 2018; Jensen et al., 2019).
5. *Cultural diversity*-The representation in one social system of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance (Mazur & Białostocka, 2010).
6. *Diversity*-observed or factual differences based on human traits (Koppelman, 2020).

7. *Pragmatic constructivist approach*-Teaching method combining pragmatism and constructivism while applying practicality to knowledge construction. (Hickman et al., 2009).

Summary

Culture is a powerful aspect of interaction and learning in the classroom. Students and teachers interact while sharing different cultures, views, and opinions about education. The more diverse the country becomes, the more schools will become multiracial and diverse, requiring teachers to understand cultural diversity and create an environment that promotes multicultural learning. Unfortunately, cross-cultural conflicts can be detrimental to teaching and learning. The adverse actions of teachers regarding cultural diversity can contribute to low performance, a higher achievement gap, and student failures. Therefore, teachers should be able to apply multiple teaching styles to educate all students regardless of culture. Students should feel free to exercise their cultural beliefs in schools without fear of reprisal or a sense of belonging. This research investigated how teachers experience, understand, and address cultural diversity in their classrooms to individually favor students' educational attainment. The problem is that teachers are not aware and prepared to address cultural diversity in their classrooms, specifically from a cross-cultural dimension. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle school and high school through the lens of cross-cultural dimensions. A systematic and snowballing review of the literature was conducted to understand how cultural diversity impacts teaching and learning while creating teacher challenges. A social constructivist theoretical framework was applied to structure the examination of pieces of literature. First, constructivism and social constructivism theories were addressed to identify the lenses I would use to consult the literature. The second part of the chapter includes a review of the literature to identify gaps and formulate a problem statement. The literature review helped me understand cultural diversity, its impact, and its need in education. Second, the importance of recognizing cross-cultural dimensions in education is discussed. Third, the individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance dimensions are synthesized to provide their relevance to subcultural diversity in education. Finally, constructivist aspects of teaching and cultural competency are discussed to support and provide mitigations to the problem and gap identified in the literature. The review of academic literature established a disparity for the present study, the framework to synthesize peer-reviewed documents, and analyze the data collected.

Theoretical Framework

Hofstede's (1980) theory of cross-cultural dimension informed the study. The theory provided the foundation for evaluating literature and synthesizing information and data. The paragraphs below will explain the approaches to producing a coherent and cohesive literature review and research.

Hofstede's Cross-Cultural Dimensions Theory

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle school and high school using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses. Hofstede's (1980) theory of cross-cultural dimensions emphasizes the need to identify students' subcultural tendencies. The dimensions of the theory are associated with students' views and perceptions of their learning environment while evaluating concepts. According to Roy (2020) and Nair et al. (2022), cross-cultural dimension studies have been dominated and influenced by the seminal research and extensive writings of Hofstede. Hofstede's theory has dominated cultural studies while analyzing national and individual cultures (Wadhwa et al., 2022). He produced four parameters to explain individuals' interactions, behaviors, and cultural differences while surveying the International Business Machine (IBM) workers from 1967 to 1973 in 40 countries (Rojo et al., 2020, Yi, 2021). The original dimensions offered by Hofstede were power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. After more research, he added two more dimensions—long-term orientation and indulgence—to address the importance of value in cultures (Cao et al., 2020; Foncha et al., 2016; Nair et al., 2022; Roy, 2020; WPSU, n.d.). The theory guided the analytical approach to data collection. It informed the research questions, data analysis, and results reported in chapter four.

Related Literature

Various topics must be discussed to understand the value and challenges teachers experience with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools. The literature review elaborates on the theoretical framework and establishes the study's structure for identifying how students and teachers interact, perceive, and experience the phenomenon in a natural setting.

First, I described the dimensions and their implications for education. Second, I discussed the IND/COL, the power distance, and the uncertainty avoidance cross-cultural dimensions from Hofstede (1980) and their relations to education because they are essential in understanding classroom teacher–student relations. Third, I evaluated the implications of social constructivism on cultural diversity in education. Fourth, I reviewed cultural diversity’s impact on education. Finally, I examined the different constructivist pedagogies related to cultural diversity and elaborated on the value of multicultural education, technology, and cultural competency to support cultural diversity in the classroom from a cross-cultural perspective. In conclusion, to provide context for the research, I related teachers’ importance in identifying and understanding the cross-cultural dimensions while teaching in culturally diverse classrooms.

The Dimensions and Their Implications for Cultural Diversity

Noorbehbahani & Salehi (2020) explains that Hofstede’s research provides the best option to understand how culture affects value in a working environment. Given that schools are working environments where teachers interact with students constantly, Hofstede’s framework of national culture based on individuals is appropriate for this study. Culture can be defined as collective programming regulations, assumptions, values, and morals adopted by a social group that affects their behaviors and how they perceive and receive information. The definition emphasizes that students will understand and receive instructions from different perspectives from teachers (Bozkurt & Akbulut, 2019; Cao et al., 2020; Kasler et al., 2020; Tlili et al., 2021). Through a meta-analysis, Morling and Lamoreaux (2008) concluded that culture is the foundation of everyone’s perception, beliefs, and interaction with others; hence, failing to understand the aspects of culture that can affect students’ learning is detrimental to creating environments that favor all cultures properly. Teachers should not have specific expectations

about how students should learn because of their social background; instead, they must be ready to teach any student regardless of the culture in individualistic and collectivistic countries (Jensen et al., 2018; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008). After conducting extensive research over six years and 70 countries, Hofstede produced six cultural dimensions representing distinctions between people or groups (Insights, 2022). Hofstede (1980, 1986, 2005, 2011) and colleagues (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004; Hofstede et al., 2010) correlated the dimensions' impact on education and culture while stating that the dimensions represent national rather than individual values. Also, each dimension can exist within individuals and cultures due to social changes, globalization, immigration, and technology (Lansford et al., 2021; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008).

The first dimension, power distance, deals with the unequal distribution of power between people or groups in a country; less powerful people either accept the hierarchical order or fight for equality and to overthrow the system and take power, but people on each side of the spectrum tolerate the level of inequality. It is always clear each person's position in all interactions (Bissessar, 2018; Fernandez et al., 1997; Noorbehbahani & Salehi, 2020; Tavanti, 2012). Education is student-centered in this dimension when there is a small distance between the top and bottom of hierarchical power. Students feel comfortable questioning teachers and receiving feedback; however, when the power distance is bigger, education is teacher-centered, accentuating roles, fear, and obedience (Tlili et al., 2021).

The second dimension, uncertainty avoidance, measures people's or groups' comfort with vagueness in all situations. In this dimension, the stronger the distance, the stricter the rules and laws to keep society in constant orderliness. Regarding absolute truth, a weak distance allows people to accept and anticipate the future and feel comfortable facing adversities and the unknown. Life is regarded as adaptable and many activities are accepted (DeBode et al., 2020;

Foncha et al., 2016; Noorbehbahani & Salehi, 2020; Yi, 2021). Teachers provide final answers and absolute truths in a strong uncertainty avoidance society with structured curriculum while leaving students with less critical thinking. In a weak uncertainty avoidance society, teachers can decide to hold on to solutions to generate students' critical thinking by having them evaluate gathered information (Tlili et al., 2021).

The third dimension is individualism versus collectivism, in that individualistic societies allow people to focus on themselves, the "I," and their immediate family, whereas people in collectivistic societies focus on loyalty to groups and communities, and the "we" is fortified to accentuate allegiance and trustfulness. Individualists focus on self and family, while collectivists favor community benefits and rewards. In this dimension, collectivistic societies' education provides a means to learn how to do things with a focus on practicality and less questioning. However, in individualistic cultures, education facilitates teaching how to learn while theorizing and synthesizing are propagated and professed. Also, teamwork allows for better information sharing and management (Cao et al., 2020; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; Noorbehbahani & Salehi, 2020; Tlili et al., 2021; Yi, 2021).

The fourth dimension is masculinity versus femininity, which revolves around societies' assertive and modest polarization. Masculine societies are more competitive, whereas feminine ones focus more on consensus and are caring-oriented. Gender roles are evident in masculine society, and quality of life is very important in feminine societies (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; Noorbehbahani & Salehi, 2020; Tlili et al., 2021). In masculine cultures, education involves competition, the best students are to be modeled, and male students do not venture into academic subjects seen as feminist. In contrast, feminine societies allow students to engage in reciprocal camaraderie and encourage collaborative learning. The academically average students are

imitated and choose academic subjects from intrinsic motivation (Gómez-Rey et al., 2016; Hofstede et al., 2010).

Long-term and short-term orientation is the fifth dimension, which entails how society prioritizes the past, present, and future (Insights, 2022). Long-term-oriented societies focus on pragmatic planning for the future through the present; current preparation should benefit future generations. In contrast, short-term societies focus on preserving traditions and are skeptical of societal changes (DeBode et al., 2020; Basnáková et al., 2016; Noorbehbahani & Salehi, 2020). In long-term-oriented societies, educational rewards are for motivation, though in short-term-oriented societies, those rewards are for satisfaction and contentment (Kaur & Noman, 2015). This dimension can help identify students' educational ambition, motive, and motive (Tlili et al., 2021).

The final dimension is restraint versus indulgence, which concerns how people in societies can express gratification (Insights, 2022; Tang & Bao, 2020). The dimension was added after Hofstede et al. (2010) analyzed the results of the World Values Survey from 93 nations. Restraint societies score higher on morality and follow strict norms. In contrast, indulgent ones are looser on ethics and virtue, value leisure and freedom of choice, and standards can change to facilitate progress (DeBode et al., 2020; Beugelsdijk et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2018). There is little research on the correlation between the restraint versus indulgence dimension and education (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015; Sandoval & Collins, 2016). However, one can conclude that indulgent societies favor an educational system that provides many options for student progress. At the same time, a restricted one will inhibit changes and hold students to one standard across the curriculum, while a fixed structure establishes teacher-student interaction (Tlili et al., 2021).

The Individualism-Collectivism Dimension Relation to Cultural Diversity

This study focuses on individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance dimensions to establish context for the participants' subcultural inclinations. The individualism–collectivism IND-COL dimension is one of the first four dimensions that Hofstede (1984) popularized with his studies on cross-cultural dimensions. Hofstede applied an etic approach to developing a questionnaire to survey nations. From Hofstede, the IND-COL dimension situates each measurement at the opposite end of the spectrum. Individualistic cultures emphasize self-independence and are driven by competition (Nickerson, 2021). In an individualistic culture, people put their immediate family's interests before those of the community and subordinate their needs to those of the group or community (Cachia et al., 2020; Lansford et al., 2021). In a collectivistic culture, individuals focus on commonality in the community, interpersonal relations, interdependence, reputation, prestige, and the welfare of others, and extended families are vital (Cachia et al., 2020; Yi, 2018). Societies that score low on the end of the IND-COL dimension are considered constructivist and collectivist, with a high score corresponding to Western societies, which can indicate individualistic tendencies (DeBode et al., 2020; Gómez-Rey et al., 2016; Kasler et al., 2020). Nevertheless, distinctions must be made for patterns found inside individualistic and collectivistic societies.

Horizontal and Vertical IND-COL Dimension within Culture

Other researchers like Triandis (1995) included quadra-dimensionality in the theory of cross-cultural dimensions. They added the horizontal and vertical axis on the original continuum to emphasize the independent and interdependent self. The vertical quadrants focus on accepting social hierarchy, selfishness, and inequality, whereas the horizontal underscores equality and reliance on the self or the collective (Humphrey et al., 2019; Singelis et al., 1995).

Those aspects of students' culture can impact their learning abilities and perception. Researchers conducted studies with undergraduate students from two different countries to explain individuals' characteristics on the quadratic dimension. The study allows them to conclude that it is essential to understand individuals of the two cultures. Self-indulgence and self-gratification are even more potent in the vertical quadrants than in the horizontal ones. That potency means students and teachers in those quadrants will perceive and be motivated about education for different outcomes. Vertical individualism can be associated with less psychological well-being, while horizontal collectivism is paired with more psychological well-being in young adults between 18-25 years of age. These findings could imply that the welfare and happiness of high school students can be attributed to their cross-cultural tendencies. Collectivist behaviors should be part of the educational curriculum to help young people combat individualistic tendencies that can contribute to depression (Humphrey et al., 2019; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

The IND-COL Dimension's Implication to Education.

Being individualistic or collectivistic as a student or teacher matters in how interactions, perceptions, and knowledge are constructed in education. Preservice teachers' attitudes are the main challenge to curriculum development to support culturally diversified classrooms. Individualistic or collectivistic tendencies will affect teachers' educational models and students' perceptions of the educational environment (Cachia et al., 2020; Wachira & Mburu, 2019). Hence, teachers' expectations of students and the environment will not be met if they maintain a cultural approach and do not account for others which will force students not to share their beliefs. Cheng et al. (2020) reported that teachers create curricula that focus on individual requirements in an individualistic educational system and do not hold students to the same

criteria; they view performance as distinct and evaluate students based on distinctiveness. Furthermore, an educational environment based on collectivism will target students as groups, teachers' expectations will be aggregated into the group, and students will internalize and feel responsible for the success or failures of classmates (Cheng et al., 2020). Societies that score low on the IND-COL dimension employ constructivist teaching styles, and teachers act as facilitators of students learning approaches, and the US as an individualistic culture, does not favor group work due to high autonomy and independence (Gómez-Rey et al., 2016; Tamimy et al., 2022).

The Power Distance Dimension and Culture

The power distance dimension concerns the allocation of power between individuals or groups in a country who either accept the hierarchical order or combat the inequality (Bissessar, 2018; Fernandez et al., 1997). Hofstede (1986) provided some fundamental and salient differences that could exist in education when teachers and students interact in classrooms. He defined power distance as how people with less power in organizations or countries accept their position in society in relation to power (Nair et al., 2022; Tavanti, 2012). Power is synonymous with authority and is relevant in classrooms because the hierarchy is established and engrained by the legitimate position of schools' administrators and teachers over students (Cortina et al., 2017). Power distance will affect how teachers are free to use their own teaching style or curriculum from administration and students' cognitive ability for knowledge assimilation (Cachia et al., 2020). Hence, understanding the dimension and its impact on education is crucial for teachers to comprehend cultural diversity and deal with it in their environment.

High-power societies' educational systems are teacher-centered and stress roles and obedience in classrooms, which reflects an authoritarian style of instruction, while students are often reactive to teaching (DeBode et al., 2020; Wadhwa et al., 2022). Teachers are regarded as

respected professionals and keepers of knowledge and initiate all communication. Seniority is perceived as experience. Students are followers and trust that teachers have the correct answers. Parents and students respect teachers' final decisions and recommendations, questioning is discouraged, and classroom discussions are initiated to clarify learning, not as debates. Students' success is attributed to teachers' excellence, and knowledge is processed to follow and achieve goals (Cortina et al., 2017; Hofstede, 1986; Kaur & Noman, 2015).

On the other hand, in low-power societies, education is student-centered or egalitarian, and education occurs in a mutually inclusive educational environment (DeBode et al., 2020; Wadhwa et al., 2022). Students feel comfortable questioning teachers, and two-way communication is attributed to students' achievement. Critical thinking is emphasized with discussions, and students' views are esteemed. Students are expected to participate in their educational planning decisions, and learning must be pleasing (Cortina et al., 2017; Hofstede, 1986; Kaur & Noman, 2015).

The Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension and Culture

Globalization and new technologies have revolutionized the world. Students and teachers equally share that space in the classroom. Teachers must recognize that students in a low-uncertainty avoidance culture will feel more comfortable making mistakes, accept non-rigid instructions, and want to be rewarded for innovation. At the same time, students in high-uncertainty avoidance cultures will only take part in activities that are pre-defined and well-structured with pre-disposed outcomes (Hofstede, 1986). In their research, Yi (2021) concluded that cultural interactions have become more ambiguous while validating the effectiveness and relevancy of the uncertainty avoidance dimension in today's societies. Lee and Lee (2018)

explain that teachers can recur to isolation from peers and avoid educational novelties while teaching to avoid uncertainty.

Cultural Dimensions and Educational Leadership

Cross-cultural dimensions provide a lens to correlate educational leaders' leadership styles to their cultural backgrounds and national culture impacted the duties and decisions of educators. Educational leadership style depends on classrooms, schools' cultural settings, or the background of educational leaders. Different dimensions are associated with specific leadership styles. For example, power distance is related to servant leadership, individualism to shared or participatory leadership, uncertainty avoidance to transformational and emergent leadership, and masculinity to tasks versus people-oriented leadership (Bissessar, 2018; Brion & Ampah-Mensah, 2021; Tsiligiris et al., 2022). Different leadership approaches can be linked to educational leaders' cultural backgrounds, which are the foundation of all interactions and support amongst all school stakeholders. Educational improvement, success, and student achievement will be affected by the leadership style of personnel responsible for setting education outcomes.

The effects of culture on effective leadership are apparent. Culture ultimately impacts educational leaders' decisions on how to lead culturally diverse environments. Culture is the multiple shared attitudes, morals, and actions of a given individual, organization, community, or society (Cheon, 2000; Fisher, 2021). The differences between the members of those organizations are vital to effective educational leadership. Understanding the granularity of the impact of cultures on effective school leadership sheds light on how educational programs do not prepare leaders to lead in culturally diverse environments. Educators adapt their leadership styles from experience, not training. Hence, a trial-and-error style of action is ineffective because

students could suffer from the consequences of that perspective. Cross-cultural leadership skills must be engrained in educational programs (Ballard et al., 2018; Robila & Taylor, 2018).

Advocates and Critics of Hofstede

Although there are pros and cons to Hofstede's cross-cultural dimensions, his theory allows researchers to continually argue and probe cultural diversity's relation, importance, and impact in all settings and environments. From the Department of Education's data, there are no clear indications that the dimensions correlate to educational achievement (Lansford et al., 2021). Most of the top countries with the best education are individualistic, like the USA, and collectivistic, like China. Hofstede was a pioneer in pragmatic and practical research about culture and has been selected as a top influencer by *The Wall Street Journal*; his theory has been cited almost 1000 times, and his advocates emphasized the relevance of his work as a whole for cross-cultural studies, the theory's vital contribution to critical thinking about national and organizational culture, and its simplicity and forthright logic (Batova & Ruediger, 2023; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; McSweeney, 2002; Sandoval & Collins, 2016; Søndergaard, 1994).

Some critics challenged Hofstede's theory based on multiple facets (Gerlach & Eriksson, 2021; Noorbehbahani & Salehi, 2020). Gerlach and Eriksson (2021) have disputed the Values Survey Module that Hofstede has used due to the inconsistency of their alpha values from quantitative research. Taras and Steel (2009) presented misconceptions of the cross-cultural dimensions that most researchers who use the theory make conceptually or as a framework. They concluded that the validity of measurement instruments' assumptions about culture is the most questioned aspect of any study. Triandis (1982) examined the responses from the survey because they were not answered in unstructured interviews; there was no way to check or confirm the respondents' replies. Also, he noted that the results should have been discussed and represented

for each country, not generalized, and heterogeneity should have been applied to questions. Roy (2020) discussed and examined the relevance and statistical adequacy of the survey as a single instrument, the lack of national cultural homogeneity, dimensions and boundaries, political impacts, and globalization as fallacies in Hofstede's approach. Yi (2018, 2021) reviewed the individualism/collectivism and uncertain/avoidance dimensions and concluded that the dimensions must be updated with new contemporary information unavailable during the original research to be more relevant to current studies. Batova and Ruediger (2023) expressed the limitations to the dimensions as fixed approaches to culture without accounting for deviation and scale versus polarity as a definition.

Constructivism, Social Constructivism, Cross-cultural Dimensions, and Cultural Diversity

Because learning and teaching are social constructs, teachers and students bring their prior knowledge and opinions to the classroom while interacting (O' Dwyer, 2018). The study adds new rich data from cross-cultural dimensions to emphasize the need to understand the phenomenon. I adopted a social constructivist theoretical framework in this study because it situates teachers in their classrooms while making sense of their environment, which is imperative to trends of cultural diversity in education (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Constructivist theorists include Piaget's (1952) theory of cognitive development, Bruner's (1960, 1961, 1964, 1966, 1984, 1985) theory on cognitive growth, and Lev Vygotsky's (1962, 1978, 1987) theory on social constructivism. These thinkers introduced different models of constructivism, such as social, cognitive growth, and cognitive development. They all focused on individuals being creators of their learning by observing, participating, and continually transforming their construction of reality (Hickman et al., 2009; Schunk, 2020). Constructivism is a theory in which individuals are assumed to structure their learning and conceive their knowledge through active

learning and is a learner- or student-centered, instructor-facilitated, and interactions-focused approach (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008; Clark, 2018; Krahenbuhl, 2016; Pruitt, 2017; Schunk, 2020). When people construct their knowledge, they organize their thoughts as a valuable plan of action to solve problems outside the classroom (Stevens, 1998). Individuals' goals are affected by their culture and contribute to social constructivism, which must be discussed to understand how the learning environment affects how teaching and learning happen in classrooms.

Understanding Social Constructivism and Culture

Lev Vygotsky (1962) introduced social constructivism, which attested to the importance of the environment and social interaction as the vehicle for learning without rejecting the mind. Vygotsky emphasizes the impact of society on individuals' learning. Social constructivism should be distinguished from cognitive constructivism, presented by Piaget (1952), who maintained that students use their intellectual ability to understand their environment and further their knowledge. Students develop their thinking framework through culture while contributing those affirmations to their beliefs. There are multiple Vygotskian concepts of learning in teachers' education. However, social constructivism must not be mistaken for a teaching practice because it is a learning philosophy (Castro-Félix & Daniels, 2020; Shabani, 2016; Smagorinsky, 2012; Wachira & Mburu, 2019).

There are drawbacks or disputes in adopting constructivist pedagogies. There are challenges and fallacies in implementing a constructivist teaching method. Teachers must understand that focusing solely on activities and constant engagement to promote knowledge discovery can lead to long-term memory misconceptions. Teachers should not ignore the learning environment's culture, the distinctions between constructivism as a learning theory,

philosophical position, and instruction theory (Krahenbuhl, 2016; Lewis, 2018; Porcaro, 2011; Renkl, 2009).

Vygotsky did not offer any implications for moral development. But Lewis (2018), although accepting and supporting Vygotsky's theory, advised that the approach was not complete in supporting the development of moral education, as suggested by Tappan's (1997) interpretations of Vygotsky. Newman and Latifi (2020) reaffirmed that only some of Vygotsky's research was intended to be published. Therefore, some of the information used by researchers could be an inaccurate assumption from Vygotsky. Nevertheless, the social and cultural interactions in education must be understood from the theory of cross-cultural dimensions to emphasize the differences between teachers' and students' views of education.

Constructivist Learning Environment and Cultural Diversity

Constructivist learning environments include collaborative and active teaching and learning, promoting learning autonomy, emphasizing problem-solving skills, and designing lessons to meet each student's experience and account for their perception of the world (Clark, 2018; Splitter, 2008). Those perceptions or worldviews are related to the cross-cultural dimensions and are vital to how students receive, process, and assimilate knowledge. Hence, cultural diversity can create clashes in teaching and learning and become challenging for teachers instructing middle and high school students to prepare them to be productive citizens. Teachers are coordinators and assistants in constructivist learning environments; they are not sages on stages, and student-centered pedagogies dominate classroom interactions (Harjali, 2019). Grier-Reed and Williams-Wengerd (2018) proposed constructivist teaching as an approach to advance inclusive education. They affirmed that the constructivist approach could be utilized to identify inequalities and injustice in classrooms. Since social constructivism facilitates

knowledge to be transmitted and shared between teachers and students, culture plays a vital role in allowing co-creation and innovation in the classroom. Thus, constructivist learning environments can create an educational atmosphere that facilitates all those aspects mentioned above. Therefore, constructivist pedagogies must be introduced to complement constructivist learning environments.

Constructivist Pedagogies

Constructivist pedagogies focus on learning, not teaching; teachers challenge students' critical thinking while providing an environment that includes dialogues and conversations to decipher the truths (Binkley & Minor, 2020). Charania et al. (2021) explain that constructivist pedagogies were essential to introduce and apply problem-based learning (PBL) as part of the integrated approach to technology in education (ITE) during the COVID-19 lockdown. She expressed that constructivist teaching and PBL allow students to produce and transmit knowledge in new ways while the teachers create content to facilitate their study.

Hindhede (2020) reinforces constructivist teaching by accentuating its importance in capturing students' interests while being a student-centered approach. From her study in a Danish school, she acknowledges that teachers are, by virtue of their position, cultural producers. She observed that teachers' power in the classroom drives instructional conduct. The teachers failed to use student-centered approaches or teaching while applying constructivist pedagogies because they were reluctant to lose their traditional role in their classroom.

Binkley and Minor (2020) emphasize that constructivist pedagogies support multiculturalism by allowing students to produce knowledge. The constructivist classroom employs problem-based learning (PBL) and experiential learning to transform, transfer and share

knowledge that students co-create in inclusive environments while participating in activities and assignments that are thought provocative.

To support the constructivist learning approach, constructivist learning environments components like the flip classroom method supports independent learning, problem-based learning (PBL) enables engagement and interaction, multicultural education acknowledges students' cultural inclusiveness, and technology allows new cognitive skills to be introduced.

Flipped Classroom Method

The flipped classroom method originated from Lage et al.'s (2000) inverted classroom theory; they identified the mismatch between teaching and learning style as a cause of students' disinterest in education. However, two chemistry teachers in Colorado, Bergmann and Sams, coined the term flipped classroom (Eppard & Rochdi, 2017). Koonce (2019) defined the flipped classroom as an inverted educational technique where homework is converted into classwork. From a flipped classroom concept, activities like homework are held in schools as lectures and theory are learned at home. Ozdamli and Asiksoy (2016) explained that the flipped classroom method emphasizes providing the maximum time for teachers and students to apply and discuss subjects in class. Students are responsible for getting acquainted with topics on their own time outside the classroom and coming to class ready to receive help from the teacher, share with other students, and apply their knowledge. In a flipped classroom environment, homework is done in an interactive classroom environment, whereas instruction happens outside the school, where students employ models to understand theories or abstract instructions (Webel et al., 2018).

The technique has multiple advantages, including students' autonomy and responsibility for learning to complement the constructivist approach. In addition, students can study at their

speed and conduct more research while parents can be involved and track the students' learning. It furthermore increases or forces teachers' technology prowess to facilitate a student-centered learning approach (Webel et al., 2018). However, there are disadvantages and challenges to implementing the method. First, students' access to technology and the internet may be limited. Second, students might need to acquaint themselves with their subjects before class. Third, teachers created substandard instructional videos and used them in class (Ozdamli & Asiksoy, 2016).

The Efficacy of the Flipped Classroom for Students. Much research has been conducted to identify the benefits and effectiveness of the flipped classroom in different subjects and learning environments. (Cheng et al., 2019; Campillo-Ferrer & Miralles-Martínez, 2021; Darmansyah, 2019). For example, Cheng et al. (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of 1590 publications that included four variables: student levels, publication types, study durations, and subject area. They concluded that the flipped classroom method benefits students' learning outcomes from three moderators: student levels, publication types, and subject area; study durations were insignificant. Zheng et al. (2020) conducted a meta-analysis to identify how flipped classrooms affect students' learning and motivation. They included 12 moderators and 1393 publications. They provided substantial evidence that the flipped classroom method is beneficial while considering all moderators. Also, Winter (2018) concluded that flipped classrooms motivated middle school students while applying a technology-based approach.

Problem-Based Learning

After multiple years of clinical observations at McMaster University medical school, Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) decided to design a teaching method to complement medical students' work with replicated and actual patients. From 1963 to 1974, they created "problem

boxes” to motivate students by solving real challenges but did not produce the expected results. Students were not wholly engaged and did not use critical thinking to diagnose their patients because they never identified alternative treatments. Barrows and Tamblyn researched and accumulated data to arrive at P4, the first model for implementing problem-based learning for medical students. They affirmed that problem-based learning allows people to endure their environment by finding and producing solutions to daily challenges. Barrows and Tamblyn wanted teachers to apply the same methods and techniques they would propose to their students in the classroom during medical research. Problem-based learning (PBL) can be found in John Dewey’s (1934) approach to teaching, who believed that teachers should allow students to investigate problems and create solutions to challenges they face in their environments (Delisle, 1997).

Schunk (2020) referred to problem-based learning as discovery and constructivist learning. He defined problem-based learning as a teaching method to motivate and engage students with unique perspectives about solving problems. Problem-based learning can be traced back to Plato’s dialogues techniques, Dewey’s teaching values and school in Chicago, Bruner’s learning by discovery, and Fraser’s case studies method. Each philosopher advocated that problems should be the start of learning, which laid the groundwork for problem-based learning (Schmidt, 2012). Abraham et al. (2019) conducted research with international students to identify considerations that influence group discussion with problem-based instruction in a diverse setting. The authors concluded that, in PBL settings, cultural differences were associated with encouraging and positive educational outcomes. Students were able to share their views while producing solutions to issues that were presented. They also advised that teachers should strive while using PBL in group discussions to avoid criticism from any students about each

other's solution or point of view. Frambach et al. (2019) also cautioned about the use of PBL as a universal term. The authors accentuated using PBL while including culture and pluralism as the objective to improve education locally and not globally. They affirmed that PBL, as a universal approach, might not be the best learning approach for every social-cultural environment. PBL does not always increase motivation in students; rather, it can favor problem-solving and academic achievements (Aslan & Duruhan, 2020).

Other authors, such as Kardipah and Wibawa (2020), combined PBL with flipped classrooms to test the Flipped Blended Learning model with 48 students. They concluded that the model was effective to motivate and increase students' performance. Servant-Miklos et al. (2019) reaffirmed that PBL had become a well-known teaching approach around the world. They expressed the achievements, improvement, and success of the PBL approach while advising educators to consider the differences between theory and practice to avoid the dire consequences of culture on the teaching method. PBL, when coupled with other active learning practices, has produced better results than being used alone in the classroom (Hallinger, 2020; Permatasari et al., 2020). However, all the previous learning concepts must involve technology as a current trend and skill that students and teachers ought to apply while learning and teaching.

The Impact of Technology on Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

In this generation, technology is inevitably a force in education. Students use smartphones and tablets at an early age to learn. Technology enhances teaching and learning in the classroom and can increase students' learning at all grade levels (Purdue Online, 2017). Educators have professed mobile learning to represent other terms like self-directed learning. Educational technology is associated with constructivism, engaging students' learning outside the classroom, like the flipped classroom method, and problem-based learning to solve current

and relevant problems (Harper & Milman, 2016). Technology enables learners to take control and personalize their education in a constructivist environment while providing real-time and real-life experience to solve problems through the problem-based learning method (An & Oliver, 2020; Sophonhiranrak, 2021). The philosophy of technology derived from Marx (1964) and Heidegger (1996) recognized the relations between technology, humans, and education. Educational technology is obligatory due to the industrial age in human history, characterized by the introduction of technology. Therefore, technology must be ingrained in schooling for fruitful human development and education.

Effects of Technology on Students and Teachers' Culture

Flipped classrooms motivated middle school students while applying a technology-based approach. Teachers' and students' beliefs contribute to their use of technology in the classroom. There is a link between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their appetite to use technology in their classrooms. Teachers should introduce technology in their classrooms regardless of their pedagogical beliefs. Teachers with a constructivist mentality, which supports a student-centered pedagogy, are more prone to use technology in their classroom because it supports current and future skills that students will need to navigate through their studies and the future. Teachers with teacher-centered pedagogy benefit from using technology in their teaching environment. Cross-cultural dimensions can correlate teachers' culture and their preference for applying technology in their classrooms. As culture influences pedagogies and educational policies, education enculturates students and teachers. (Panicker, 2020; Tondeur et al., 2016; Winter, 2018)

There is skepticism about the narrative on technology's impact on education. The increase in data mining, datafication, capitalist tendencies to sell technologies in or to education,

and the increase in information and communication technology (ICT) does not mean an increase in achievement in education. Research has made it evident that math students' literacy does not increase with more access to digital or technological means. The push for technology to support online learning in education can be attributed to during and post-COVID-19 (Teräs et al., 2020; Tsinonis, 2018).

Faculty Development to Teach with Technology to Improve Cultural Diversity

There is a difference between teaching with technology and teaching technology. Teaching with technology means applying specialized hardware, guidelines, and structures; researchers have made the distinction by defining educational technology as using technical applications to improve education by focusing on three concepts, visual directives, individualized systems, and systematic assessment (An & Oliver, 2020; Brown, 2003). Training with technology increased students' diversity awareness, inclusion, and self-expression and facilitated participation and collaboration in class and online (Collins et al., 2020; Haghanikar, 2019; Hali et al., 2021). There are challenges from cultural diversity associated with technology in special education; concerted and conscious efforts must be made in the field to support innovation and implementation (Hollingshead & McMahon, 2022). Teachers in K-12 were not aware of the possibilities and opportunities that were available to them to use in schools with the enactment of "The Assistive Act" of 2004 (Kaczorowski et al., 2022; Shaheen, 2022). There are more current issues that exist for marginalized or disabled and marginalized-disabled students. Many barriers exist that are correlated with technology and cultural diversity. Many authors addressed the effects of technology on cultural diversity within the disabled population of students (Shaheen, 2022; Kaczorowski et al., 2022; Zilz & Pang, 2019). Shaheen (2022) offers technology-mediated education as a solution to combat the challenges to access, use, implement,

and assess the use of technology for disabled students. At the same time, Kaczorowski et al. (2022) recommend using technology that reflects students' diversity or culture and facilitates inclusion while constantly evaluating assistive technology.

Multicultural Education and Cultural Diversity

Multicultural education, as a paradigm, involves using and applying strategies to promote pluralism and eradicate any types of discrimination that can be ingrained from kindergarten to 12th grade. It requires curricula that incorporate techniques to involve parents, students, teachers, and communities to accept all groups of people that form societies (Cortés, 2013). Multicultural education has moved over time from an idea to a reform movement and is currently a process that educators must embrace to implement social justice actions in their environment and amplify multiculturalism and diversity (Arsal, 2019a, 2019b).

Multicultural Education, the Educational Idea, Reform Movement, and Process

As an idea, multicultural education stemmed first from ethnic studies, which contributed to the cultural deprivation paradigm theory, which was introduced to support educational opportunities for low-income and minority students. However, theorists believed that the schools' culture was more important than the students. Therefore, the culture difference theory was formed to counter the cultural deprivation paradigm and emphasize students' culture as a priority in implementing a multiethnic education (Banks, 2013; Kirylo, 2017).

As a reform movement, multicultural education's goal is to achieve and maintain pluralism in education, which favors the development of students to become active participants in a diverse and democratic society (Koppelman, 2020). Banks (2013), the pioneer in multicultural education, stated that the reform is derived from ethnic studies, which resulted from the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 70s. Black studies were the first programs, and

ethnic studies grew to incorporate other minority racial groups, like Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Asian Americans. Furthermore, he explained that the reform movement allowed teachers and activists to agree that a multiethnic curriculum must be implemented to eradicate the inequality in education to acknowledge African American contributions to American history.

Banks (1990) introduced different approaches to implementing multicultural education as a process. First, the contributions approach allows educators to celebrate special ethnic days with lessons while introducing ethnic heroes or characters the same as the White ones. Second, through the ethnic adaptive system, educators can add different curriculum characteristics without modifying their specific constructions to introduce ethnic material to students. Third, the transformative process does more than add to the curriculum; it provides complementary and supplementary features or perspectives to current views while explaining how to implement multicultural education. Finally, the decision-making and social action approach allows teachers and students to understand relevant ethnic issues while identifying solutions and taking appropriate actions to combat ethnic prejudice and discrimination in their environment, from the classroom to their home. Educators can use all these methods to satisfy minimal ethnic teaching. However, the transformative and decision-making (social action) approaches are best for students to become active in multicultural societies and less discriminatory (Banks, 2004).

Multicultural education is more than teaching students about cultures. The approach denies discrimination against disadvantaged groups in society, supports pluralism while emphasizing diversity, and implements a multicultural curriculum in any school. Educators must present ethnic education without taking a side or promoting superiority according to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, or religion in a democratic society. Diversified communities must practice multicultural education to allow each social group to be equally learned and understood

(Cumming-McCann, 2003; Koppelman, 2020; Parkhouse & Thomas, 2022). For example, it is not appropriate to teach Japanese American students about Pearl Harbor while praising the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; it could create dissent among students and make them become unmotivated to learn history. Therefore, the approaches provided by Banks (2013) are crucial for educators to understand when they want to implement multiethnic and multicultural education in their classrooms to support cultural diversity. Cultural competency must be introduced in teachers' education to support multicultural education.

Why Multicultural Education

Research on inequality, race, and ethnicity have been necessary for a new wave of teaching pedagogies that translate to eradicating discrimination in and from education from early childhood. Stevens and Dworkin's (2019) provided global perspectives on the issues related to prejudice worldwide. Researchers have supported the need and effectiveness of multicultural education in different countries, professions, and disciplines related to education (Arphattananon, 2018; Dameron et al., 2020; Geerlings et al., 2019; Hummelstedt et al., 2021; Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2018; Merlin-Knoblich & Dameron, 2021). In school counseling, multicultural education helps counselors to be prepared to understand and meet students' educational achievements in a diversified setting (Dameron et al., 2020). In psychology, Geerlings et al. (2019) confirmed that students' perception of their classmates' ethnic backgrounds in multicultural classrooms depends on their teachers' interactions with those groups. In teacher education, preservice teachers provided with a multicultural education curriculum and training presented positive attitudes towards diversity in their classrooms (Arsal, 2019a, 2019b). In early childhood education, Khalfaoui et al. (2020) affirmed that interactions between teachers and

students in a culturally diversified setting contribute to a positive classroom climate from a structural and pedagogical perspective.

Globalization, as a driving force in our current world, is changing how multicultural education must evolve with classroom diversification. In many disciplines, researchers have expressed their views about multicultural education. For example, in teacher education, programs must include and employ multicultural education to improve social justice and equality in their candidate. Educators' development programs must entail more long-term, collaborative, and supportive intercultural training to allow prospective teachers to develop and maintain multicultural education in their classrooms. (Hummelstedt et al., 2021; Shin, 2016; Tualaulelei & Halse, 2021).

Cultural Diversity

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (2021) primary goal is to empower and promote inclusivity and diversity in education. The organization wants to eradicate inequality and ensure quality and equal access to education worldwide. The cultural context and environment that envelops education impact learning and teaching; the world, while continuing to become more blended and fused due to globalization and increased migrations, will change the education landscape (Balestra & Fleischer, 2018; Ju et al., 2016). Teachers have a vital role in acknowledging cultural diversity in their classrooms, including their own beliefs, experiences, and attitudes, while teaching and formulating educational strategies (Kaur & Noman, 2015). Multiple definitions of culture are associated with cross-cultural education (Foncha et al., 2016; Jensen et al., 2018; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008; Roy, 2020). However, Fiske (2002) provided the most appropriate definition for this study and defined culture as transmitted social constructions that impact the human environment and education. That

definition emphasizes that classroom interactions between teachers and students will result from cultural transmission and communication vital to learning success. Instilling inclusive education and learning concepts into all educational systems will benefit all students. Through inclusive education and learning, all students will be able to accept, understand and attend to each other's differences and diversity no matter their situation, if it is physical, cognitive, academic, social, or emotional (McManis, 2017). Culture is a complex concept, and its dimensions should be studied to identify their implication for education. Multiple different terms are used to explain "Cultural Diversity," including racialized demeaning terms like whiteness (Fylkesnes, 2018; Tlili et al., 2021).

The Need for Cultural Diversity in Education

Culture plays a vital role in how students learn at the high school level to prepare them for independent learning in college. Teachers must understand the goal of education for each student and not misjudge their culture's influence while teaching and instructing (Jensen et al., 2018; Toraman & Demir, 2016). The difference between students' and teachers' worldviews is a critical dynamic in the classroom; most of the settings observed through research are marginally connected to students' lives outside the school (Ural & Bümen, 2016). In this instance, teachers can develop curricula under Western cultural perspectives while ignoring the multicultural aspect of classrooms or espouse a sense of individualism while ignoring students' collectivistic tendencies and vice versa.

Many studies identified how cross-cultural differences affect classroom interactions, learning, and teaching perceptions and development (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Bissessar, 2018; Lawter & Garnjost, 2021; Shedrow, 2017).) Cross-cultural dimensions would produce different outcomes from different students' learning needs and teachers' perceptions; they could

perceive cross-cultural experiences and values differently. Furthermore, preservice teachers' recognition of diversity does not correspond directly to their cultural competence (Lawter & Garnjost, 2021; Shedrow, 2017).

Recognizing and supporting cultural diversity in education is linked to student achievement, success, inclusiveness, and mental health in different countries and cultures (Gopalkrishnan, 2018; Kefallinou et al., 2020; Óskarsdóttir et al., 2020; Schachner et al., 2019; Simón et al., 2021). For example, Schachner et al. (2019) found that managing cultural diversity allows all students to thrive. However, Schwarzenhal et al. (2019) conclude that contact and cooperation, color-evasion, and multicultural approaches must be combined effectively to achieve cultural diversity objectives. The researchers emphasized that a singular approach is not a viable course of action to attain inclusive education. Multiple strategies from culturally responsive pedagogy must be tried with all types of students (Institute of Education Sciences, 2019). Cultural diversity can impact many different aspects of education, such as teachers' professional satisfaction and openness to students with different backgrounds, diversity climate in multiethnic schools, and teachers' professional development and perceptions (Tardif-Grenier et al., 2022; Schachner et al., 2019; Szelei et al., 2019)

The Impact of Culture Diversity on Education

Plagiarism and culture are also related for students. Teachers must be aware of the impact of students' culture on their perception of plagiarism. Cross-cultural dimensions such as individualism, collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance impact national culture and influence how students understand plagiarism. Educational policymakers must consider their cultural environment and students' cultures to formulate rules, regulations, and procedures to implement plagiarism policies (Kasler et al., 2020; Mahmud et al., 2018). It is evident that

culture plays a role in the students' interaction and expectations from teachers, school policies, and regulations. A multiethnic classroom will incorporate different levels of collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, feminism, masculinity, individualism, and a long-term orientation, all at the same time (Heathy, 2020).

Principalship and Service Quality in Relation to Students' Culture

Leadership in schools impacts both students and teachers. Principals are responsible for setting schools' climate for subordinates to emulate and supporting teachers while ensuring students have appropriate support and services to succeed. Teachers' motivations are linked to cross-cultural dimensions like power distance, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity. There are differences between teachers' perceptions of principalships and the actual actions of their principals (Larsen, 2021; Massry-Herzallah and Arar, 2019)

Students' expectations of service quality from their schools and teachers also depend on their cultures (Tsiligiris et al., 2022). Service quality is how organizations, like schools, evaluate their customers' (Students) outlooks on the services provided. Hence, schools should be very interested in the results of service quality from their stakeholders to focus on productivity which equals students' achievement in the education realm. Schools or education service quality must encompass students' culture to identify shortfalls and produce excellent education for students and all patrons. For example, students with high long-term orientation (LTO) would expect and focus on employability as an outcome of their education; they will be willing to travel and move to a different country to receive employment.

Generations and National Culture Impact on Teaching Style and Student Experience

Relationships exist between generations, national cultures, teaching styles, and student experience. Specifically, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and individualism dimensions.

Teachers' experience as students, professional background, and personality affect their teaching styles and methods. Higher scores on the power distance dimension relate to teacher-centered methods, while a student-centered approach is attributed to being more individualistic and accepting of uncertainty (Glock et al., 2018; Hecht & Kahrens, 2021). There are cultural differences between various generations of students and faculties. Generation Y prefers student-centered instructions; they want to know the "why," not the "how"; they prefer associations with others, and education provides them a sense of social attainment while Generation Zs are more masculine than all the other generations; they want power, accept social hierarchy, and are materialistic. Generation Zs want teacher-centered instructions and are self-centered.

Generational gaps create differences in the cultural background among students from the same national culture. Educational leaders must be aware of the impact of cross-cultural dimensions on generations (Bukhari et al., 2019; Finneman, 2019). Family life education (FLE) is implemented to help individuals and families identify and resolve issues in family settings. have correlated the impact and needs of FLE programs to cultures. FLE educators must be culturally competent to navigate the ambiguities of providing services to a diverse population. FLE educators will have to provide services to individuals with different cultural backgrounds from their own. In that instance, educators need to be cognizant of the different aspects of cultures and the strengths and weaknesses of individuals. Those aspects can be related to poverty, race, gender, sex, religion, and military affiliation. FLE will impact classrooms and schools while providing services to empower families and students to achieve success. Authors (Ballard et al., 2018; Robila & Taylor, 2018).

Cultural Competency

Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2014) and Gay (1975, 1980, 2002, 2010, 2013) have written extensively about culturally relevant and competency pedagogy related to multicultural education. Ladson-Billings introduced the theory of culturally relevant education, which bridges the gap between students' home cultures and schools. Furthermore, she recognized that knowledge is not static and constructed and proposed specific criteria to implement the approach while accounting for racial, ethnic, and cultural aspects of students' lives. Cultural competence refers to appreciating others with different conviction systems and cultures; it stresses acceptance, expansion of cultural familiarity, and cross-cultural relations for educators and students (DeAngelis, 2015; Nelson & Nelson, 2020). Teaching cultural competence will open teachers' and students' aperture to diversity. Culturally relevant pedagogy is a holistic approach to multicultural education. It reflects a way of thinking that allows teachers to identify students' educational inequality challenges based on discrimination while proposing actionable solutions from a social justice standpoint. Being culturally competent helps educators to be open to diversity in their classrooms. They become self-aware, understanding, and humble about their students' different ways of life (Grosser, 2020; Kirylo, 2017).

The correlation between constructivism, multicultural education, culturally relevant and competency pedagogy, and student outcomes is evident. The association emphasizes that teachers, students, and parents use schools and classrooms to understand, create knowledge, and implement problem-solving skills to engage issues and problems in their communities to benefit students' overall success. Teachers have to be more aware of diversity differences in their classroom as a strength rather than an impediment (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Chase et al., 2021). Howard (2021) pointed to the interdependence between teachers' cultural competence and students' success and attributed teachers' cultural expertise to students' knowledge construction,

their safety feelings about expressing themselves, and the classroom as a continuance of their home.

Many trends around the nation and the world continue to impact education. Phuntsog (1999) explained that teachers and educational leaders must reflect on views about diversity and realize that culturally responsive teaching is a practical rather than a theoretical approach. He explained that ethnocentrism, cultural perspectives, and differences in social status play a significant role in how much teachers' appetite is for culturally responsive teaching in their curriculum. Colombo (2007) noted that without the proper cultural competence, mainstream teachers would identify the strengths of international students as weaknesses or challenges. Furthermore, cultural competency deficiencies can lead to gaps in social comprehension between culturally diverse students and their mainstream teachers. Teachers' professional development in cultural competency is crucial to understanding students' culture and fairness in their pedagogical philosophy. Thompson (2020) emphasizes the importance of cultural self-awareness for students; Nelson & Nelson (2020) stressed the need for teaching cultural competence to open students' aperture to diversity, and Collins et al. (2020) used technology in a diversity course to provide a better venue for students to express themselves and facilitate participation.

Summary

This literature review reveals that culture is vital in how students learn in their classrooms. Globalization and migration will continue to change educational environments, and cultural diversity is challenging for teachers to understand while facilitating academic success for all students. Findings in the educational field identify how cultural differences affect classroom interactions, learning, teaching, perceptions, and development. Recognizing and supporting cultural diversity in education is linked to student achievement, success, inclusiveness, and

mental health across countries and cultures. Culturally competent educators are open to diversity in their classrooms and can become self-aware, understanding, and humble about their students' different ways of life and perceptions.

However, it is unknown how teachers address students' subcultural tendencies in their classrooms and what type of learning environment they implement to facilitate success for all students. Those aspects of students' culture can impact their learning abilities and perception. This study provides insights into how middle school and high school teachers experience cultural diversity and implement learning environments that contribute to students' success. Understanding teachers' experiences and the aspects of culture that can affect students' learning is essential to creating knowledge about teaching styles that favor all cultures. This study could contribute to culturally relevant and competency pedagogies with a cross-cultural dimension perspective. Furthermore, it could provide techniques, tactics, and actions for teachers to facilitate cultural diversity in their classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses. In this chapter, first, I present the research method, design, type, procedures, and data analysis plans to give readers details of how the problem investigation was conducted. I also describe the rationale, articulating and justifying all procedures I applied to investigate the perceived issue. Successively, I explain the nature, characteristics, and purposes of the research methodologies while directly relating them to the heart of the inquiry's problem and goal. Second, I reintroduce the research questions to remind readers of the focus of the study. Third, I describe the setting and participants to provide visualization to readers of the environment surrounding the research. Fourth, I offer justifications for my positionality as a researcher and communicate the interpretive framework that provided the lens that directed the study. My philosophical assumptions provide my views of the world and my role as the human instrument in research. Fifth, I outline the steps I applied to complete this research. Sixth, I delineate the multiple strategies or methods to collect data to arrive at findings and triangulation to ensure the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and breadth of the study. Finally, I provide the steps I took to conduct the study ethically that is easy to follow while protecting the participants provides trustworthiness. This study was exploratory, using the qualitative approach and a transcendental phenomenological study design.

Research Design

There are many qualitative research methods such as (a) case studies, which allow a researcher to select a particular case in advance and focus on the issue; (b) narratives, which

explain a single individual's experience; (c) grounded theories, which generate or discover a theory as a unified explanation of an experience lived by many people; and (d) ethnographies, which assess shared patterns among many individuals like culture and behaviors by participation observations. In conducting this research, I wanted to explore and understand cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools in a natural setting from teachers' perspectives. In this research, I identified the knowledge, experience, and training teachers are equipped with to overcome the challenges of teaching in a multicultural environment. Hence, I chose a qualitative research method to provide a "thick description" of the findings from data interpretations collected with multiple instruments and from different sources or participants (Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative research method empowered the participants to share their views and opinions of their reality. Researchers use qualitative research methods when time is not a constraint, want to collect social realities from humans, explore different facets of influences on a phenomenon, and describe participants' experiences from specific circumstances. In contrast to qualitative methods, quantitative methods are used to collect impersonal, fast, calculable, measurable, and less resourceful data from larger samples to generalize statistics and test premises (Baškarada, 2014; Bennett & Elman, 2006; Hancock & Algozzine, 2016; Stake 1995, 2010). This qualitative study is exploratory because it identifies ongoing occurrences and trends in cultural diversity without anticipating outcomes in the research site and participants' actions (Check & Schutt, 2012). I used a specific qualitative design to research the phenomenon.

Because phenomenology represents individuals' socially constructed experiences and views, I applied a phenomenological design to the study to answer the "what" while searching for meanings of cultural diversity from teachers' lived experiences, understandings, and

viewpoints (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Phenomenological studies describe a phenomenon experienced by many individuals to make its meaning universal while aiming for empirical generalization and rest between qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Schreier, 2017; Van Manen, 2016). I applied a specific type of phenomenology to conduct the research.

The research design of transcendental phenomenology accentuates realism, discovery, and subjectivity from the deliberate collection of data on natural phenomena while (a) avoiding prejudgments, (b) being open, and (c) being receptive to the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This approach allows participants to express what they think and how they feel and perceive cultural diversity in their environments from a cross-cultural perspective. Furthermore, transcendental phenomenology focuses on describing rather than interpreting the participants' lived experiences. Their experience was undistorted and clear from the interviews (Yee, 2019). During the research, I applied epoché, phenomenological reduction, and bracketing to be mindful of the complete meaning of the participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Epoché is the process of evading or excluding presumptions and preconceived notions while studying a phenomenon, which can capture pure descriptions from participants. Phenomenological reduction brings out the participants' lived experiences and provides vivid explanations of its central ideas to create textural descriptions. Bracketing helps researchers acknowledge and constantly reflect on their judgments and presumptions about the studied phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Epoché and the phenomenological reduction allowed me to visit, revisit, and re-revisit the applicants' experiences with purity and self-restraint from assumptions and avoid judgments from previous biases derived from ordinary or common knowledge. Participants' characters were

described rather than explained (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing followed the epoché to create the textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon experienced by the participants. I applied bracketing by acknowledging and constantly reflecting on my judgments and presumptions about cultural diversity (Perry, 2013). While conducting the research, I avoided asking leading questions that could arise from my experiences with cultural diversity as an immigrant. I intuitively paid close attention to my feelings and emotions to avoid them in my analysis.

From the data collected, I produced reports and findings that (a) emphasize the opinions and assessments of the participants and (b) contribute to a body of knowledge on educative and teaching strategies that favor cultural diversity in classrooms from teachers' viewpoints (Check & Schutt, 2012; Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Poth, 2018). I followed the methods prescribed by Moustakas (1994) and Van Manen (2016) to conduct the study, which is textural, structural, systematic, and thematic (Randles, 2012; Thani, 2012; Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

The phenomenological research approach originated from the social and health sciences, sociology, psychology, and education. Some of the thinkers credited for introducing, expanding, and promoting the phenomenological approach in research are Kant (1765), Heiderberg (1977), Edmund Husserl (1993), and Moustakas (1994). Husserl is considered the father of the movement and philosophy (Tuohy et al., 2013; Van Manen, 2016). Phenomenological research can be hermeneutic, empirical, transcendental, or psychological (Moustakas, 1994; Randles, 2012; Thani, 2012; Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

Research Questions

The research questions helped to frame the study and set conditions for me to interact and observe the participants in multiple settings to accumulate different data. The questions drove the interviews and focus groups' goals and provided objectives for the questionnaires.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms?

Sub-Question One

How do teachers perceive, define, and facilitate cultural diversity in their classrooms?

Sub-Question Two

What do teachers perceive as positive and negative aspects of culturally diverse classrooms?

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers recognize, acknowledge, and facilitate cross-cultural dimensions in their classrooms?

Setting and Participants

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses. This section describes the setting in sufficient detail to allow readers to visualize and understand its implication for the study's problem statement and presents the profile of the participants by articulating the criteria for eligibility and selection with the rationale for the study.

Site

With 257 public schools serving middle schools and high schools, Hawaii is the only state with a single governing body for public schools with a student and a military representative on their board of directors with nonvoting power to make sure that cultural diversity is included in their decision-making process at the highest educational level (Hawaii Department of Education, 2021b). Nonetheless, there is a cultural disproportion in the state's schools that is at

the center of the problem for this research. For example, middle schools and high schools in Oahu, a cosmopolitan locality, support over 1 million inhabitants. Most schools primarily serve students of military or government-employed parents (Hawaii Department of Education, 2021a). The military and tourism bases of these parents' employment contribute to a significant student turnover yearly, hence the diversified academic population, which could pose issues related to cultural diversity for teachers.

The district 145 middle and high schools are located primarily in urban areas. Most schools have assistant principals to support the principals in managing students. The assistant principals are assigned students based on the first letter of the student's last name. The district contains about 181,088 students and 11756 teachers, with a 15 to 1 student/teacher ratio (HomeTownLocator, 2022; National Center for Education Statistics, 2022; Niche, 2022). The district has a diversity index of 81%, 26.9% of which is Asian and 73.1% other minority students, and ranks third as the most diverse district in the state (World Population Review, 2022). The site was selected for the study because of its cultural diversity and rare attributes from those characteristics.

Participants

The diversity gap is evident between teachers and students in Hawaii. As of 2020, 25% of students and 10% of teachers were native Hawaiian, 25.5% and 18% were White, and 7.4 % and 22% were Filipino. The state has 24% of Japanese teachers serving 9% of Japanese students (Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, 2020).

The sample of participants was mixed by gender, race, ethnicity, qualifications, and sociocultural stance. Participants were teachers of any content area with more than one year of experience in middle schools and high schools to be eligible for the study. They had to have

more than one year of teaching practice and a teaching certification. The participants could not be students, teacher candidates, or in the process of completing their teacher certification. This mixture ensured that the participants had enough experience in classroom instruction, had experienced student turnover, and were experienced with cultural diversity in their classrooms. Those criteria allowed the participants to articulate their lived experiences, involvement, and knowledge with more context about cultural diversity and the study's phenomenon.

Researcher Positionality

This section articulates the social position and motivation that fueled my curiosity about conducting the study. Positionality in research affects outcomes, methods, and ethics; it is defined as the relationship between researchers, participants, and the setting (Laycock & Nikulina, 2021). Mason-Bish (2019) stated that researchers should assume an outsider position to exercise reflexivity throughout the investigation process. For this study, I used the social constructivist interpretive framework and provided my philosophical assumptions, such as ontological, epistemological, and axiological, to guide the research and analyze the data.

Interpretive Framework

A social constructivist approach informed this study's interpretive framework. Utilizing a social constructivist paradigm helped frame the study's research questions and produce data collection instruments that captured and explained teachers' constructed views and opinions about cultural diversity while discussing the sociocultural challenges in education.

Constructivism is derived from Vygotsky's (1962, 1986) ideas of social constructivism, which attested to the importance of the environment and social interaction as the vehicle for learning without rejecting the mind. Vygotsky emphasized the impact of society on individuals' learning. A social constructivist framework allowed me to focus on the participants' multiple views rather

than on any specific meanings of the phenomenon using collaboration as a venue (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This framework permitted me to investigate the issue while considering all participants' views and comprehension of the world they occupy. With this framework, each participant could have different opinions of the phenomenon because of the social setting of each class. However, I can still develop consensus from the data collected (Check & Schutt, 2012). From my social constructivist worldview, the participants constructed their views from the social interactions in their environment, and cultural and social subjectivity is vital to situate the phenomenon and formulating findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Philosophical Assumptions

Several philosophical assumptions helped me articulate my position, standpoints, and background that could affect the research. Posing the philosophical beliefs for the study provides the reader with the lens and approach for analyzing the central research question. The three philosophical assumptions addressed in the study are ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

Ontological Assumption

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that assesses the varieties of human beings while allowing researchers to accept the multiple facets of a phenomenon (Kim & Sosa, 1995). The reality, for me, is the tangible and actionable aspect of life. My ontological assumption allowed me to focus on a natural phenomenon like teachers' perspectives of cultural diversity in schools that we ought to learn from. I believe that the reality of cultural diversity is specific to and with individuals. Every teacher will provide their own perspective on what is really happening in culturally diverse classrooms. The participants for the research are culturally diverse and interact daily with students from different backgrounds. Therefore, asking teachers about their lived

experiences and beliefs about the nature of cultural diversity is appropriate to give me insight into reality in their classrooms. Hence, the ontological assumption let me account for the multitudes of views from the participants about their opinions attributed to cultural diversity (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Epistemological Assumption

Philosophical epistemology relates to how knowledge is acquired, which is central to research because studies always try to add understanding to the world (Goes & Simon, 2018). As a transcendental phenomenology, the participants' interviews were the cornerstone of data collection (Roulston & Choi, 2017). My epistemological assumption helped me structure the collection of information about the teachers' interpretations of cultural diversity in their classrooms (Moon & Blackman, 2017). As a social constructivist, I believe that knowledge is built upon individuals' experiences with their environment. I established close contact relations with the participants before collecting data to understand their lived experiences in their environment and contextualize their responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The central research question regarding teachers' experiences with cultural diversity in their classrooms allowed me to gather data directly from the participants to answer the inquiry (Ahmed, 2008). Ultimately, I want to acquire knowledge about cultural diversity firsthand from the teachers themselves.

Axiological Assumption

The axiological assumption is the foundation of qualitative research because it provides the background to understand, establish, and ground credibility and validity to the investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Madondo, 2021). As a social constructivist, I am interested in minority opinions and experiences while respecting individuals' values; for me, a smaller sample is more important than a majority generalization (Madondo, 2021). Also, I recognize that specific

knowledge must be divulged to readers to reinforce my curiosity about cultural diversity and how I interpreted the findings. Readers must know that I am a military service member and have experienced cultural diversity in schools as an immigrant, student, parent, and teacher.

Furthermore, I have been in an interracial marriage with multiracial children attending public high schools and universities in the American educational system. Therefore, as a service member, I live by the military values. Values engrain standards in life; they give meaning to my decisions and actions.

Researcher's Role

I chose a qualitative and transcendental phenomenological design for the investigation because it allowed me to collect multiple points of view on the topic without expected outcomes using extensive interviews as instruments to gather data. I used interviews, focus groups, and observations to collect information during the study. As the study's human instrument, my values, experiences, and assumptions were bound to be part of the research (Siegle & McCoach, 2009). I had to apply specific techniques for my results to meet and reach a degree of confidence. I assumed an informant-centered approach to complement the transcendental phenomenological study, which enabled me to recognize that the participants know their reality better than I do; they shared more about their experiences with me. I did not have any expectations from their responses during the interviews (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2015). First, I applied epoché to remove as many as possible biases and judgments to better understand the lived experience of the participants. Second, horizontalization allowed me to capture every relevant and meaningful phenomenon topic. Finally, I used a cluster of meanings to create themes and remove recurrent or intersecting statements to provide clarity and conciseness in my findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

For the research, I acknowledge that I did not have any authority over the participants, and none of them taught my children or had any contact with them. While teaching at a military academy, I witnessed firsthand the implications of cultural diversity on a military campus. Students and teachers struggled to understand each other to succeed on campus. My time at the academy triggered me to research the same phenomenon at the middle school and high school levels to learn how teachers impact future college students. I have experienced or observed cultural diversity in classrooms for two decades.

Procedures

I applied the steps to complete this research: First, I submitted a request to secure the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Liberty University (see Appendix A). Second, I drafted a memo to receive site permission from Hawaii's Department of Education (see Appendix C). Third, I used flyers to solicit teachers' participation via forums like Facebook pages, teacher associations, and school boards. I created a schedule that participants agreed upon for the various data collection times. Finally, I transcribed and analyzed the information after collecting all the data to achieve triangulation.

Permissions

Before conducting a study, researchers need to receive approval from authorities to obtain admission to the sites and complete a questionnaire with the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I met with the principals of the schools I was seeking to study and briefed them on the research proposal to obtain their support or permission (see Appendix C). After they agreed with the research conditions, I drafted a memo to receive official site permission if and when needed (see Appendix B). The principals signed to acknowledge the agreement with the requirements. After receiving the principals' consent, I requested Liberty University Institutional

Review Board (IRB) approval before collecting data (see Appendix C). After receiving Liberty's IRB approval, I scheduled a meeting with the participants to discuss the daily plan for the various data collection times, places, and locations.

Recruitment Plan

Stake (1995) stated that qualitative research is not about collecting large participant samples; instead, it is about sampling that favors research. A selected pool of participants may better represent an investigation than a large population. In this section, the techniques to recruit from the sample pool to reach the required size and type are defined rationally. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using a cross-cultural dimension as lenses; therefore, the total possible sample pool for the qualitative research was 11,756, which was the number of teachers at middle schools and high schools in the district. The sample size was between 10–15, representing the number of teachers who agreed to participate and were selected to participate in the study. Mason (2010) recommended 20 to 30 participants from a content analysis study for phenomenological research. To receive adequate data and feedback, a sample size between 10 minimum and 20 maximum middle school and high school teachers was optimal in this study. However, careful judgment supports saturation while selecting participants, which is achieved when adding or interviewing additional participants who do not contribute to novel themes or information about the phenomenon being studied (Guetterman, 2015; Schreier, 2017).

I distributed a recruitment flyer to the school principals to solicit participants. The flyer contained all the research information and was posted on schools' bulletin boards. I added my screening questions on my flyer to provide the criteria for eligibility. Principals announced the research during staff and faculties' meetings and distributed the flyer to amass volunteers. The

principals conducted the screening of the potential participants and forwarded the list to me. After I received contact information for all the volunteers required for the study, I used snowballing, purposeful, or criterion sampling with the requirements set forth to choose the final participants. This qualitative research used transcendental phenomenology; hence, to properly represent the problem in the study and contrary to a random sample to obtain a larger population, I used purposeful, snowballing, and criterion sampling to guide the selection process to choose the participants with specific conditions. Those sampling styles allowed me to select participants who have lived and experienced cultural diversity and provide substantive information from interviews while meeting particular standards for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Readingcraze.com, 2021). The sample was appropriate for the study because the participants were selected because they teach in high-ranking schools in diversity in the state and cater to a multiracial student body (Braun et al., 2017).

After selecting the participants, I contacted each person to confirm their participation while answering any of their questions. If they confirmed their involvement in the study, I met with them to set conditions for the interviews and focus groups. I introduced and discussed the research to emphasize credibility and trustworthiness. Furthermore, I addressed scheduling and locations for the interviews and focus groups to gauge the participants' preferences. At the end of the meeting, I had the participants sign a consent form (see Appendix E) to acknowledge their role, commitment, and responsibility in the study.

Data Collection Plan

Braun et al. (2017) provided novel and contemporary ways that are not dull or archaic to collect data for qualitative research. However, critical considerations must anticipate ethical misrepresentation and deception in collecting data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The collection plan

must be engrained in the research questions to amass rich information and foster deep thinking for the participants in phenomenological (Bassey, 1999; Madondo, 2021; Moustakas, 1994; Stake, 2010). I used purposeful sampling to select information and data-rich participants to provide more informed evidence about classroom cultural diversity (Patton, 2015). Mason (2010) found from a content analysis of 560 qualitative dissertations that the repeated sample used were 20 and 30. To receive adequate data and feedback, a sample size between 10 minimum and 20 maximum middle school and high school teachers was optimal in this study; careful judgment will support saturation. The percentage of Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, Black, Samoan, and Native American teachers was minuscule compared to students from those same groups in Hawaii. At the time of this research, the schools' teachers and student demographic included seven ethnicities.

This section delineates the multiple strategies or methods to triangulate data to add accuracy, comprehensiveness, and breadth to the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Several subsections show the different sources of documentation in the data collection plan. To collect rich information and provide a thick description, as in qualitative research, the data were collected in the following sequence: (a) individual interviews, (b) focus group interviews, and (c) observations. This structure allowed me to gather personal information about the participants and understand individual and group perspectives or experiences on the phenomenon. Then, I interpreted the data and compared the information from all viewpoints. After I present each data collection method, I discuss the specific data analysis.

Individual Interviews

Stake (2010) stated that interviews lead to multiple truths because each person interviewed has a unique way of experiencing a phenomenon. Researchers' principal duty is to

construe meaning by describing and interpreting others. In-person interviews offer researchers a means to probe and clarify respondents' answers while monitoring their reactions through social interactions (Check & Schutt, 2012; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Roulston and Choi (2017) explained that phenomenological interviews contain open questions centered on the participants' feelings, perceptions, and understanding of the lived experience; researchers must focus on listening rather than questioning. After collecting basic information about the participants, I scheduled in-person interviews in a location of their choice, free of distraction and noise. The interview lasted between 45–60 minutes. I reminded the participants of their consent before each data collection session. The interviews were recorded face-to-face or online, and due to the pandemic, participants could request in-person interviews via Zoom or Teams. As recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) and Madondo (2021), I used the seven stages of the interview process for phenomenology using a semi-structured interview protocol with prewritten open-ended questions that let participants express themselves and space in writing new information, questions, or notes while clarifying respondents' answers if necessary.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your educational background and career through your current position.
2. What are your experiences with teaching culturally diverse classrooms? CRQ
3. Describe your challenges when teaching culturally diverse classrooms. SQ1
4. Describe your challenges when working with culturally diverse students in your classes. SQ2
5. Describe successful teaching practices you use to address culturally diverse classrooms SQ3

6. What professional development experiences have prepared you to work with culturally diverse classrooms? SQ3
7. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences in culturally diverse classrooms that we haven't discussed? SQ1
8. How would you describe your students' learning trends from a cultural diversity perspective? SQ2
9. What learning environments are appropriate for culturally diverse classrooms? SQ3
10. What can teachers do to make learning practices beneficial to culturally diverse classrooms? SQ3
11. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with learning environments, practices, and cultural diversity that we haven't discussed? SQ3

Van den Scott (2018) recommended that researchers be mindful of their and the participants' feelings. He explained that reflexivity is vital in executing research while interacting with interview participants. Additionally, Loughran and Mannay (2018) noted that researchers must negotiate feelings and emotions with participants during qualitative research to build trust and integrity in collecting data. However, Moustakas (1994) and Van Manen (2016) emphasized the need for researchers to practice epoché, bracketing, and reduction in phenomenological studies; they must free themselves from suppositions and preconceived biases or knowledge.

The first question allows the participants to introduce themselves and break the ice from formality and rigor. The question was designed to let participants feel comfortable and connect with me about the topic. Questions 2 through 7 relate to the central themes of culturally diverse classrooms, while Questions 8 through 12 focus on cross-cultural dimensions and teaching

practices. All interview questions are formulated to gain the participants' perspective and experience on the study's phenomenon and the research questions without them feeling interrogated or judged for their practices.

Before conducting the interviews, I had my doctoral committee members review the questions. After receiving IRB approval to collect data, I piloted the interview with the schools' principals, who were not sampled in the study, to identify and correct flaws in the interview process.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

Kennedy (2018) explained that induction is used in qualitative research to decipher patterns and conclusions from data. I applied epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation and formulated textural/structural descriptions while analyzing 10–15 participants' interviews. Epoché is the process of avoiding or precluding presumptions and preconceived notions while studying a phenomenon that allows researchers to capture pure descriptions from participants. Phenomenological reduction brings the participants' lived experiences to originality and provides vivid explanations of its central ideas to create textural descriptions. Imaginative variation aims to produce a structural description from the “how” to the “what” of lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

I applied Moustakas's (1994) methods to analyze the data. He recommended transcribing the data collected from the interviews, analyzing them for patterns, concepts, and theories relevant to the study, and finally, creating themes. Then, developing textural and structural descriptions of the data using memos to record thoughts and reflections on the participants' responses. Finally, applying horizontalization and cluster of meaning to the themes to build on the data from the interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Schreier, 2017; Van

Manen, 2016). Giorgi (1997) proposed a scientific strategy to identify pattern matching for processes and outcomes to be applied while writing the results in codes or themes. The plan allowed me to provide a holistic approach by reading the entire data before conducting any analysis. Because the study aimed to describe teachers' experiences in culturally diverse classrooms, a discovery-oriented approach led to meaningful themes from the data.

Focus Groups

Wilson (1997) claimed that focus groups are great avenues to accumulate and produce rich qualitative data while adding validity through triangulations. Focus groups allow researchers to gauge consensus on a research topic without extensive analysis (Morgan, 2019). Morgan and Hoffman (2017) explained that focus groups provide a venue to reduce issues from a diversified sample and get consensus on specific themes. The focus groups in the study were executed as needed and only included a maximum of four participants, allowing me to interact with small groups to understand other perspectives of the phenomenon. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed later. I invited through emails or met participants identified for the focus groups in person. Each focus group was held at a location best suited for the participants and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes or until discussions did not bring any new information to collect. The focus groups featured preselected participants, semi-structured questions, and follow-up interviews to probe for more input on the study's topics if needed. Focus groups were scheduled only to allow participants to expand on patterns and themes revealed in the initial data analysis to seek group ideas, stimulate feelings and emotions, and understand perspectives (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Focus Group Questions

The focus group questions are as follows:

1. What steps do you take to overcome the challenges associated with cultural diversity in your classrooms? SQ3
2. How do you describe your experience while implementing the steps you discussed in your classroom? SQ3
3. How can you describe the impact of cultural diversity in your school? SQ1
4. How does cultural diversity concern you as a middle school or high school teacher? SQ2

The four questions invited deep and critical thinking from the participants, who shared their perspectives on the research topic (see Appendix G).

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses. Therefore, the focus group's data were analyzed through the same procedures as the interviews, and thematic analysis was included by coding, applying correlated themes from previous data collection, and memoing (Morgan, 2019).

Observations

Observations allow researchers to collect data in a natural setting that produces adequate and suitable data for a specific study. However, observers must consider the impact of biases before initiating the process (Gold, 1970; Madondo, 2021). After collecting individual and group perspectives through interviews and focus groups, observations were scheduled with selected participants to ensure participants' bias is removed or compared to or from other individual data collections (Wästerfors, 2018). Observations lasted one class period. I used an observation protocol (see Appendix H) to allow the sessions to produce relevant data to the research

questions and the participants' perspectives, practices, and classroom attitudes. I did not record observations once with each participant; however, more observations could have been scheduled for amplified assessment.

I assumed a nonparticipant role during the observations but built enough rapport with the participants to be trusted and make them feel at ease during the session. During observations, I had to stay cognizant of details, sequences, and atmospheres to avoid collecting irrelevant notes or points of view (Madondo, 2021; Wästerfors, 2018).

Observations Data Analysis Plan

The observation data were analyzed through descriptive and reflexive notes from the field. I focused on gaining insights into how the participants act and react to issues from cultural diversity in their classrooms and what they do to prepare, apply, and assess their learning environment on the same subject. These observations allowed me to examine how teachers deal with cultural challenges in their classrooms. I coded the results and applied analytic induction to arrive at consistent inferences from the notes captured on the observation protocol.

Data Synthesis

As a transcendental phenomenological study, the research relied heavily on individual and group social interactions with the participants. Transcriptions are conversions of social interactions to allow researchers to analyze phenomena (McMullin, 2021). Transcription of collected data requires skills, methodology, and experience; it must be clear, depict the social interaction, and be accurate (Jenks, 2018). While transcribing, researchers translate social interactions and create a visual space for the readers to understand the context of recorded data; that transcription was selective because it cannot mimic all the features of the interactions (Davidson, 2009).

Transcribing is the first step in analyzing social interaction data (McMullin, 2021). Before transcribing, I chose a medium that allows me to record my interviews and focus groups. I offered Zoom or Microsoft Teams to the participants and used the recording feature on the web media to capture all visual and audio components of the session. After completing the interviews and focus group, I used the transcription method to produce the written data that can be analyzed. I applied Perry's (2013) process to identify the relevant themes in the transcripts. I went through the transcripts to correct all grammatical errors using reduction and interpretation to make the texts clear and significant for further analysis (Bailey, 2008). Perry (2013) initially recommended reading the texts to understand the interviews or focus groups while identifying themes by writing notes, highlighting parts of the transcript, or comments with one word. Second, create a table to determine each transcript and its summary. Finally, using that table unifies the single themes, phrases, or paragraphs while synthesizing their meaning and linking them to understand their relation to each other.

Making sense of the abundance of data collected during qualitative research is demanding but exciting (Patton, 2015). I followed a specific order to collect, organize, analyze, and synthesize data to fluidize the process to overcome challenges. Specifically, I synthesized the textural and structural descriptions while describing the essence of the lived experience of the participants so that readers can have enough information to understand the study's findings in its context and if they apply to other circumstances or settings (Siegle & McCoach, 2009).

As mentioned, I collected the data in the following sequence to facilitate critical and analytic thinking. The steps were (a) individual interviews, (b) focus group interviews, and (c) observations. Then, I organized the data by types and codes. I analyzed the data through a thematic approach. Triangulation was achieved by implementing coworker and member-

checking of the findings from the different collection methods. I conducted the entire data analysis with coding, memoing, and journaling to summarize the results and create an audit trail.

I applied a thematic analysis method using an inductive, deductive, and emic approach to synthesize the collected information. Thematic analysis categorized themes and patterns while answering the research questions. Themes allow researchers to reach saturation from topics or subjects while analyzing the collected, integrated, combined and summarized data (Wästerfors, 2018). From Bassey (1999), I used research questions to collect raw data. Reflective thinking on the data led to analytical statements that were tested against the data to saturate the themes, providing the empirical findings for the study. Finally, because I am using an inductive approach, a codebook permitted me to create a hierarchical tree diagram to represent and merge my findings visually for the readers.

Trustworthiness

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) affirmed that transparency is the objective of trustworthiness in research. They explained that transparency could be achieved by divulging the steps taken to conduct the study in a manner that is easy to follow. Lincoln and Guba (1985) addressed trustworthiness in research by offering credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as agents to support researchers' efforts to clarify and simplify their study.

Credibility

Credibility is achieved when readers can correlate their truth and reality with the study's findings and context and when researchers provide and explain mitigation for their biases in studies (Madondo, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017). While collecting the data, I was conscious of the impact of malicious information. I requested the support of a methodologist to test the research instruments used to collect data for credibility with a Coefficient of Credibility (CC) score

(Madondo, 2021). During the research, I employed some techniques to maintain credibility: (a) prolonged engagement with the participants in the natural setting to understand the background of the study; (b) constant triangulation of the data, (c) member-checking to confirm findings, and assumptions by having the participants' review the written reports of their lived experiences for accuracy, and (d) reflexive journaling to check how biases inform data interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research is equal to generalizability in quantitative studies (Guba, 1985). In non-technical language, transferability means that a study's findings can be applied to a similar study with the same context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve transferability, the research must be identical in geographical location, nature, population, and participants (Madondo, 2021). To favor transferability, I designed the study, collected and analyzed data, reported the findings, and compared the results to other studies of cultural diversity, which is the phenomenon being studied. I presented the participants' experiences and behaviors in their context.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative studies is equal to reliability in quantitative research. Dependability can be achieved with replication testing, which implies that similar findings were produced while replacing the study's context and staying relevant to change and variability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Madondo, 2021). I employed memoing while collecting data to facilitate audit trails, verifying, and comparing data collected from multiple instruments. Additionally, I submitted my final research to my dissertation committee and the

qualitative research director of the university to conduct a thorough review of the study's development, method, results, and products to ensure dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative studies is equal to objectivity in quantitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) stated that findings are the research's results, not subjective notes. Therefore, to reach confirmability, I situated myself in the study while providing and describing any personal, cultural, and political biases that can impede results. Previous procedures such as audit trails, triangulation, and reflexivity applied throughout the research's data collection, analysis, and synthesis established confirmability.

Ethical Considerations

Check and Schutt (2012) attested that research provides a way to generalize or particularize the findings of selected individuals, groups, or organizations. They explained that researchers must refute contradictory analyses or calculations using criteria that enhance study trustworthiness. Finally, those criteria diminish inaccurate interpretations of the world. Hence, researchers must conduct research ethically; ethical considerations protect the participants and provide credibility to the study. Throughout the research process, I acted to (a) anticipate any ethical issues, (b) not violate participants' privacy, (c) not deceive readers and participants, and (d) safeguard the data.

First, I obtained site and participant access through the school principal when needed. Second, consent letters were used to inform participants' agreement and compliance. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms, and coding were applied to participants and the site. Physical data were secured and locked in a private location, while electronic data were protected

with a password and kept on a personal remote cloud server. The data collected through interviews, surveys, focus groups, and notes will be destroyed after three years if the study is not furthered.

I created an extensive and detailed table to apply while conducting all phases of the research process to anticipate ethical issues. The table allowed me to have a checklist throughout the different stages of the research to examine and consult to stay within the ethical parameters. The table covers all aspects of the three IRB principles: respect for people, concern for welfare, and justice.

Summary

This research was guided to describe participants' lived experience of a phenomenon in culturally diverse settings while emphasizing, as a research problem, that teachers should be equipped with the proper knowledge, training, and expertise to overcome the challenges of teaching in a culturally diverse environment. This chapter elaborated on the research method, design, data collection methods, analysis strategies, and ethical considerations.

First, I anticipated ethical issues throughout the research process, did not violate participants' privacy, and did not deceive readers and participants while safeguarding the data. I focused on the three IRB principles: respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice to conduct the research and establish trustworthiness. Second, I applied a qualitative method, such as transcendental phenomenology, to answer the "what" from the teachers' experiences and perspectives about the phenomenon (Moustakas 1994). Purposeful, snowballing, and criterion sampling guided my selection process for participants with specific conditions. Third, to collect rich information and provide a thick description, the data were collected in the following sequence: (a) individual interviews, (b) focus group interviews, and (c) observations. Fourth, the

entire data collection analysis was coded, memoed, and journaled to summarize each category's findings. I applied a thematic analysis method using inductive, deductive, and emic approaches to synthesize the collected information with a hierarchical tree diagram to represent and merge my findings for the readers visually.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools. Hofstede's cross-cultural dimensions were applied as a lens to examine the data. This chapter describes and explains the study's data analysis results as findings. This chapter includes the findings for 12 participants' descriptions; data in narrative themes, tables representing themes; outlier data; research question responses, and conclusion. As a transcendental phenomenological study, the research relied heavily on my social interactions with the participants independently and in groups to collect the data. The focus of the data collection and thematic analysis was to answer the "what" from the teachers' lived experiences and perspectives about the phenomenon, which is cultural diversity in their classrooms (Moustakas 1994). Purposeful, snowballing, and criterion sampling guided the selection of the participants. The data were analyzed using open coding and Delve as the data analysis software. I executed journaling and memoing while conducting the interviews and applied epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variations as proposed by Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (2016) to remove suppositions and preconceived biases or knowledge. This chapter elaborates on and discusses the lived experiences of 12 teachers. Interview questions were structured as a framework for discussion but were not followed strictly. A discussion and conversational approach were adopted to facilitate the interviews. Questionnaires were collected to accentuate participants' answers and amass relevant data. Textural and structural descriptions provided the "what" and "how" of the teachers' lived experiences from the interviews. An interpretation and discussion of the results are provided in Chapter 5.

Participants

The sample sought a culturally diverse set of teachers to provide relevant feedback for optimal relevancy to the study. The selection of participants for the study was executed differently than planned. Rather than selecting a specific site for the study, I was more successful in seeking participants from multiple organizations in different states and countries using many social media vectors. The selection represents an amalgamation of participants' responses during the data collection. The participants are from different social backgrounds, races, lifestyles, and organizations, which makes each answer unique concerning cultural diversity. I conducted 12 interviews and was unable to schedule a focus group due to participants' locations and time zone. Four of the 12 interviews were face-to-face, including two in Germany and eight via Zoom. Observations were not conducted because I could not secure approval from various institutions due to the pandemic's regulations, and minors' consent was not planned; students would be involuntarily participating in the process. Interviews, transcription, questionnaires, memoing, and journaling produced the data that was analyzed thematically to reach a conclusion and create the findings.

Table 1 presents the participants in the study. Twelve teachers from different locations, backgrounds, experiences, and socioeconomic stances volunteered to be interviewed and discussed their lived experiences with cultural diversity in their careers and classrooms. The teachers had different motives for becoming educators. They all started from different industries before transferring to teaching. However, one common theme was that they knew that they always wanted to be teachers. For example, Suzane started in business to get experience and transition to teaching. She stated,

I had always looked forward to being a teacher, and it was always something that I planned on much later in life. I wanted to have a business career. I wanted to have all this real-world foundation I would take to the classroom. So being a teacher was always something I planned much later.

Edwidge recognized that academics was inevitable as a job prospect. During the interview, He stated,

Since I was certain I didn't want to leave Hawaii, my job prospects at the university level as either a researcher or a professor didn't look too great. Also, I begin to look at other fields to go into. But then the opportunity came up here, and I switched. I went into an accelerated teaching license program and got my teaching license instead. And then, I started teaching here as a teacher.

Jocelyn graduated college, and because her interest was in tutoring, she started her teaching career as a teacher during the pandemic to secure an income. She stated,

Obviously, the pandemic came, and I was like, well, I liked tutoring enough, so that's when I started to look into teaching. I did an alternative teaching program that took about a year. So, I finished my student teaching at the end of the 2021 school year, and then I just finished my full year of first teaching.

Overall, the sample was diverse in race, gender, age, location, and sex. The participants enjoy their position in the classroom. Most of the teachers decided to interview via Zoom and declined observation because of schools' regulations due to the pandemic.

Table 1*Teacher Participants*

#	Teacher participant	Gender	Experience	Highest degree earned	Content area	Grade Level
1	Suzane	F	4	Master's	AP Social Studies AP Economics, Government & Politics, Econ/American Problems, World History	9–12
2	Edwidge	M	5	Master's	Mathematics	9–12
3	Jocelyn	F	2	Bachelor	Mathematics AP Calculus AB, Trigonometry/Precalculus Geometry	9–12
4	Christine	F	11	Bachelor	Physical Education Health Education	10 All Grades
5	Aisha	F	15	Bachelor	Math Reading Special Education	K-12
6	Jack	M	10	Doctorate	English ESL Language	9–12
7	Clarice	F	2	Bachelor	Special Education ELA, AVID	9–12
8	Laura	F	10	Master's	Performing Theater	K-12
9	Mark	M	4	Master's	General Special Education Math, Science, English, and Social Studies	7 & 8
10	Kaitlyn	F	10	Master's	Arts	9–12
11	Judith	F	15	Doctorate	Social Studies, English, Gifted, Special Education, Reading Resource, and Migrant Resource	9–12
12	Marjorie	F	10	Master's	German as a Second and Foreign Language	9–12

Results

The central research question that guided the data analysis was “What are the lived experiences of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms?” This section is organized thematically. Themes emerged using suitable narrative and raw data, particularly utilizing Delve participants’ quotes to reveal evidence of themes from the information. Data were collected from interviews, questionnaires, memoing, and journaling. The data were analyzed using Moustakas’ (1994) epoché, bracketing, and reduction process to remove my suppositions and preconceived bias or knowledge. The data were synthesized by applying Perry’s (2013) process to identify the pertinent themes in the transcripts. Using Perry’s method, I read the texts from the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires to single out the themes by taking notes, highlighting parts of the transcript, or comments with one word. Table 2 presents all themes and provides a visual depiction of the correlation between 26 themes and 480 teachers’ comments. Finally, Figure 1 depicts the seven main themes and their subthemes.

Table 2

Themes from the First Analysis

#	Themes	Theme explanation	Total comments
1	Parents voice	Parents’ Contribution to cultural diversity implementation	2
2	Fear	Consequences of implementing cultural diversity	3
3	Place-based education	Focus education on location and individual	4
4	Multicultural education	Practices while focusing on inclusivity	4
5	Relationships building	Spending time to learn about each student	16
6	Balance in the classroom	Rapport building between students	2
7	Cross-cultural dimensions	Dimensions of culture that are more individual and span multiple cultures	30
8	Classrooms set up	Spatial importance or awareness of cultural diversity	7

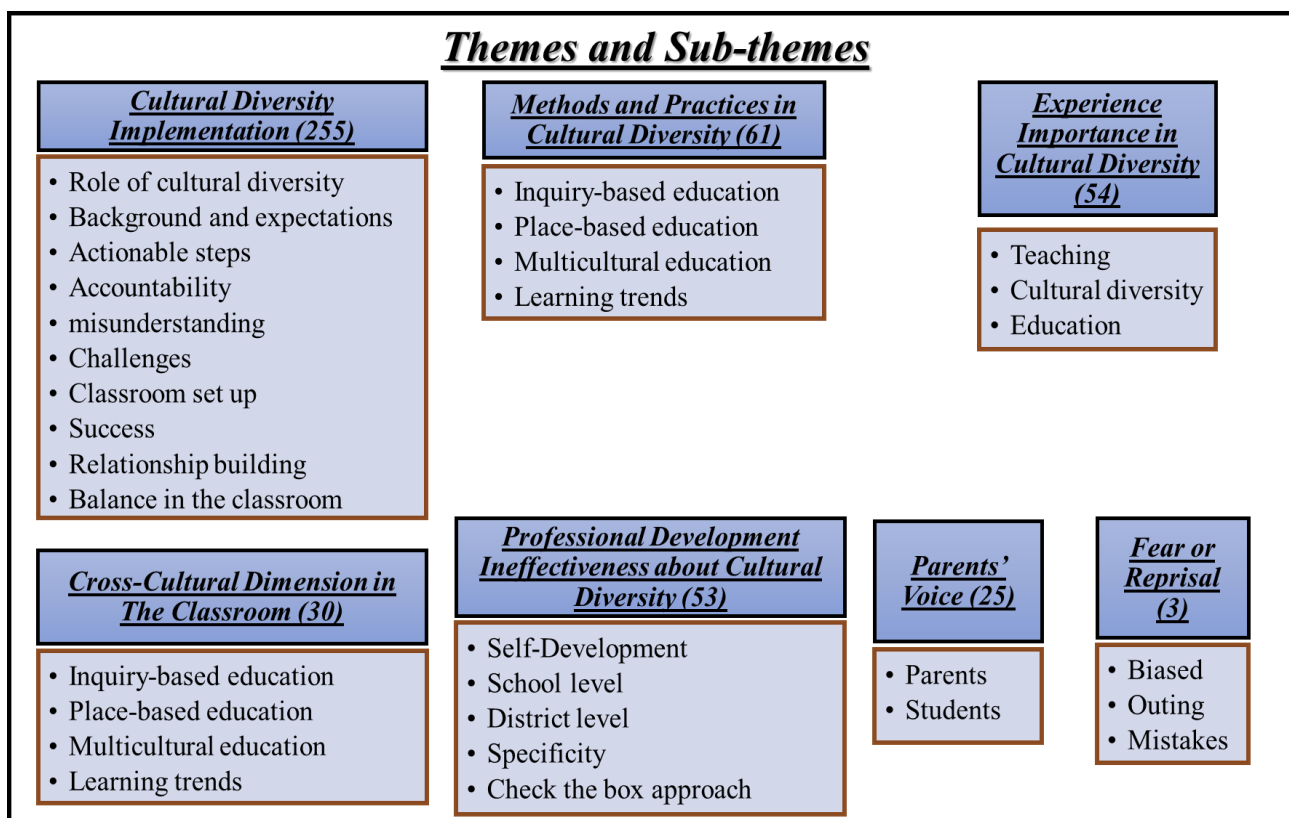
9	Backgrounds and expectations	Presuppositions about cultural diversity	8
10	Misunderstanding	The confusion created by cultural diversity between and among students and teachers	5
11	Role of cultural diversity	What cultural diversity needs to be in the classroom	2
12	Accountability	Requirements needed to force educators to learn and implement cultural diversity in their environment	14
13	Researcher's point of view	What cultural diversity means to each teacher separately	1
14	Methods and practices	The actions that teachers take to facilitate cultural diversity while instructing	33
15	Learning trends	Common learning actions that are associated with a certain culture	16
16	Successes	Favorable outcomes or results while implementing cultural diversity	30
17	Subjects	Academic studies or curricula that are more favorable to cultural diversity implementation	7
18	Inquiry-based teaching	Teaching methods that allow the teacher to explore their students' culture	4
19	Students' voice	Allowing students to participate in their learning while implementing cultural diversity	23
20	Challenges	Barriers to cultural diversity implementation	70
21	Actionable steps	Quantifiable and qualifiable procedures to implement cultural diversity	28
22	Implementation	Teachers' responsibilities in the classroom regarding cultural diversity	64
23	Experience with cultural diversity	The Credibility of Teachers in cultural diversity	28
24	Teaching experiences	The credibility of teachers in instructing	12
25	Professional development	Formal and nonformal opportunities for teachers on cultural diversity	53
26	Education	Teachers training level	14

Figure 1

Visualization of Themes from TagCrowd

**Figure 2**

Final Themes and Subthemes



Cultural Diversity Implementation

The first theme, cultural diversity implementation, was the most talked about during the interviews. The theme comprises 255 comments from all teachers and ten subthemes. All teachers explained and commented on all positive and negative aspects that impact implementing cultural diversity. They acknowledged that cultural diversity is impeded by time to teach curricula. They recognized that implementing cultural diversity requires repetition. It is not easy to identify when lessons need to include culturally relevant attributes. They affirmed that teachers could implement cultural diversity easier in certain subjects. Christine affirmed her struggle with implementation by saying,

So, I'm White, so just, you know, trying to find people of all sorts of different backgrounds and religions and cultures, so it's kind of hard; and in fact, I somewhat recently went back to some of my slides and looked at them, and I was like, you know, there's definitely not as much diversity in my slides as I wish there were, so went it through, you know, found the pictures, it changed some of the wording, and it was a challenge to really find especially videos.

Success

The teachers expressed some of their successful actions in implementing cultural diversity. Those were the favorable outcomes or results while implementing cultural diversity. Over 30 comments about success in the classroom focused on creating relationships, collaborations, and making connections with and between students. Clarice explained that her success is attributed to taking the time to create an inclusive classroom to support cultural diversity.

Building Relationships

The teachers expressed that building relationships in the classroom is the most important aspect of supporting cultural diversity. The theme was reinforced by the role of cultural diversity in the classroom. Suzane appreciated the conversation during the interview because it allowed her to remember and reflect on her role as a teacher and to support cultural diversity. She said,

I'm thankful that this whole interview and everything brought that back to the forefront of my mind because it is something that you go back to.

Edwidge echoed the importance of building relationships. The relationship allows students with different backgrounds to collaborate and share their views and values. He said that "It helps with By-ins. It's that excitement about going into something that they recognize and can talk about, so they're more likely to do it."

Challenges

Challenges were the most spoken subtheme while implementing cultural diversity. There were 71 comments about the struggle with implementation. Time is the biggest and most common challenge for all teachers in implementing cultural diversity. Edwidge said, "There's just not enough time to do everything. We have only about 12 instructional class days in quarter one, and I have to get through like 30-something lessons in those 12 days." Aisha explained that time does not allow her to focus on cultural diversity in her classroom. She admits that she mistakenly assumed sometimes that her students' race or skin color represented their culture.

She explained,

We assume you know one person's skin color could be their culture, but you don't really know. But truthfully, for me, the challenge is the time, the time to be able to truly value the differences.

Actionable Steps

The teachers expressed a lack of actionable steps available to help them to include cultural diversity in the classroom. They referred to missing content in curricula to promulgate cultural diversity in teaching. The teachers expressed that classrooms' observation and evaluation systems for teachers could address or reinforce actionable steps to account for cultural diversity in their daily tasks. The participants want help from their administration to help them better understand cultural diversity and how to be more culturally responsive in their classrooms. They explain that sometimes they wish they could have some list that could provide guidance and serve as a reminder to be cognizant of cultural diversity in their classrooms. Suzane asked,

What are the actionable steps that you take? How do you actually put it into action? How do I reach each student with cultural responsiveness in that 75-minute and allow them to share or bring their cultural background into learning?

Accountability

The teachers wanted more accountability in professional development that focuses on cultural diversity. They mentioned that training on cultural diversity is optional and therefore is not a priority for educators. The participants expressed concerns about how accountability for cultural diversity implementation is non-existent since cultural diversity is not the priority for their schools or districts. Mark expressed his disenchantment about professional development on cultural diversity by saying that the reality is that cultural diversity professional development will not happen and the conversations about windows and mirrors will keep happening but without any plan of action. On cultural diversity professional development, Suzane concluded by adding that if everything is optional and suggestive, then we're just turning in circles and talking about stuff without follow-up and consequences.

Misunderstanding

The teachers recognized that cultural diversity could create confusion in the classroom between students and among teachers. Edwidge explained that mispronouncing a student's name could impede learning and motivation. He explained that sometimes teachers and students can be misunderstood because of differences in cultural background. While teachers focus on their curriculum, simple mistakes like not knowing how to pronounce the name of their students can be disrespectful or impolite and reduce learning.

Professional Development Ineffectiveness with Cultural Diversity

The second theme, professional development, included 53 comments from 10 out of 12 teachers. The consensus among the teachers throughout the interviews was that professional development opportunities were ineffective because they do not teach actionable steps or are not provided at all. Some of the teachers never received professional development to help them deal with cultural diversity or to be successful in addressing cultural diversity. They affirmed that they acquired a ton of other professional development on learning strategies, collaboration, and behavior management, but never specifically on cultural diversity. Jack added to his discontent about professional development by saying:

They need professional development that deals directly with classroom diversity.

Defining and reflecting on it, you know what type of diversity is represented in your classroom and what accommodations you must and can make to complement culture.

Aisha pointed to her lack of cultural diversity training by saying: "I had one, maybe one class a long time ago, but that's it."

Teaching Methods and Practices to Facilitate Cultural Diversity

The third theme, teaching methods, and practices, received 33 comments from 11 teachers. Those are the actions that teachers take to facilitate cultural diversity while instructing. The teachers acknowledged that personality and cultural backgrounds are crucial in implementing cultural diversity in the classroom. The comments focused on inquiry-based and place-based teaching, multicultural education, and students' learning trends. The teachers acknowledge that certain disciplines or topics are more conducive to cultural diversity; they explain that it is hard to implement cultural diversity in the sciences because the focus is to complete the curriculum.

Inquiry-Based Teaching

Teachers acknowledged that inquiry-based teaching allows them to explore their students' culture and gives students a means to provide and share insights into their culture in the classroom. Jocelyn added, "The most important thing was just knowing that I'm never going to know everything, and I'm always going to have to be asking the students questions to figure out like what they need and then to not be surprised when I'm like, oh, I didn't know that." Suzane reinforced inquiry-based teaching with cultural diversity by asking her students "how do you connect this to any experience that you have had a background, places you have lived, and things you've seen personally?"

Place-Based Teaching

The teachers mentioned that they apply place-based teaching to instill cultural diversity into education and teaching because it focuses on location and individual students. Kaitlyn asserted, "I think when I did my masters, and I learned more about place-base pedagogy and connecting students to their communities into their places where they from, I think that really made a difference." Laura attested that in her classroom, "we tend to focus on place-based

education, which grounds us in the place that we live but also takes into account where the individual children come from.”

Multicultural Education

Marjorie and Clarice stated that multicultural education is a practice that helps them focus on inclusivity in the classroom. Marjorie pointed out that the most important aspect of teaching in culturally diversified classrooms is to be open and reflect on oneself because everyone is ethnocentric, and perhaps the teacher might be the problem with cultural implementation. Clarice noted, “We took a class called Multiculturalism in Education, and that was the class that really showed me the importance of making notes of your students; that’s the class that made me realize me being a teacher isn’t about my kids getting A’s; it’s about whom I’m teaching.”

Learning Trends

For the teachers, specific learning trends or common learning actions are associated with a certain culture. They recognized that those trends could impact and facilitate cultural diversity in the classroom. Marjorie recognized that “Russians are really focused on reading, and the younger ones now, they are really into YouTube videos to check on learning.” Clarice mentioned that “Ah, like my islander kids, I notice that I have to be direct with them; they respond when I’m direct with them, they respond when I’m blunt with them, and I don’t BS anything like this is how it is, this is how it’s going to be.”

Cross-Cultural Dimensions in the Classroom

The theme of cross-cultural dimensions drew 30 comments from the teachers, who recognized that they were unaware of those dimensions of cultural diversity. However, after discussing it in the interviews, they understood the implications of the dimensions of learning

and teaching. All the teachers agreed that more training or professional development should be provided about cross-cultural dimensions. Aisha fervently said, “Yes, and it’s eye-opening, you know, to actually hear the definitions and the how and why behind.” The participants express the need to make cultural diversity known in the educational community because it is very important. The factors that need to be considered are more important than generalizing. The participants do not want to sit through policy briefs; they would rather have speakers talk about cultural diversity, the differences, what to look for, and how to recognize and utilize any kind of tools to better serve our students’ cultures.

Christine was surprised by the implications that I shared during the interview about the cross-cultural dimensions. She stated:

Having those cross-cultural dimensions really adds a layer to what people know and what they think they know, you know. Because you can see some things in people that other people are already judging, and you really don’t know what their backgrounds are, you don’t know what their other kinds of dimensions are; I guess that is true.

Experience Level Importance to Cultural Diversity

The teachers recognized different levels of experience in teaching, cultural diversity, and education matters about how to approach diversity in the classroom. They attributed experiences to credibility in cultural diversity and instructing. During the interview, experience, and longevity in the classroom did not translate to the knowledge of the cross-cultural dimensions. Apparently, teachers from minority backgrounds were more aware of their students’ challenges and learning trends. Teachers who wanted to teach from an early stage in their life were more aware of the impact of cultural diversity in their classrooms. Participants that became teachers by default were less concerned or experienced with cultural diversity. Teachers that were affiliated

with the military services were very expressive of the lack of support for cultural diversity from their administration.

Outlier Data and Findings

Two unexpected findings and themes did not align with specific research questions or themes. Fear was mentioned as an impediment to implementing cultural diversity, while parents' voice was pointed to as necessary to instill cultural diversity in education. Fear from the participants was related to cultural bias, being terrified of being outed by peers, and making mistakes that could cost them their job. Students' and parents' voices were mentioned as an essential tool to support teachers' views on cultural diversity.

Outlier Finding #1: Fear of Reprisal or Making Mistakes

One teacher mentioned that fear is a huge factor that negatively impacts cultural diversity implementation. The teacher explained his concern about making mistakes while affirming that it is risky to out oneself as being ignorant about cultural diversity to a group of peers or a superior. Fear is very powerful because it inhibits a lot of teachers from taking action to implement and talk about cultural diversity. Teachers do not want to make a mistake that can cause them to lose their employment.

Outlier Finding #2: Parents' Voice in Cultural Diversity Integration

One teacher mentioned that parents' voice is integral to receiving the proper feedback and forming a coalition with parents on cultural diversity in the classroom. Kaitlyn noted that in those studies where they got to have input about the school, the school should allow parents a voice by asking them for feedback and information. The feedback will allow the school to have an idea about how to form relationships with students and how to address cultural diversity in a way that's meaningful and actionable.

Research Question Responses

This section presents succinct answers to the research questions. It sets up the reader for the discussion in the next chapter. The narrative of each research question is supported by the themes developed during the data analysis and reinforced by participant quotes from the interviews.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms? The theme that corresponds to the main research questions is the implementation of cultural diversity. The participants' perspective is that implementing cultural diversity is difficult and complicated. They recognized that there is a multitude of challenges. However, the most common impediment is time. The participants believe that leaders are unaware of their struggles. Teachers want the districts and schools to be a part of the conversation on how to implement cultural diversity. In the participants' view, upper leadership or management gets removed from these conversations because they are removed from the classroom, hence become detached from their own diversified population of students.

All teachers expressed their success and attributed that success to building relationships with students. They believed that if time was allotted at the start of the school year to get to know the students, it would pay dividends rather than get straight to instructions. They agreed that there should be more accountability in cultural diversity training, and professional development about culture should not be optional. Also, they expressed that programs should provide actionable steps for implementing cultural diversity in the classroom. The participants do not want to include cultural diversity as a subset of any other discussion. Cultural diversity must be

an essential topic like funding. Teachers feel that they are not given the time, the opportunity, the space, or the latitude to really accomplish what needs to be done about cultural diversity.

Sub-Question One

How do teachers perceive, define, and facilitate cultural diversity in their classrooms?

The themes that relate to the first sub-question are the experience level of the participants and implementation. The teachers define cultural diversity in different ways depending on their experience level and speak of implementation from personal views. Christine, an 11-year veteran, defined the implementation of cultural diversity as making sure to include as many cultures as possible in her teaching. For teachers, it is all about being open-minded to all backgrounds and cultures. Mark, a four-year teacher, explained that cultural diversity, as it pertains to the classroom, revolves around the students seeing themselves in the curriculum's content as well as being introduced to cultures they are unfamiliar with. The teachers' perceptions of cultural diversity were completely distinct; they used different approaches to include cultural diversity in their teaching practices. For example, Clarice, a new teacher, stated that her teaching style is being real with her students; "I don't BS them, and they don't BS me." But Jack, a 10-year teacher, noted that he uses project-based learning across the curriculum as a requirement. Most of the teachers in his school have seen the value of project-based learning. Jack uses the Project-Based Learning Works Checklist, which is a checklist to evaluate project-based learning and applies it to other curricula.

Sub-Question Two

What do teachers perceive as positive and negative aspects of culturally diverse classrooms? The themes that relate to the first sub-question are the need for professional development and teaching methods and practices. Teachers recognize that cultural diversity is

inevitable in the classroom, and they need more training to facilitate it in their instructions. The participants mentioned that some of the positive aspects of cultural diversity are inclusion, collaboration, awareness, and a sense of belonging. Edwidge mentioned that cultural diversity brings students together on topics they would normally not participate in; he mentioned that cultural diversity helps with by-ins; it's the excitement about going into something that they recognize and can talk about, so they're more likely to participate in it. Regarding inclusion, Mark stated that when students are in a place where they feel accepted and welcome, then they look forward to being there. Christine accentuated the sense of belonging as very important. Once teachers and students have common values and perspectives, it might not just be the exact cultures; they can find common ground with each other.

On the other hand, some teachers recognized that the students' home cultures could become a problem in the classroom. Sometimes, students' actions in class do not support their culture at home or vice versa. Judith explained a situation about how the culture at home was disruptive to her classroom. Students felt like the classroom was their place to be free, then they went back home after school to being culturally suppressed. So, Judith learned to work around the challenge because her approach wasn't working, and she was getting frustrated. Sending them out of class, giving them referrals, and calling their parents were the worst approach because then the students would go home and get scolded by their parents. Edwidge emphasized home culture as an impediment in his class. He stated that teachers need to value education with their students, which can elicit resistance against it from their parents. So, when students come from a household where their parents don't appreciate math and barely understand arithmetic, then the students internalize that view, and they say that there's no reason to learn math because they never have to use it; that's what their phone is for. Versus a family that emphasized

education, and those students come in, and it's like, oh my goodness, why aren't we in Trigonometry right now? Why are we so far behind?

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers recognize, acknowledge, and facilitate cross-cultural dimensions in their classrooms? The themes that relate to the first sub-question are the cross-cultural dimension in the classroom and the professional development of cultural diversity. Teachers needed to gain knowledge of the cross-cultural dimensions and their impact on the classrooms. However, after I explained the dimensions during the interview, all the teachers recognized the tendencies of their students that correlate to the cross-cultural dimensions. They recognized cross-cultural dimensions as individual characteristics and made the connection to their instructional methods, learning trends, and challenges in the classroom. Mark reflected on his teaching practices and expressed that having the ability to know the curriculum's intention and the diversity of the class allowed him to add lessons that would focus on the different cultures that are represented in his school. Teachers should apply and create lesson plans that center around different cultures. Kaitlyn explained that the multitude of cultures makes it difficult to reach every student during the time allotted for instruction. In Kaitlyn's view, in the United States, one of the challenges might be that teachers have so much diversity in their classrooms that they have to make sure that they engage each student. Aisha placed her challenge on recognizing, knowing, and applying actions to foster inclusion through cultural diversity. She explained that the challenge is that everyone knows that cultural diversity is there but feels that teachers can't do anything more than just consider the impact with no plan of action to attack the challenges. Because knowing and considering the challenges is one thing, but actually creating an inclusive environment is different.

Summary

Implementing cultural diversity is a crucial aspect of learning that all teachers agree with. Time for instruction was the most detrimental aspect of cultural diversity implementation in the classrooms. Failures or successes were attributed to the amount of time devoted to building relationships with and between teachers and students. The participants noted that they want their leadership to create and maintain accountability for cultural diversity implementation by providing training that has actionable steps rather than being abstract.

The participants want professional development on cultural diversity to be mandatory and not optional. They want professional development to focus on helping them understand the dynamics in their classrooms while applying cultural diversity. The participants affirmed that different teaching methods and practices could be applied to facilitate cultural diversity. However, inquiry-based, place-based, and multicultural education were the specific ones mentioned to engage all cultures in classrooms.

The participants did not know the cross-cultural dimensions and their impact on teaching. However, the interviews made them aware of the dimensions that exist in their classrooms and why they must understand the cross-cultural dimensions and their consequences while teaching and learning. The participants acknowledged that their experience in teaching, cultural background, and education level was a great factor in their exposure to cultural diversity and how they facilitated cultural inclusivity in their method of teaching.

A few participants mentioned some facets of cultural diversity that were not expected during the interviews. Fear of being misunderstood and judged hinders teachers from expressing their abilities or lack thereof to facilitate cultural diversity in their classrooms. The participants agreed that parents should have a voice in implementing cultural diversity in schools to get their

buy-in and support at home. Their voice will provide feedback to the teachers and translate to success for students in the classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools. Hofstede's cross-cultural dimensions were applied as a lens to examine the data. This chapter plainly and succinctly illustrates organized discussions using my interpretations, explanations, and thoughts to hone on the findings of the study while clarifying them for the reader. The chapter includes five discussion subsections: (a) interpretation of findings, (b) implications for policy and practice, (c) theoretical and methodological implications, (d) limitations and delimitations, and (e) recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this section is to discuss the study's findings from the thematic analysis of data collected through 12 interviews and questionnaires provided by teachers from around the world teaching in middle schools and high schools. The subsections included in the following paragraphs of the study are (a) Interpretation of Findings; (b) Implications for Policy or Practice; (c) Theoretical and Empirical Implications; (d) Limitations and Delimitations; and (e) Recommendations for Future Research.

Interpretation of Findings

To interpret the research findings, I present a brief summation of the themes developed throughout the analysis and their significance to education. Then I provide a concatenation of my understanding of the themes deemed significant to the reader. The thematic analysis allowed me to read the transcripts multiple times to produce the six major themes and subthemes that emerged from the data evaluation (Alshahrani et al., 2022).

Summary of Thematic Findings

The data analysis provided seven major themes that emerged from interviewing 12 teachers and reading their responses to a questionnaire. The themes are dominated by cultural diversity implementation, with time being the most detrimental to application, (b) professional development about cultural diversity is needed and must be required and not optional, (c) teachers must apply teaching methods and practices that are conducive to cultural diversity, (d) cross-cultural dimensions are relevant to cultural diversity, (e) experience level matter for implementation and identifying challenges with cultural diversity, and (f) two outliers, fear and parents' voices accentuate the role of administrations and parents to provide feedback to teachers about cultures in the classrooms. Each theme represents the teacher's lived experience with cultural diversity in their classrooms. From my analysis of the interviews and questionnaires, I formulate some of my observations and interpretations of the thematic findings.

Prioritization of Cultural Diversity in Education. Educational leaders have not prioritized cultural diversity and therefore are neglected at all levels. That lack of prioritization is reflected in the challenges faced by teachers. While conducting the research, I realized that all teachers know the challenges of implementing cultural diversity in their classrooms. They expressed challenges at schools, district, state, and federal levels. When segregation was declared unconstitutional, all teachers had to learn how to teach all students regardless of race or skin color while providing equal resources to them (Weathers & Sosina, 2022). However, cultural diversity has been and will always be there. Classroom diversification is inevitable because of globalization and migration movements. If cultural diversity does not become a priority in all schools, teachers' challenges with cultural diversity in their classrooms will become increasingly

strenuous and ambiguous. Specifically, cross-cultural dimensions should become part of teaching frameworks because they exist in all cultures, including students and teachers.

Cross-Cultural Dimensions as an Element of Any Teaching Framework. Teaching frameworks are critical for teachers to create curricula that support their goals. If cultural diversity is employed constantly as an element of all teaching frameworks, it will become apparent and practical for teachers. In the research, the teachers said the focus is on meeting prescribed time, standards, and requirements to teach a curriculum rather than implementing cultural diversity. However, teachers acknowledge that certain subjects are more conducive to facilitating cultural diversity implementation. For example, they expressed that it is easier to apply cultural connection with discussion prompts in AP classes because they provide more leeway for conversations and debates. The cross-cultural dimensions of Geert Hofstede must become essential to teachers and enforced as part of any cultural training. It emphasizes the need to identify students' subcultural tendencies in all cultures. Teachers should not have specific expectations about how students should learn; instead, they must be ready to teach any student regardless of culture (Jensen et al., 2018).

Actionable Practices. Educational leaders at the school, district, state, and federal levels must create, provide, or adopt processes that have actionable steps that can be quantified or qualified for future and consistent application in education. The step-by-step process could provide sustainable and identifiable changes through measures of performance and effectiveness. All the teachers in the research understood what needs to be done about cultural diversity in their classrooms. However, they asked how to get and maintain results. I recognized that none of the teachers had a recipe for implementing cultural diversity in their classrooms. They acknowledge

that they do not think of it all the time and must remind themselves of its implication in the classroom.

Cultural Diversity in Teachers Education. Cultural diversity must become a pillar in teacher education. It can't be just a course or a lecture in a program; it must be the core of all teaching education or preparation. Multiple barriers constrain teachers' efficacy in professing cultural diversity in their classrooms. For example, Lu et al. (2022) found that teachers' autonomy in their classrooms is a factor in implementing cultural diversity in their curriculum; more autonomy showed more implementation. In this research, the teachers expressed a need for more training during their education on cultural diversity, precisely cross-cultural dimensions. Succinctly expressed, teachers' education lacks training with quantifiable and actionable steps to support future teachers in their curriculum development.

Implications for Policy or Practice

Cultural diversity must have a universal approach across schools, districts, states, and federal educational levels. The various stakeholders, such as policymakers, administrators, teachers, and parents, must recognize the value of cultures in education and implement approaches or laws that support their goals. The implications for policy and practice from the research are presented below.

Implications for Policy

During the interviews, none of the teachers mentioned the specific policies or approaches to the cultural diversity that their district or state was promoting. The lack of guidance and support leaves teachers with no guidance and hence their frustration with implementation and actionable steps to cultural diversity. School districts, states, or federal policies could mandate cultural diversity as a teacher training requirement and professional development. The standards

must differentiate which approach they want to adopt because different methods will require different implementation steps. While all approaches focus on minorities' inclusion, they will not foster cultural diversity. For example, a multiculturalism approach will favor cultural diversity as an additional value, a colorblindness approach will disregard cultural diversity and accentuate equal treatment, and an assimilationist approach will favor the majority culture (Celeste et al., 2019). Therefore, teachers must be briefed or trained on the specific approach their school districts employ to facilitate curriculum development.

Implications for Practice

The implications for practice draw from the research's participants' comments and the themes constructed from the interviews and questionnaires. Educators and administrators in middle schools and high schools could affect and implement change in their district or other schools with diverse demographics. Educational policymakers may need to focus on cultural diversity implementation by providing mandatory training, creating measures of performance and effectiveness related to the training, and creating a system that holds stakeholders accountable. Teachers in culturally diverse classrooms who identify and relate to similar challenges can benefit from the successful actions implemented by the participants of this study to mitigate their issues with cultural diversity.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The study confirms and corroborates previous research on the importance of teachers understanding and facilitating cultural diversity in their classrooms. In many fields, the challenges encountered by teachers correspond to the findings of this study. For example, educators' attitudes about cultural diversity are not the same as they display after they received professional development; they become aware of the challenges with cultural diversity

implementation (Merlin-Knoblich & Dameron, 2021); in teacher-student relationships, teachers must be aware of their culture and students' identities to effectively support culturally diverse classrooms (Whitaker, 2019). Under the methods and practices' themes that facilitate cultural diversity, classroom instruction and practices that include inclusion help implement pedagogies to reach all learners (Simón et al., 2021). Teachers' professional development to facilitate cultural diversity is not too par. Teachers continue to report the lack or disparity of professional development needed to advance cultural diversity (OECD, 2019). Cross-cultural dimensions matter in the classroom for both students and teachers. The impact of the dimensions relate to students' and teachers' perception of each other on gender identity (Pishghadam et al., 2016), students' evaluation of teaching (Arnold & Versluis, 2019; Hofstede, 1996), students' sense of belonging (Cortina et al., 2017), their effect on school and educational leadership (Bissessar, 2018, Engin, 2020; Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014).

The study brought novel contributions by expanding on new perceptions and interpretations of how teachers experience cultural diversity from a cross-cultural perspective. It could help educators and educational leaders in multicultural environments to understand and account for cross-cultural dimensions while formulating curricula to promote learning and students' achievement. Hence, this study builds on other research (e.g., Khan et al., 2020; Pruitt, 2017; Wachira & Mburu, 2019) by adding knowledge and accentuating the need for teachers to understand the value of cross-cultural dimensions and their impact on teaching pedagogies in their classrooms practice.

The research provides new insights into how teachers experience cultural diversity from the cross-cultural dimensions viewpoint. The findings can allow educators in multicultural environments to acknowledge and account for cross-cultural dimensions while formulating

curricula to promote learning. The study reinforces the need to educate teachers and educators about the theory of cross-cultural dimension from Geert Hofstede (1980) to emphasize identifying students' subcultural tendencies while teaching and instructing. All teachers agreed that there should be more training or professional development about cross-cultural dimensions.

The findings are congruent and support constructivist pedagogies as being the best methods to support cultural diversity in the classroom. Constructivist pedagogies provide a venue for collaboration, discussions, and student-centered approaches (Binkley & Minor, 2020; Charania et al., 2021; Clark, 2018; Grier-Reed & Williams-Wengerd, 2018; Harjali, 2019; Splitter, 2008). The teachers affirmed that inquiry-based, place-based, and multicultural education are favorable to cultural diversity implementation.

The study extends previous research by reinforcing that teachers must recognize cross-cultural dimensions as a vital part of their classrooms. The teachers may refocus on the goal of education for each student and not underestimate their cross-cultural tendencies while teaching and instructing (Mesker et al., 2020; Toraman & Demir, 2016; Čeněk, 2020). The success that teachers expressed during the interviews in the study could help other educators achieve their goals with cultural diversity in their classrooms. Throughout the study, success is observed and attributed to taking the time to create an inclusive classroom. Teachers expressed that building relationships in the classroom is the most important aspect of supporting cultural diversity. Fear of making mistakes and home culture was mentioned as an impediment, while parents' voices were vital to implementing cultural diversity.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were limitations to the study that can be considered difficulties, as I could not control them. First, covid protocols restrained me from conducting classroom observations

because teachers could not get approval from their school districts. Second, many teachers elected to conduct the interviews over Zoom, which impeded me from observing visual clues from the participants. Third, many schools reject the study because of the pandemic rules. Fourth, focus groups were not conducted because of the participants' geographical location and time zones. The participants could never agree on a time to run focus groups because of their locations and time. Finally, many participants refused to participate and volunteer for the study out of fear of reprisal from their schools or districts. They express concern about getting reprimanded and even losing their jobs.

Some delimitations encountered during the research were very apparent and demotivating. After submitting many requests to different schools and districts in vain, I decided not to use a specific site for the study. I chose snowballing, purposeful, and criterion sampling to redefine the study's boundaries. I elected to include any teachers that met the criteria as teaching at any middle school and high school level worldwide to get a better perspective of the phenomenon. Also, time was a factor of delimitations; as an active-duty soldier, I was deploying to a foreign country and did not want to jeopardize completing the research. Ample time management and discipline help control the work workload commendations for Future Research

From the limitations and delimitations of the study, multiple recommendations and directions for future research can be invoked. More studies on cross-cultural dimensions in a different environment and with other participants could produce different conclusions from teachers' perceptions. First, choosing a specific site, like a school or district, for the study would be beneficial to identify challenges and recommend specific solutions for that population. Second, the study can be repeated after schools' protocols for the pandemic have been removed to facilitate site selection, more volunteers, observations, and focus groups.

The study could be executed while focusing on or comparing specific teachers' age brackets, years of experience, gender, ethnicity, and race. Also, the study could be conducted with different types of educators like principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors to receive a different perspective of the phenomenon from administrators rather than teachers. A hermeneutic rather than transcendental phenomenology could be conducted to include my interpretations, opinions, and constructive meaning. A case study could also be appropriate for researchers to select a particular case in advance and focus on the phenomenon. The study could be action research to evaluate any institution's practice regarding cultural diversity and cross-cultural dimensions while providing critical analysis to improve their process.

Conclusion

This transcendental phenomenological study sought to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses. The theory of cross-cultural dimension from Geert Hofstede was applied as a lens to investigate the participants' views about their experience with cultural diversity. Teachers from middle schools and high schools participated in the research. They were from different social backgrounds, races, lifestyles, countries, and organizations, which made each answer unique regarding cultural diversity and cross-cultural dimensions. The researcher conducted 12 interviews; four were face-to-face, including two in Germany, and eight via Zoom. Interviews, transcriptions, questionnaires, memoing, and journaling produced the data that were thematically analyzed to reach a conclusion and create the findings. Purposeful, snowballing, and criterion sampling guided the selection process with specific conditions for eligibility.

The research revealed that none of the participants mentioned the particular policies or approaches to the cultural diversity that their district or state was promoting. The lack of

standards and support leaves teachers with no guidance, hence their frustration with cultural diversity implementation and actionable steps. Schools, districts, or states must differentiate which approach they want their teachers to adopt because different approaches will require dissimilar implementation steps. Throughout the study, teachers observed and attributed success to taking the time to create an inclusive classroom. Teachers expressed that building relationships in the classroom is the most important aspect of supporting cultural diversity and identifying cross-cultural dimensions. Fear of making mistakes by teachers and students' home culture was mentioned as an impediment, while parents' voices were vital to implementing cultural diversity.

Teachers do harm to students if they do not take appropriate actions to address cultural diversity in their classroom while favoring all students' educational abilities individually. The study helps capture cross-cultural perceptions and experiences of teachers about cultural diversity. The findings of the study could provide educators with a benchmark to gauge students' opinions, experiences, and learning needs to benefit all stakeholders in schools and classrooms.

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APPENDIX A: INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 17, 2022

[REDACTED]

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-1110 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES WHILE ADDRESSING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

[REDACTED]

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

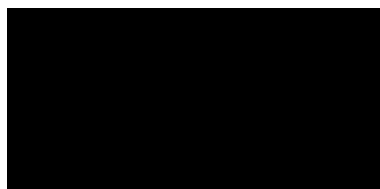
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION RESPONSE LETTER

5 February 2022



RX High School

4361 Salt Lake Blvd

Honolulu, HI 96818

Dear Mr. RX:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled *A Phenomenological Study of Teachers' Lived Experiences while Addressing Cultural Diversity in Middle Schools and High Schools*, I have decided to grant you permission to contact our faculty, invite them to participate in your study, conduct your study at RX High School, and utilize courses syllabus for your research study.

I grant [REDACTED] to contact our teachers to invite them to participate in his research study.

I will provide potential participant information to [REDACTED], and I agree to provide his study information to teachers on his behalf.

The courses syllabus **WILL BE STRIPPED** of all identifying information before I provide it.

I request a copy of the results upon study completion and publication.

Sincerely,

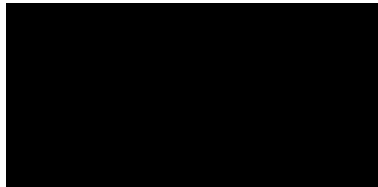
Cristopher RX (Pseudonym)

Principal

RX High School

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER

5 February 2022



4361 Salt Lake Blvd

Honolulu, HI 96818


Dear Mr. RX:

As a graduate student in the Leadership department, School of education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The title of my research project is *A Phenomenological Study of Teachers' Lived Experiences while Addressing Cultural Diversity in Middle School and High Schools*, and the purpose of my research is to understand how teachers deal with cultural diversity while instructing in constructivist learning environments at school in Hawaii.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at RX High School, contact members of your school, and invite them to participate in my research study. I would like to gain access to and utilize the course syllabus.

Participants will be asked to complete the attached survey and contact me to schedule an interview and focus group. The data will be used to collect data for the study. Participants will be presented with informed consent information before participating. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on an official letterhead indicating your approval and respond by email to

 A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Juan P. Remy

Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT FLYER

Research Participants Needed

A Phenomenological Study of Teachers' Lived Experiences while Addressing Cultural Diversity in Middle School and High Schools

Screening Questions

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Are you a teacher?
- Are you instructing any content areas in middle schools and high schools?
- Do you have more than a year of teaching experience?

If you answered **yes** to each of the questions listed above, you might be eligible to participate in a research study.

The research is a transcendental phenomenology that aims to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses.

Participants will be asked to:

1. Conduct an in-person interview at a location of your choice, free of distraction and noise. You will complete a consent form, and the interview will be audio-recorded face-to-face or online.

Due to the pandemic, you can request an in-person interview via Zoom or TEAMS. The interview will not be longer than 30 minutes. Open-ended questions will be used during the interview.

2. Participate in a focus group, if needed, at a location best suited for all participants, including a maximum of four members. The focus group will be audio-recorded to be transcribed later. The focus group will be scheduled by email or phone with the participants. The focus group will take 30 minutes or until the discussion ends.

Participants should not expect to receive a **direct benefit** from taking part in this study.

If you would like to participate, **contact me at the phone number or email address provided below.**

A **consent document** will be given to you during the interview and focus group.

Juan P. Remy, a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Department School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Juan P. Remy at [REDACTED] for more information.

APPENDIX E: CONSENT

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study of Teachers' Lived Experiences while Addressing Cultural Diversity in **Middle Schools and High Schools**

Principal Investigator: Juan P. Remy, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. You must be 18 years old and a certified teacher. You may be instructing any content areas and have more than a year of experience. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The transcendental phenomenology aims to understand and describe teachers' lived experiences with cultural diversity in middle schools and high schools using cross-cultural dimensions as lenses.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Conduct an in-person interview at a location of your choice, free of distraction and noise.

You will complete a consent form, and the interview will be audio-recorded face-to-face or online. Due to the pandemic, you can request an in-person interview via Zoom or TEAMS.

The interview will not be longer than 30 minutes. Open-ended questions will be used during the interview.

2. Participate in a focus group at a location best suited for all participants, including a maximum of four members. The focus group will be audio-recorded to be transcribed later. The focus group will be scheduled with a calendar invitation by email for you to accept and RSVP. The focus group will take 30 minutes or until the discussion ends.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include 1) understanding of how teachers experience challenges with cultural diversity in their classrooms, 2) understanding of constructivist learning environments (CLEs) are favorable for students and teachers in a culturally diverse environment, 3) How educators and administrators can affect change in their district or other schools with diverse demographics.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

There are minimal risks involved in this study. The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only I will have access to the records.

- To protect the privacy of the participants and the confidentiality of their data: [e.g., Participant responses will be anonymous and kept confidential using pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only I will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other focus group members may share what was discussed with people outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Do I have any conflicts of interest?

I am the father of a student at the school. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on their decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with any institution. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, don't hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and not included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the investigation if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

I, conducting this study, is Juan P. Remy. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED].

You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Alan Wimberley, Ed.D., at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

Suppose you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than me. In that case, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records, and I will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

I have my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How do you identify your gender?
2. What is your highest degree earned?
3. What content area/s are you teaching?
4. In which grade level are you teaching?
5. How long have you been teaching?
6. How would you define cultural diversity in your classroom?
7. Please tell me about your experience with cultural diversity in your classroom.
8. How has your experience with cultural diversity changed over time?
9. What type of training on cultural diversity have you ever been offered by the school?
10. How do you feel your teaching certification prepared you to teach in a culturally diversified school?
11. How would you describe the learning environment in your teaching practice in a culturally diversified school?

APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What steps do you take to overcome the challenges associated with cultural diversity?
2. How do you describe your experience implementing the steps you discussed in your classroom?
3. How can you describe the impact of cultural diversity in your middle or high school?
4. How does cultural diversity concern you as a middle and highschool teacher?

APPENDIX H: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Participant: # Of Students:

Date & Time: Type of Class:

Course Subject Title: Course Format:

Cultural Diversity Verbal Cues Nonverbal Cues Action/Interactions

In the Classroom

Perspectives

Practices

Attitudes