

Intercultural Sensitivity of School Teachers in Connection to Their Demographic Features

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ABSTRACT For teachers to maximise learning outcomes and improve the quality of learning experiences for students from a variety of backgrounds, cultural sensitivity is an essential quality. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the cultural sensitivity of secondary school teachers in relation to a number of demographic factors, including sex, location, age group, community, educational background, and length of teaching experience. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 95 secondary school teachers using Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (2000). Findings show that most teachers' degrees of cultural sensitivity were between average and above average. Teachers scored higher on the categories of interaction enjoyment and respect for cultural differences in the dimension-wise analysis. There is no significant difference in the intercultural sensitivity of teachers based on demographic characteristics, that is, sex, locale, age group, community, or educational qualifications. Teachers with more experience had higher intercultural sensitivity. The study emphasises the need for professional development and institutional practices to foster an inclusive learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

The necessity of incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is emphasised in the UN paper for "Indigenous Peoples and the MDGs: Inclusive and Culturally Sensitive Solutions" (Herfkens 2008). With increase in globalisation, today's diverse classrooms bring unique challenges for teachers who must adapt their practices to ensure inclusivity and equity (Yurtseven and Altun 2015; Akcin 2023; Maniatis and Panagiotidou 2025). The importance of cultural awareness is growing across a range of sectors, and education is no exception. In the modern classroom, cultural sensitivity is not only a necessary ability for instructors, but also a valuable skill, particularly in diverse classrooms. To foster an inclusive and encouraging learning environment, teachers must not only be aware of the cultural origins, values, and beliefs of their pupils but also show them respect and understanding. One characteristic that influences instructors' effectiveness and practice is cultural sensitivity (Baron 2023).

Meghalaya's capital city, Shillong, is a significant hub for education, drawing students from both within the state and from neighbouring states. A culturally diverse atmosphere is produced by the city's already-existing cultural variety as well as

the influx of students from diverse cultural backgrounds attending various educational institutions. Teachers' cultural sensitivity is essential to creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for pupils. The current study investigates the ways in which teachers' cultural sensitivity is influenced by demographic factors such as sex, age, ethnic background, educational background, and teaching experience.

An intercultural sensitive individual should have six affective components, including self-monitoring, empathy, open-mindedness, interaction engagement, and suspending judgment, according to Chen and Starosta (1997). Self-esteem is the conviction in one's value and identity. The ability to modify one's behaviour in response to situational demands and communicate effectively is known as self-monitoring. Being open-minded is being willing to express one's opinions while appreciating and accepting those of others. The capacity to place oneself in another person's shoes and consider things from their point of view is known as empathy. Understanding a scenario that affects one's sense of self is known as interaction involvement. When engaging in cross-cultural interactions, it is important to maintain an open mind and listen intently without passing judgement. A welcoming and helpful learning environment is created by educators that value the many

cultural backgrounds of their pupils and include them in the curricula (Gay 2015).

The affective component of intercultural communication ability, known as intercultural sensitivity, is the emotional willingness of an individual to recognise, value, and accept cultural differences (Chen and Starosta 2000). According to Sherman (2014), cultural sensitivity is the ability to collaborate with individuals who have distinct cultural attitudes and behaviours (as mentioned in Garcia and Pantao 2021). The Interaction Engagement dimension of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale comprises five factors that pertain to an individual's communication style with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Respect for Cultural Differences centres on acknowledging these differences, as well as an individual's level of acceptance and understanding of the beliefs and viewpoints of different cultures. The degree of a person's confidence in cross-cultural interactions is known as interaction confidence. The satisfaction of interaction pertains to how a person feels when interacting, whether positively or negatively, with their counterparts from other cultural backgrounds. The comprehension of a person and their flexibility in cross-cultural communication are the topics of the interaction attentiveness dimension (Chen and Starosta 2000; Bosuwon 2016).

A substantial correlation between cultural sensitivity and classroom management was discovered by Garcia and Pantao (2021). According to Tanase (2021), educators included their pupils' cultural backgrounds in their teachings. Perceptions of intercultural sensitivity and classroom management were not significantly influenced by gender, ethnicity, years of experience, or grade level (Walker 2019). Instructors are very sensitive to cultural differences and possess the capacity to evaluate and take into account the cultures of others (Garcia and Pantao 2021; Karatas and Oral 2015). According to a study by Blazevic et al. (2023), there is a strong relationship between understanding of multicultural education and a few intercultural sensitivity aspects. To meet the requirements of their numerous, culturally diverse students, highly sensitive teachers implement learner-centred teaching strategies and employ culturally appropriate curricula (Baron 2023). Furthermore, pre-service and beginner English teachers are aware of international notions, including language, beliefs, and values, according to a study by Kazazoglu and Ece (2021).

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), created by Chen and Starosta (2000), is a measure of sensitivity that consists of twenty-four statements broken down into five factors, namely, engagement in interactions (6 items), respect for cultural differences (6 items), confidence in interactions (5 items), enjoyment of interactions (3 items), and attentiveness during interactions (3 items). The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) has been used and modified by researchers in a variety of cultural contexts (Fritz et al. 2002; Bayles 2009; Yuen and Grossman 2009; Nieto and Booth 2010; Yurtseven and Altun 2015; Wang 2016; Chranioti and Arvanitis 2018; Segura-Robles and Parra-González 2019; Shalva and Gorgadze 2019; Walker 2019; Bahar-Özvaris et al. 2022; Garcia and Pantao 2021; Baron 2023; Blazevic et al. 2023; Maniatis and Panagiotidou 2025).

According to Bayles (2009), Spinthourakis et al. (2009), Yurtseven and Altun (2015), Ahmad and Khan (2016), Bosuwon (2016), Drandic (2016), Mendoza et al. (2017), Altan (2018), Kazazoglu and Ece (2021), Bahar-Özvaris et al. (2022), Bal (2023) and Maniatis and Panagiotidou (2025), there is no difference in intercultural sensitivity between males and females. Conversely, substantial disparities between male and female teachers were observed (Petrovic and Zlatkovic 2009; Nieto and Booth 2010; Yilmaz and Göçen 2013; Leutwyler et al. 2014; Walker 2019; Agarwal and Sandilya 2020; Aydemir and Kalin 2021; Boudouaia et al. 2022; Rodríguez-Izquierdo 2022; Santosh 2022; Chen and Hu 2023; Pouli 2025). Age is a significant determinant, as observed by previous researchers (Drandic 2016; Ghamarnia et al. 2016; Yilmaz and Wujiabudula 2019; Kazazoğlu and Ece 2021; Bal 2023), but other investigations reported no significant differences based on age (Spinthourakis et al. 2009; Segura-Robles and Parra-González 2019; Maniatis and Panagiotidou 2025). Several studies suggest that teaching experiences influenced teachers' intercultural sensitivity (Bayles 2009; Ahmad and Khan 2016; Zhao 2018; Boudouaia et al. 2022), however findings reported by Pouli (2025) and Maniatis and Panagiotidou (2025) observed that teachers with fewer teaching experience demonstrated higher level of intercultural sensitivity. No discernible variations in teachers' intercultural sensitivity were discovered in previous research (Yurtseven and Altun 2015; Ghamarnia et al. 2016; Segura-Robles and Parra-González 2019; Sekerci and Dogan 2020) based on community, nationality, ethnicity, or cultural identity.

Cultural plurality and diversity are the essence of Indian society, and multiculturalism is evident within the classrooms. Herein, the teachers' role becomes crucial in creating a meaningful learning environment for better learning experiences and optimum learning outcomes. However, very little has been explored on intercultural sensitivity among school teachers. This gap emphasises the need to evaluate teachers' intercultural sensitivity and the influence of demographic characteristics, more evident in the northeastern region of the country, which is marked by its rich cultural diversity. However, no studies have been conducted to explore more in this regard. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by assessing the intercultural sensitivity among school teachers in Shillong, particularly in connection with the demographic features.

Objectives

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the intercultural sensitivity among the teachers at the secondary level.
2. To study the influence of sex, locale, age group, community, educational qualification,

and teaching experience with cultural sensitivity of secondary school teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Method

For the purpose of the present investigation, a descriptive survey method was employed to assess the intercultural sensitivity of teachers in relation to their demographic features.

Technique of Sampling and Sample Utilised

The sample for this study was drawn from the population using basic random sampling, according to the researcher. A sample of 95 secondary school teachers who work in schools in Shillong was chosen.

Teachers' Profile

Table 1 provides a detailed presentation of the background and demographic data, such as sex, location, age group, community, educational background, and teaching experience.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the teachers

<i>Demographic features</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Sex</i>	Male	24	25.3
	Female	71	74.7
<i>Locale</i>	Rural	13	13.7
	Urban	82	86.3
<i>Community</i>	Khasi	58	64.2
	Garos	2	1.1
	Jaintia	7	7.4
	Others	28	27.4
<i>Age Group</i>	> 30 years	27	28.4
	30-39 years	28	29.5
	40-49 years	24	25.3
	< 50 years	10	10.5
	Missing	6	6.3
<i>Educational Qualification</i>	Undergraduate	40	42.1
	Postgraduate	55	57.89
<i>Teaching Experience</i>	> 1 year	13	13.7
	1-5 years	12	12.6
	6-10 years	20	21.1
	11-15 years	15	15.8
	16-20 years	16	16.8
	< 20 years	15	15.8
	Missing	4	4.2
	Total	95	100

Source: Authors (April 2024)

Instrument

To estimate secondary school teachers' intercultural sensitivity, the researcher employed Chen and Starosta's (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. 24 items on a 5-point Likert scale were included in the scale (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being uncertain, 2 being disagree, and 1 being strongly disagree). It measures five dimensions of (1) interaction engagement, (2) respect for cultural differences, (3) interaction confidence, (4) interaction enjoyment, and (5) interaction attentiveness. On preliminary study of the tool, the reliability and validity of the scale on Intercultural Sensitivity by Chen and Starosta's (2000) was established again to fit the cultural context and was found to be culture free. Therefore, the investigators decided to adopt the original scale. The scale's overall reliability was .72.

Data Analysis

The intercultural sensitivity scale was distributed to secondary school teachers in Shillong in order to gather data, and a week later, the completed scale was collected. The data's normality was tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and the results revealed a p-value of .09 ($p > .05$). According to the outcome, the distribution was normal. IBM SPSS 26 was used to do both descriptive and inferential analysis, including z-scores, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and ANOVA.

RESULTS

Levels of Secondary Teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity

Table 2 shows the levels of secondary teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity with respect to the five

dimensions. As a result, most teachers had average levels of total cultural sensitivity in the overall intercultural sensitivity. Further, in the dimension wise analysis, teachers having average levels of intercultural sensitivity were the highest, followed by above average and below average levels. Very few teachers had high and low levels of total intercultural sensitivity as well as across all the dimensions.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Demographic Features

Table 3 revealed that in comparison to female, urban and postgraduate teachers, higher mean scores for overall intercultural sensitivity were found in male, undergraduate and rural teachers. For each attribute, male teachers outperformed female teachers in terms of mean scores. Rural teachers performed better than urban teachers in the areas of interaction enjoyment, respect for cultural differences, and interaction engagement. Conversely, the interaction attentiveness and interaction confidence scores were greater for the urban teachers. Undergraduate teachers scored higher on the aspects of Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Enjoyment, and Interaction Attentiveness, whereas postgraduate teachers scored higher on both the attributes, that is, Interaction Engagement and Interaction Confidence.

The mean scores for Respect for Cultural Differences dimension were the highest followed by Interaction Enjoyment, Interaction Engagement, Interaction Confidence, and Interaction Attentiveness. In comparison to female, rural and postgraduate teachers, male, urban and undergraduate teachers scored higher mean scores in this dimension. The overall mean scores for total intercultural

Table 2: Levels of secondary teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity

Levels of intercultural sensitivity	Respect for cultural differences	Interaction confidence	Interaction engagement	Interaction enjoyment	Interaction attentiveness	Total intercultural sensitivity
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
High	-	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	-	6 (6.3)	1 (1.1)
Above Average	19 (20)	9 (9.5)	12 (12.6)	15 (15.8)	7 (7.4)	11 (11.6)
Average	62 (65.3)	70 (73.7)	67 (70.5)	71 (74.7)	72 (75.8)	74 (77.9)
Below Average	9 (9.5)	11 (11.6)	14 (14.7)	4 (4.2)	7 (7.4)	6 (6.3)
Low	5 (5.3)	4 (4.3)	1 (1.1)	5 (5.3)	3 (3.2)	3 (3.2)
Total	95(100)	95(100)	95(100)	95(100)	95(100)	95 (100)

Source: Authors (April 2024)

Table 3: Mean scores of Intercultural Sensitivity across the demographic features

Demographic features	Interaction engagement		Respect for cultural differences		Interaction confidence		Interaction enjoyment		Interaction attentiveness		Total in intercultural sensitivity	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sex	3.9	0.3	4.25	0.4	3.77	0.4	4.26	0.51	3.65	0.66	3.97	0.28
Female	3.86	0.3	4.17	0.42	3.76	0.45	4.16	0.39	3.63	0.46	3.92	0.27
Male	3.92	0.3	4.15	0.45	3.69	0.4	4.3	0.57	3.64	0.51	3.94	0.22
Locale	3.86	0.3	4.19	0.41	3.77	0.44	4.17	1.73	3.64	1.55	3.94	0.28
Rural	3.82	0.3	4.24	0.36	3.75	0.39	4.24	0.45	3.63	0.58	3.94	0.27
Urban	3.9	0.3	4.15	0.46	3.78	0.47	4.16	0.62	3.62	0.42	3.93	0.28
UG	3.87	0.3	4.19	0.42	3.76	0.44	4.19	0.55	3.64	0.5	3.94	0.27
PG												
Total												

Source: Authors (April 2024)

sensitivity were higher in male and undergraduate teachers, while rural and urban teachers had the same mean scores.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Sex, Locale and Educational Qualifications

Table 4 indicates the Intercultural Sensitivity of teachers based on their sex, locale and educational qualification. There were no significant differences in the total Intercultural Sensitivity scores among all the variables, that is, between male and female teachers, rural and urban teachers, and undergraduate and postgraduate teachers. However, male teachers had slightly higher mean scores in the overall Intercultural Sensitivity than female teachers, mean scores were higher for rural teachers than urban teachers, and undergraduate teachers' scores were higher than postgraduate scores. There were no significant differences found in any of the dimensions of Intercultural Sensitivity.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Community

The ANOVA analysis presented in Table 5 showed that teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity scores did not differ significantly based on community. Among all the dimensions, Interaction Attentiveness was found to have a significant difference however, the post hoc comparison test could not be performed due to a very low sample size of the group.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Age Group

Table 6 highlights the total Intercultural Sensitivity scores based on their age group where no significant differences were found across all five dimensions based on their age group.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Teaching Experience

From Table 7 it can be observed that there was a significant difference in the secondary teachers' intercultural sensitivity and teaching experience. The significant difference was found in overall intercultural sensitivity and two dimensions, that is, Respect for Cultural Differences and Interaction Enjoyment.

Table 8 reveals the post hoc comparison where a difference was found between the groups with less than 1 year and 11-15 years of teaching experience ($p < .05$).

Table 4: Differences in scores of Intercultural Sensitivity based on sex, locale and educational qualification

Dimension	df	Sex Male=24 Female=71		Locale Rural = 13 Urban = 82		Educational qualification UG = 40 PG = 55		Level of significance
		t	p	t	p	t	p	
Interaction Engagement	92	0.58	0.55	0.64	0.52	1.22	0.22	Not significant
Respect for Cultural Differences	92	0.85	0.39	-0.35	0.72	0.98	0.32	Not significant
Interaction Confidence	92	0.11	0.91	-0.64	0.51	0.38	0.7	Not significant
Interaction Enjoyment	92	0.72	0.47	0.8	0.42	0.69	0.48	Not significant
Interaction Attentiveness	92	0.76	0.45	0	0.99	0.03	0.97	Not significant
Total Intercultural Sensitivity	92	0.75	0.45	0.04	0.96	0.05	0.96	Not significant

Source: Authors (April 2024)

Table 5: Differences in scores of Intercultural Sensitivity based on community

Dimension	Sum of squares	Mean squares	df	MS	F	p	Level of significance
Interaction Engagement	Between groups	12.253	94	34.227	0.935	0.427	Not significant
	Within groups	397.473		44.636			
	Total	409.726					
Respect for Cultural Differences	Between groups	4.829	94	1.61	0.245	0.865	Not significant
	Within groups	597.803		6.569			
	Total	602.632					
Interaction Confidence	Between groups	4.254	94	1.418	0.285	0.836	Not significant
	Within groups	453.052		4.979			
	Total	457.305					
Interaction Enjoyment	Between groups	4.038	94	4.084	0.476	0.7	Not significant
	Within groups	257.12		4.368			
	Total	261.158					
Interaction Attentiveness	Between groups	20.439	94	1.346	3.13	.029*	Significant
	Within groups	198.046		2.825			
	Total	218.484					
Total Intercultural Sensitivity	Between groups	102.681	94	34.227	0.767	0.516	Not significant
	Within groups	4061.909		44.636			
	Total	4164.589					

Source: Authors (April 2024)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the intercultural sensitivity of educators and to investigate the influence of demographic factors, including sex, location, age group, educational background, and years of experience teaching. Overall, the findings revealed that most teachers' intercultural sensitivity ranged between average and above average, suggesting that teachers generally were aware of and mindful of the varied cultural backgrounds of their students. Additionally, the dimensions related to Interaction Enjoyment and Respect for Cultural Differences had the highest mean scores, suggesting that teachers generally enjoy intercultural interactions, appreciate and value cul-

tural diversity, which is crucial for fostering an inclusive learning environment. The results could be attributed to the fact that Shillong's cosmopolitan atmosphere draws students from all across the region as well as from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, thereby providing opportunities for teachers to interact with students from diverse cultures.

The findings of this study, which were consistent with earlier research (Bayles 2009; Spithourakis et al. 2009; Yilmaz and Göçen 2013; Yurtseven and Altun 2015; Ahmad and Khan 2016; Bosuwon 2016; Drandic 2016; Altan 2018; Kazazoğlu and Ece 2021; Bahar-Özvaris et al. 2022; Bal 2023; Maniatis and Panagiotidou 2025), suggest that gender has little bearing on a teacher's level of intercultural sensi-

Table 6: Differences in scores of Intercultural Sensitivity based on age group

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>Mean squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Level of significance</i>
<i>Interaction engagement</i>	Between groups	21.464	88	7.155	1.685	0.176	Not significant
	Within groups	361.008		4.247			
	Total	382.472					
<i>Respect for Cultural Differences</i>	Between groups	12.488	88	4.163	0.64	0.591	Not significant
	Within groups	552.501		6.5			
	Total	564.989					
<i>Interaction Confidence</i>	Between groups	38.59	88	12.863	2.694	0.051	Not significant
	Within groups	405.882		4.775			
	Total	444.472					
<i>Interaction Enjoyment</i>	Between groups	3.444	88	1.148	0.423	0.737	Not significant
	Within groups	230.669		2.714			
	Total	234.112					
<i>Interaction Attentiveness</i>	Between groups	9.353	88	3.118	1.328	0.271	Not significant
	Within groups	199.524		2.347			
	Total	208.876					
<i>Total Intercultural Sensitivity</i>	Between groups	322.903	88	107.634	2.518	0.064	Not significant
	Within groups	3633.591		42.748			
	Total	3956.494					

Source: Authors (April 2024)

Table 7: Differences in scores of Intercultural Sensitivity based on teaching experience

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>Mean squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Level of significance</i>
<i>Interaction Engagement</i>	Between groups	29.747	90	5.949	1.397	0.234	Not significant
	Within groups	361.923		4.258			
	Total	391.67					
<i>Respect for Cultural Differences</i>	Between groups	70.644	90	14.129	2.378	0.045*	Significant
	Within groups	504.96		5.941			
	Total	575.604					
<i>Interaction Confidence</i>	Between groups	45.217	90	9.043	1.887	0.105	Not significant
	Within groups	407.31		4.792			
	Total	452.527					
<i>Interaction Enjoyment</i>	Between groups	31.635	90	6.327	2.443	0.041*	Significant
	Within groups	220.123		2.59			
	Total	251.758					
<i>Interaction Attentiveness</i>	Between groups	13.471	90	2.694	1.298	0.273	Not significant
	Within groups	176.485		2.076			
	Total	189.956					
<i>Total Intercultural Sensitivity</i>	Between groups	692.456	90	138.491	3.611	0.005*	Significant
	Within groups	3260.226		38.356			
	Total	3952.681					

*p < .05

Source: Authors (April 2024)

Table 8: Post Hoc: Comparisons of Intercultural Sensitivity scores based on teaching experience

<i>(I) Teaching experience</i>	<i>(J) Teaching experience</i>	<i>Mean difference (I-J)</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>95% confidence interval</i>	
					<i>Upper bound</i>	<i>Lower bound</i>
>1 year	11-15 years	9.354	2.347	0.011*	1.36	17.35

Source: Authors (April 2024)

tivity. However, the results of this study indicate that male teachers have slightly higher mean scores than female teachers, which is consistent with findings from other studies (Mendoza et al. 2017; Walker 2019; Yilmaz and Wujabudula 2019) that found mean scores for female teachers were lower than those for male teachers. This could be explained as both men and women are equally exposed to different cultures. The current outcome contrasts previous research that found significant differences between males and females (Petrovic and Zlatkovic 2009; Nieto and Booth 2010; Leutwyler et al. 2014; Walker 2019; Agarwal and Sandilya 2020; Aydemir and Kalin 2021; Boudouaia et al. 2022; Rodríguez-Izquierdo 2022; Santosh 2022; Chen and Hu 2023; Abad-Merino et al. 2024; Pouli 2025).

With regards to locale, the result of the present study confirmed Drandic's (2016) findings by indicating that instructors' location has no bearing on their sensitivity to different cultures. However, when it comes to mean scores, rural instructors performed slightly better than urban teachers in the areas of interaction enjoyment and engagement. This conclusion contrasts with that of Cojocariu and Boghian (2020), who discovered that teachers' intercultural sensitivity dimensions are impacted by their work environment. One plausible explanation could be that teachers belonging to the rural area reside in areas where social groups coexist more closely, leading to closer interaction with the communities.

The findings of the present study revealed that there was no significant difference in the intercultural sensitivity of teachers according to their educational background, which is consistent with previous research (Bayles 2009; Ahmad and Khan 2016; Boudouaia et al. 2022; Pouli 2025). In areas such as Interaction Engagement, Respect for Cultural Differences, and Interaction Attentiveness, undergraduate teachers performed slightly higher than postgraduate teachers in terms of mean scores suggesting that formal education attainment does not impact intercultural competence.

Teachers belonging to different communities or ethnic backgrounds did not significantly impact their intercultural sensitivity, suggesting that teachers were culturally sensitive regardless of their social identity. Previous studies' findings (Yurtseven and Altun 2015; Ghamarnia et al. 2016; Segura-Robles and Parra-González 2019; Walker 2019; Sekerci and Dogan 2020) are similar to this. This

result could be explained by the socio-cultural fabric of the region where teachers are more understanding of other cultures because of the coexistence of several ethnic groups in the area.

Further, the current study also found that age is not a significant factor influencing the intercultural sensitivity of teachers. The findings are consistent with earlier studies (Drandic 2016; Ghamarnia et al. 2016; Yilmaz and Wujabudula 2019; Kazzoğlu and Ece 2021; Bal 2023; Maniatis and Panagiotidou 2025), who also reported the same. This contradicts previous findings (Spinthourakis et al. 2009; Segura-Robles and Parra-González 2019; Pouli 2025) indicating that age-group being a biological factor has no bearing on teachers' intercultural sensitivity. Therefore, no matter what age group they are in, teachers may be equally exposed to and willing to acknowledge and embrace cultural differences as they are equally sensitive to the cultures of their students.

Experienced teachers were better at adjusting to cross-cultural settings (Bayles 2009; Ahmad and Khan 2016; Zhao 2018). Due to their longer years of exposure to and experience with students from varied cultural backgrounds, teachers with more experience in the classroom exhibited stronger intercultural sensitivity than those who were new to the profession. The novice teachers and teachers with fewer years of experience may be less equipped in their adaptation strategies owing to their lack of exposure to diverse classrooms. The outcomes align with the research conducted by Boudouaia et al. (2022), which claimed that educators consistently strive to engage in cross-cultural contact during the course of their employment. This contradicts the findings by Pouli (2025) and Maniatis and Panagiotidou (2025) where teachers with fewer years of experience had higher intercultural sensitivity.

Overall, the findings of the study suggest that the intercultural sensitivity of teachers is not determined by their demographic variables, such as sex, age group, locale, community, and educational background, as much as it is through their experiential exposure. The study also indicates that intercultural sensitivity is not an inherent trait; rather, it could be nurtured over time through experience and more intercultural interaction.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study show that teachers' intercultural sensitivity was mostly aver-

age, indicating that teachers were aware and mindful of cultural diversity. Also, they recognised and respected the cultural differences as reported by the teachers. The years of teaching experience had significantly influenced teachers' intercultural sensitivity, suggesting that extended exposure and experience with culturally diverse students had impacted their intercultural sensitivity. However, no significant differences were found based on sex, location, age group, educational qualification, and community, suggesting that these demographic features had minimal influence on their intercultural sensitivity. Overall, findings from the study underscore the significance of experiential learning in fostering intercultural sensitivity among teachers and emphasise the need for professional development opportunities that promote sustained engagement with diverse cultural contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance intercultural sensitivity among teachers, teacher education programs must prioritise fostering intercultural education. Teacher training courses should be contextualised and experience-based, equipping trainees with the skills and strategies needed to navigate the opportunities and challenges of multicultural classroom settings. Induction and orientation programs for novice or less experienced teachers should specifically address the challenges of multicultural classrooms to raise their awareness. Professional development programs could further embed experiential learning opportunities, such as intercultural exchange programs or workshops. For future research, increasing the sample size and employing a mixed methods design is recommended. Additionally, future studies could explore other variables and investigate relationships through cross-cultural comparisons.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Sanjita Devi¹: The first author has contributed to the conceptualisation, data collection, organisation and analysis, preparation of original and subsequent drafts of the paper.

Dr Vandana²: The corresponding author has contributed to the conceptualisation, data analysis, reading, reviewing, modifying and finalization of the final draft of the paper.

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