



Research on Current Situation and Optimization Mode of Communication Ability Education for Foreign Students in a Multicultural Educational Environment of the University

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ABSTRACT

University students learning in a multicultural educational environment fosters a sense of inclusivity, empathy, and open-mindedness, preparing them to navigate the complex and diverse world beyond the classroom. The present study investigates the impact of international students' language proficiency in a multicultural educational setting on their communication abilities, academic performance, and satisfaction, with the moderating influence of institutional policies for multicultural education and instructor expertise. Data for this study were collected from a sample of 450 international students at a prominent public institution in China, employing a quantitative research design. Participants completed a survey questionnaire assessing their language proficiency, communicative skills, academic achievement, satisfaction with the educational experience, institutional policies regarding multicultural education, and instructor competency. The findings suggest that a student's level of language proficiency significantly influences their ability to communicate effectively, academic success, and overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Moreover, the study reveals that institutional policies promoting intercultural education and instructors' expertise can mitigate the impact of language proficiency on these outcomes. This study holds significant implications for institutions and policymakers aiming to enhance educational opportunities for international students in multiethnic university settings. Specifically, the results advise institutions to develop and implement effective policies and programs that support linguistic and cultural diversity within their student body. Additionally, universities should ensure that their faculty members possess the knowledge and expertise required for successful teaching in a multicultural environment.

Keywords: Foreign Students, Communication Ability, Optimization Mode, Language Proficiency, Academic Performance.

INTRODUCTION

A multicultural educational environment provides a vibrant and enriching learning experience in which diverse perspectives are celebrated, cultural barriers are dismantled, and students are empowered to become global citizens (Aldhahi, Alqahtani, Baattaiah, & Al-Mohammed, 2022; B. J. Lee, 2022; López-Mulnix, 2019). Language proficiency plays a crucial role in communication and significantly impacts international students' academic performance and satisfaction in such a multicultural educational setting. Universities and educational institutions are becoming increasingly diverse in today's globalized society. Consequently, it is imperative to ensure that all students, particularly international ones, receive exceptional instruction in communication skills to aid their academic success and integration into the community (B. J. Lee, 2022; López-Mulnix, 2019).

The increasing multiculturalism on university campuses has opened up numerous opportunities for

international students to explore different cultures and engage with people from diverse backgrounds. However, this diversity also presents significant challenges for international students, including language barriers, cultural differences, and feelings of social isolation (López-Mulnix, 2019). It is crucial to provide education in practical communication skills to help international students excel academically and socially in this heterogeneous environment. Communication is a significant challenge for international students, substantially impacting their academic performance and overall satisfaction with the educational experience (Aldhahi et al., 2022).

The number of international students enrolling in colleges worldwide has increased due to the globalization of higher education. While studying abroad can be a rewarding experience, it can also be challenging, particularly for students who are not native speakers of the language of instruction. Research indicates that language proficiency significantly affects the academic success and overall satisfaction of international students in higher education (Aldhahi et al., 2022; Zhang, 2022). This study investigates how a student's level of language proficiency impacts their communication abilities, academic achievements, and overall university experience. Language proficiency refers to an individual's ability to effectively and accurately use a language in various contexts and for different purposes (Taherkhani, Aliasin, Khosravi, & Izadpanah, 2022). International students with varying levels of language proficiency encounter challenges in academic and social interactions within a multicultural educational environment where English serves as the medium of instruction (Zhang, 2022).

Studies have shown that language proficiency levels significantly influence the communication abilities of international students. According to research conducted by Sirokmány, Császár, Fogarasi, and Gátos (2023), students with higher language competence tend to excel in academic and social communication. Conversely, those with lower levels of language proficiency often struggle to express themselves clearly and comprehend others effectively. This language barrier can lead to dissatisfaction, alienation, and anxiety, adversely affecting their academic performance and overall satisfaction with their educational experience, as noted by Sarwar et al. (2020).

Facilitating the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and information among educators, students, and other stakeholders is a fundamental aspect of successful education, with effective communication as its core foundation (Dao, M. X. N. C. Nguyen, & N. B. C. Nguyen, 2021). Diverse communication modalities are employed within educational environments to accommodate distinct learning modalities and preferences. Verbal communication, encompassing various forms such as face-to-face interactions, classroom discussions, and lectures, facilitates direct engagement between teachers and students, enabling the former to promptly address inquiries and elucidate complex ideas (McAndrews, 2019). This interactive methodology facilitates learners' engagement in active participation and cultivates a conducive atmosphere for learning. Written communication also plays a pivotal role in education (Adams, Koster, & den Brok, 2022).

Educators can provide students with well-structured information and essential reading materials using various resources, including textbooks, handouts, assignments, essays, and reports. Written communication is a valuable tool through which students can demonstrate their grasp of the subject matter by completing written assessments and reports. This method not only aids in fostering students' reading comprehension but also nurtures their writing skills, which are pivotal for achieving academic excellence (Heywood, 2022).

Visual communication has proven highly effective in facilitating comprehension and improving information retention (Leadbetter, Brown, & Spencer, 2023). Educators commonly employ visual aids, such as charts, graphs, diagrams, and multimedia presentations, as pedagogical tools to elucidate complex concepts and data. Visuals can cater to diverse learning styles and enhance the accessibility and engagement of abstract ideas (Melzi, Schick, & Wuest, 2023).

The onset of the digital era has ushered in a significant transformation in the field of education, mainly due to the revolutionary impact of technology on communication (Belda-Medina, 2022). Digital communication tools, such as email, online forums, video conferencing platforms, and Learning Management Systems (LMS), have streamlined the implementation of remote learning and collaboration. Digital platforms have experienced a surge in popularity as a means of delivering online courses, webinars, and virtual classrooms, effectively overcoming geographical constraints and fostering continuous learning (Trindade, Bittencourt, & da Fonseca, 2022).

Non-verbal communication, often underestimated, exerts significant influence within the field of education (Q. Xu & Zhong, 2022). Nonverbal communication, encompassing body language, gestures, and facial expressions, serves as a vital means of conveying crucial information about one's emotions, feelings, and level of engagement. Educators can interpret students' non-verbal cues to assess their comprehension and emotional state, tailoring their instructional methods accordingly (Fondo & Gómez-Rey, 2021).

Language proficiency plays a pivotal role in the academic journey of international students, mainly when English serves as the primary medium of instruction. Mastery of the English language grants individuals access to global educational opportunities and enhances their capacity for effective intercultural communication (C. M.

Chen & I. C. Chen, 2021). Students proficient in English can confidently interact with professors, peers, and individuals residing in English-speaking nations. They can actively participate in class discussions, collaborate effectively on group projects, and fully immerse themselves in the academic and social aspects of the Aning experience (Lai, 2022).

There is a strong positive correlation between language proficiency, particularly in English. A strong command of the language is better equipped to comprehend course materials, engage with lectures, and understand scholarly texts. The ability to express ideas with clarity is associated with producing high-quality assignments and improved examination performance (Shehzadi, Raza, & Zaman, 2021).

Several factors influence students' language proficiency. Language acquisition depends on essential factors such as immersion and consistent practice, facilitating linguistic growth (Jiang, Zhang, & May, 2019). Additionally, an individual's motivation and attitude significantly impact the proficiency attained in language learning. A positive and supportive learning environment and practical instructional methods have dramatically enhanced language learning outcomes. Furthermore, language proficiency is influenced by individual aptitude and prior language learning experiences (Lim, 2021).

Despite an extensive body of research on language proficiency among international students, there exists a notable gap in the literature concerning the relationship between language proficiency levels and the communication abilities, academic performance, and overall satisfaction of international students within the multicultural educational environment of universities (Peng & Chuang, 2020). Scant attention has been paid to understanding how varying degrees of language competency impact overseas students' effectiveness in communication, academic achievements, and overall contentment with their educational experiences. Moreover, there is a pressing need for additional research to delve into how language proficiency interacts with other variables, such as cultural differences and educational backgrounds, to shape the experiences of international students in higher education (Al-Husban, 2020). Consequently, the primary objective of this research is to investigate the influence of language competence levels on international students' communication abilities, academic accomplishments, and satisfaction with their educational experiences.

Existing literature acknowledges the significance of institutional policies promoting multicultural education. Yet, there needs to be more research investigating how these policies can act as moderating factors in the association between international students' language proficiency levels and their communication abilities, academic performance, and satisfaction. Consequently, the primary aim of this study is to explore the role of institutional policies related to multicultural education in moderating the impact of language proficiency on international students' communication abilities, academic achievements, and overall satisfaction.

Moreover, prior research has underscored the significance of instructor expertise in enhancing the educational experience of international students within a multicultural environment. However, more knowledge remains regarding how this expertise can mediate the association between language proficiency levels and international students' communication skills, academic performance, and overall satisfaction (H. Lee, Shimotakahara, Fukada, Shinbashi, & Ogata, 2019). Consequently, this study assesses how teacher expertise influences the relationship between language proficiency levels and international students' communication abilities, academic achievements, and satisfaction.

Following the study's objectives, the following aims must be achieved:

1. To investigate the correlation between language proficiency levels and the communication abilities of international students within a multicultural educational environment.
2. To examine the connection between language proficiency levels and the academic performance of international students in a multicultural educational setting.
3. To explore the relationship between language proficiency levels and international students' satisfaction with their educational experience in a multicultural environment.
4. To assess the moderating influence of institutional policies related to multicultural education on the connections between language proficiency levels and the communication abilities, academic performance, and satisfaction of international students.
5. To evaluate the moderating impact of instructor expertise on the associations between language proficiency levels and the communication abilities, academic performance, and satisfaction of international students with their educational experience.

The study contributes significantly to the current body of literature on intercultural education and the experiences of international students in colleges. Firstly, it provides a comprehensive analysis of how the proficiency level in language impacts international students' communication abilities, academic performance, and

overall satisfaction with their educational experience within a multicultural university environment.

Secondly, the research delves into the moderating effects of institutional policies on multicultural education and instructor expertise. This sheds valuable light on the crucial role these factors play in facilitating the success and well-being of international students.

Thirdly, the findings from this study hold practical implications for institutions seeking to develop effective policies and programs to support the academic and personal growth of their international student populations. This, in turn, enhances the overall university experience for these students.

Lastly, the study aligns with the broader objective of promoting multiculturalism and diversity within higher education institutions, which, in turn, positively impacts society as a whole.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The level of linguistic competence, which measures an individual's ability to use a language fluently and accurately, plays a crucial role in impacting the communication skills of international students, especially in academic and social contexts. According to Humphries et al. (2019), an individual's language proficiency level significantly influences language utilization's cognitive processes, including comprehension, expression, and interpretation. Consequently, students with lower language proficiency levels may need help communicating effectively, resulting in misunderstandings and feelings of frustration (Gonzalez-Barrero, Salama-Siroishka, Dubé, Brouillard, & Byers-Heinlein, 2021). In academic settings, international students with limited language proficiency may need help to grasp lectures, comprehend written materials, and effectively articulate their thoughts in written and spoken assignments. Fathi, Derakhshan, & Torabi (2020) examined the language proficiency levels of Chinese students studying abroad and their academic writing skills.

According to the data, students with lower levels of language competence in their writing assignments received lower grades than those with higher language proficiency. Similarly, Melzi et al. (2023) conducted a study in which overseas students with low-level language competency reported feeling uncomfortable and dissatisfied during group discussions and presentations, ultimately negatively impacting their engagement and performance. Providing more language support and training to overseas students can help them become more effective communicators in academic contexts. Additionally, when overseas students with poor language proficiency find themselves in social situations, they may need help engaging in informal conversations, making friends, and participating in extracurricular activities (Aukerman & Chambers, 2021). According to a study conducted by Cao and AlKubaisy (2022), international students with low language competency reported feeling hesitant to participate in social activities due to linguistic barriers.

Language proficiency levels significantly impact the academic achievements of overseas students. As Zhang (2022) noted, students with lower language skills often need help comprehending lectures, grasping reading materials, and effectively communicating their thoughts in written and oral assignments. Consequently, these individuals may achieve lower grades than their peers with more vital language abilities. Similarly, Zhou and Rose (2021) found that Chinese international students with limited language proficiency tended to perform worse academically than those with a higher level of language competence. It is essential to recognize that language proficiency also plays a crucial role in students' cognitive learning processes, affecting information processing, memory retention, and attention.

Several factors influence the correlation between language proficiency and academic success. Students studying in a language other than their native tongue may face challenges with academic jargon, intricate sentence structures, and unfamiliar cultural references (Yang, Lawrence, & Grøver, 2023). Additionally, a student's prior educational background can impact their ability to transition to a new language and academic environment (Alhosani, 2022). Furthermore, the institution's quality of support and resources can significantly affect the academic performance of international students with limited language proficiency. According to Canet-Juric et al. (2021), language support, academic counseling, and cultural integration programs can potentially enhance these students' academic achievements.

The language proficiency level significantly impacts international students' satisfaction with their educational experience. According to Belda-Medina (2022), students facing language barriers often encounter difficulties in social interactions, comprehending lectures, and expressing themselves in written and oral tasks. Consequently, they may grapple with isolation, frustration, and dissatisfaction with their school experience. Barrios, López-Gutiérrez, and Lopez-Agudo (2022) discovered that international students with lower language proficiency levels reported lower satisfaction with their educational experience than their peers with higher language competence. The authors argued that language skill levels directly affect students' ability to engage in academic and social

activities, reducing satisfaction with their educational journey (Marschark, Duchesne, & Pisoni, 2019).

Numerous factors contribute to the relationship between language competence and satisfaction with the educational experience. One crucial element is the student's perception of their language competency. Students who perceive their language skills as inadequate may experience anxiety and lack confidence in their communication abilities, ultimately resulting in dissatisfaction with their educational experience (Nikolopoulou, Akriotou, & Gialamas, 2019). Furthermore, the institution's quality of support and resources is pivotal in enhancing international students' happiness with their educational journey. According to Peltokorpi, Sekiguchi, and Yamao (2021), offering language assistance, facilitating cultural integration activities, and providing academic guidance can significantly improve international students' satisfaction with their educational experience.

According to Ødegaard (2020), institutional practices promoting multicultural education play a pivotal role in fostering the development of communication skills among international students. Such measures diminish language barriers and foster cross-cultural understanding, enhancing international students' communication proficiency. Moreover, institutional regulations affect how language competence impacts students' communication abilities. Sadiq (2022) found that institutional policies concerning language support services moderated the relationship between language competence levels and communication abilities among international students. Numerous factors come into play when examining the interplay of institutional policies on multicultural education, language competence levels, and the communication abilities of international students (Johnson, 2022).

Among these factors, the level and nature of support the institution offers stand out as one of the most critical. For instance, language support, cultural integration programs, and academic guidance significantly enhance international students' communication skills and ameliorate the adverse effects of limited language proficiency (Gonzalez-Barrero et al., 2021). Furthermore, the efficacy of multicultural education policy is influenced by institutional culture and beliefs. Universities that actively promote diversity and inclusivity tend to witness more successful multicultural education practices, enhancing international students' communication skills (Melzi et al., 2023).

Many factors affect the interplay between institutional policies concerning multicultural education, language proficiency, and academic success. Among these factors, the institution's level and nature of support emerge as one of the most crucial aspects (Bringle & Clayton, 2023). Services such as language support, cultural integration programs, and academic counseling, for instance, can potentially enhance academic performance among international students, simultaneously ameliorating the adverse effects of limited language proficiency (Froese, Shen, Sekiguchi, & Davies, 2020). Furthermore, the institutional culture and beliefs shape multicultural education policies' efficacy. Colleges that actively promote diversity and inclusivity tend to employ more effective intercultural educational practices, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes for international students (Morales-Alexander, 2021).

According to Rasouli and Moradkhani (2021), institutional policies promoting multicultural education can enhance international students' satisfaction with their educational experience. These policies contribute to fostering cross-cultural understanding, eradicating discrimination, and providing essential language support services, ultimately mitigating the adverse effects of limited language proficiency on educational satisfaction. Moreover, institutional practices are pivotal in determining how language competency influences one's happiness with their educational journey (Steinberg & Kleinert, 2022). In a recent study, Duan, Jia, and Chen (2022) discovered that institutional regulations about language support services moderated the association between language competence levels and the overall contentment of international students with their educational experience. The institutional culture and values also significantly impact the effectiveness of multicultural education strategies. Colleges that actively promote diversity and inclusivity tend to exhibit more successful intercultural educational practices, thereby enhancing the happiness of international students in their educational journey.

Instructors with experience teaching overseas students with limited language proficiency can employ a variety of approaches to enhance communication skills. These approaches include using clear and concise language, providing supplementary feedback, and utilizing visual aids (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019). Furthermore, instructors proficient in teaching students with poor language ability can offer additional support, such as language assistance services, cultural integration programs, and academic counseling. These resources can significantly enhance the communication abilities of international students (Li, Bañuelos, Liu, & Xu, 2022).

Numerous factors influence the relationship between instructor expertise, language proficiency levels, and the communication abilities of international students. One of the most critical variables is the extent of training and support instructors provide in educating overseas students with limited language skills. Instructors who receive training and support in teaching students with poor language ability tend to employ more effective

teaching strategies, ultimately leading to improved communication abilities (Cohen & Calderón-Aponte, 2021). Additionally, the effectiveness of these teaching strategies is closely tied to instructors' cultural sensitivity. Culturally sensitive instructors who are attuned to the challenges faced by overseas students are more likely to develop successful teaching strategies that enhance communication abilities (Kim, Merrill Jr, Xu, & Kelly, 2022).

According to recent studies, instructors' knowledge is pivotal in elevating students' academic success (Wang et al., 2022). Furthermore, Ma, Chen, Zheng, and Wu (2022) have discerned that instructors with extensive experience teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) excel in providing targeted feedback that significantly enhances students' writing performance. Similarly, Kwihangana (2020) has unearthed that instructors with a wealth of experience teaching EFL are more adept at creating a positive classroom atmosphere conducive to language acquisition. In contrast, Damm, Mattana, Nielsen, and Rouland (2021) have uncovered that students taught by less experienced instructors experience a more pronounced impact on their academic performance regarding language competency.

English proficiency level is a crucial factor influencing one's school experience satisfaction. Numerous studies have consistently revealed a significant correlation between language proficiency and overall satisfaction with the educational journey. For instance, Peltokorpi et al. (2021) observed that students with a higher degree of language proficiency tended to express greater satisfaction with their educational experiences. Similarly, Câmara-Costa, Pulgar, Cusin, Labrell, and Dellatolas (2021) indicated that higher levels of language skills were positively associated with increased satisfaction in the context of online learning.

However, the impact of instructor expertise in moderating the relationship between language competency and satisfaction with the educational experience has received relatively little attention in previous research. Nevertheless, several studies have uncovered evidence suggesting that instructor expertise can act as a mitigating factor in this relationship. For example, Lin and Wang (2021) discovered that instructor expertise significantly attenuated the association between language proficiency levels and overall learning satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Language proficiency level is a critical factor that significantly influences the communication abilities, academic performance, and overall satisfaction of international students during their educational experiences. A student's proficiency level determines their capacity to engage in classroom interactions effectively, comprehend course materials, and actively participate in group discussions. Nevertheless, institutional policies related to multicultural education and the competence of instructors can significantly moderate the impact of language proficiency levels on international students' academic achievements and overall satisfaction with the educational experience.

As a result of the literature review and discussion above, we have developed the following hypothesis and conceptual framework, as illustrated in [Figure 1](#).

H1: Language proficiency levels significantly and positively influence the communication abilities of international students.

H2: Language proficiency levels significantly and positively impact academic performance among international students.

H3: Language proficiency levels significantly and positively affect satisfaction with the educational experience of international students.

H4: Institutional policies related to multicultural education moderate the relationship between language proficiency levels and the communication abilities of international students.

H5: Institutional policies related to multicultural education moderate the relationship between language proficiency levels and the academic performance of international students.

H6: Institutional policies related to multicultural education moderate the relationship between language proficiency levels and international students' educational experience satisfaction.

H7: The expertise of instructors moderates the relationship between language proficiency levels and the communication abilities of international students.

H8: The expertise of instructors moderates the relationship between language proficiency levels and academic performance among international students.

H9: The expertise of instructors moderates the relationship between language proficiency levels and satisfaction with the educational experience among international students.

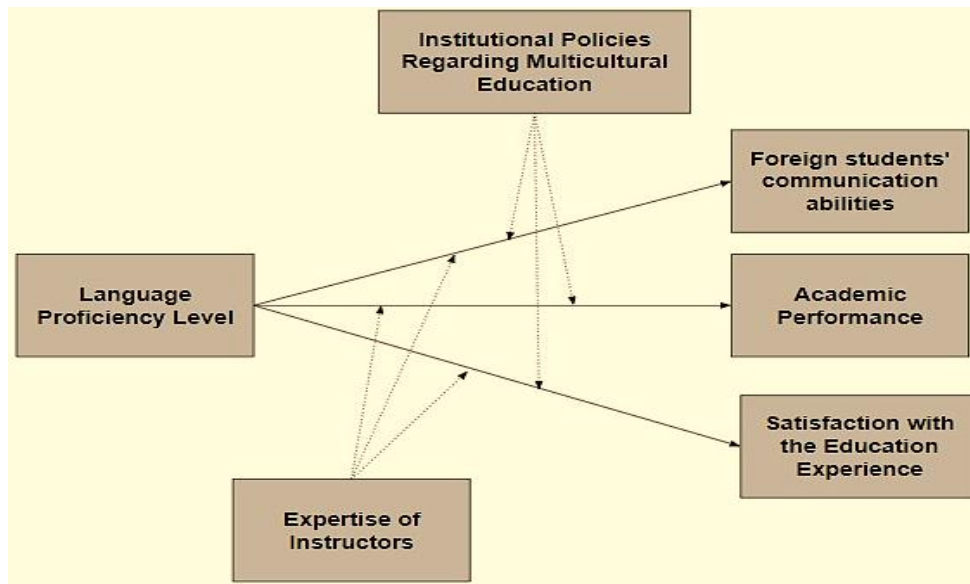


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey research design was selected for this investigation. This design enables data collection from a broad and diverse sample of international students. Another advantage of employing cross-sectional surveys is that they are cost-effective, time-efficient, and yield data on various variables. The convenience sampling method was employed in this study. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which study participants are chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate. The sample size, determined through power analysis, consisted of 450 international students from various disciplines, all of whom were part of the university's heterogeneous educational environment. The study excluded non-foreign students. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire featuring closed-ended questions to elicit participant responses. Recruitment efforts utilized emails and notices on the university website to attract volunteers. The study's inclusion criteria were international students who had completed at least one semester of university coursework. Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS. The relationships between variables were explored using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The investigation unfolded in two stages. Initially, the measurement model was assessed to establish the reliability and validity of the scales. Subsequently, the structural model was scrutinized to test hypotheses and ascertain the moderating impact of institutional policies on multicultural education and instructor competency.

Measures

Language Proficiency Levels

The participants' self-reported language competence was assessed using a 5-item scale (LPL1-LPL5). A Likert scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) was employed to evaluate the participants' responses. This scale has previously been utilized in research studies and established as a reliable measure of language competency (Liu & Supinda, 2022).

Communication Abilities

Participants' self-reported communication abilities were assessed using five items (FSCA1-FSCA5). A Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well) was employed to gauge participants' responses. This scale has been utilized in previous studies and has demonstrated its reliability as a measure of communication ability (Suswaram, Brady, & Gillispie, 2023).

Academic Performance

The participants' academic performance was evaluated using five items (AP1-AP5). A Likert scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) was used to gauge participants' responses. This scale has been employed in previous studies and has proven to be a reliable measure of academic performance (Marschark et al., 2019).

Satisfaction with the Educational Experience

Participants' satisfaction with their educational experience was assessed using a 5-item scale (SEE1-SEE5). A

Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very unhappy) to 5 (extremely satisfied), was employed to gauge participants' responses. This scale has been previously utilized in studies and established as a reliable indicator of satisfaction with the educational experience (Belda-Medina, 2022).

Institutional Policies on Multicultural Education

Institutional policies regarding multicultural education were measured using a 5-item scale (IPRME1-IPRME5). A Likert scale assessed participants' responses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale has been utilized in prior research (Al-Kahtani, 2022) and has been determined to be a dependable assessment of institutional policies related to intercultural education.

Instructor Expertise

The expertise of instructors was evaluated using a 5-item scale (IE1-IE5). A Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well), was used to gauge participants' responses. This scale has previously been utilized in research (Parr, Gladstone, Rosenzweig, & Wang, 2021) and has been established as a reliable measure of instructor expertise.

RESULTS

Sample Profile

Table 1 reveals that the sample consisted of 53.3% female and 46.7% male students. The age distribution indicates that most participants fell within the 18-23 age range (56.7%), while the remaining 23.3% were 27 or older. Two-thirds of the participants were undergraduate students, while one-third pursued graduate studies. Concerning English proficiency, 50% of the participants demonstrated an intermediate level, 30% were classified as advanced, and 20% were beginners. Regarding institutional policies, half of the participants (50%) reported that their institution supported multicultural education, while 20% found their institution unsupportive. The remaining 30% indicated that their institution maintained a neutral stance.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	210
	Female	240
Age	18-20	120
	21-23	135
	24-26	90
	27 and above	105
	Undergraduate	300
Educational Level	Graduate	150
	Beginner	90
English Proficiency Level	Intermediate	225
	Advanced	135
	Supportive	225
Institutional Policies	Neutral	135
	Unsupportive	90

Measurement Model Assessment

Hair Jr, Matthews, Matthews, and Sarstedt (2017) assert that a measurement model scrutinizes the validity, encompassing discriminant and convergent aspects and reliability, including the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha. This analysis used composite reliability to assess item correlations, with outer loadings applied to individual items. The determination of the bonding and strength of each relationship was contingent upon establishing the validity and reliability of the specified criteria (Yunpeng & Zaman, 2023). Consequently, the measurement model effectively quantified the intended elements (Aktan, Anjam, Zaman, Khwaja, & Akram, 2023).

Construct Reliability and Validity

Zaman, Nadeem, and Nawaz (2020) have posited that a factor loading of 0.70 is the preferred threshold for explanatory research, while a loading of 0.40 or higher is deemed appropriate for exploratory research. Furthermore, the composite reliability within the construct exceeded 0.70, underscoring the construct's robust

internal consistency (Zaman, Aktan, Baber, and Nawaz, 2021). These reliability findings are detailed in [Table 2](#).

Hair Jr, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019) elucidated that convergent validity assesses how well the items correlate with alternative measures for a specific construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) propose two critical perspectives for establishing convergent validity: (a) Cronbach's alpha and (b) the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Notably, Cronbach's alpha values for institutional policies regarding multicultural education and language proficiency exceeded 0.90, signifying strong reliability. These reliability findings are also provided in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Academic Performance	AP1	0.574	0.777	0.850	0.540
	AP2	0.550			
	AP3	0.793			
	AP4	0.850			
	AP5	0.846			
Expertise of Instructors	EI1	0.756	0.771	0.846	0.526
	EI2	0.647			
	EI3	0.825			
	EI4	0.636			
	EI5	0.745			
Foreign Students' Communication Abilities	FSCA1	0.842	0.887	0.917	0.689
	FSCA2	0.866			
	FSCA3	0.778			
	FSCA4	0.836			
	FSCA5	0.826			
Institutional Policies Regarding Multicultural Education	IPRME1	0.889	0.927	0.945	0.773
	IPRME2	0.863			
	IPRME3	0.891			
	IPRME4	0.884			
	IPRME5	0.869			
Language Proficiency Level	LPL1	0.856	0.909	0.932	0.733
	LPL2	0.805			
	LPL3	0.887			
	LPL4	0.866			
	LPL5	0.863			
Satisfaction with Education Experience	SEE1	0.804	0.803	0.864	0.560
	SEE2	0.727			
	SEE3	0.728			
	SEE4	0.770			
	SEE5	0.708			

Discriminant Validity

Recent trends in research have highlighted discriminant validity as a standard and essential component of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Zaman, Aktan, Agrusa, & Khwaja 2023). [Table 3](#) presents discriminant validity using the heterotrait-heteromethod ratio (HTMT) criteria, one of the three PLS discriminant validity measures. HTMT involves investigating the association among indicators measuring different phenomena (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Additionally, HTMT, when employed with bootstrapping, provides a threshold value less than or equal to one, confirming discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015; Zaman, Nawaz, Javed, & Rasul, 2020).

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	AP	EI	FSCA	IPRME	LPL	SEE
AP						
EI	0.577					

	AP	EI	FSCA	IPRME	LPL	SEE
FSCA	0.446	0.154				
IPRME	0.713	0.451	0.768			
LPL	0.164	0.133	0.242	0.077		
SEE	0.784	0.896	0.454	0.834	0.172	

Coefficient of Determination and Q2

The coefficient of determination, the R2 value, is the primary assessment metric for evaluating the structural model. Table 4 illustrates institutional policies about multicultural education, the expertise of instructors, and language proficiency levels collectively account for 64.5 per cent of the variance in international students' communication abilities, 47 per cent of the variance in academic performance, and a substantial 78 per cent of the variance in satisfaction with the educational experience. Moreover, we employed the PLS-SEM blindfolding technique to validate the model's predictive significance. In this investigation, the derived Stone-value Geisser's (Q2=0.722) meets the established criteria (i.e., Q2 > 0) for confirming the predictive relevance of our study model (Chin, 1998), as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination and Q2

Constructs	R2	Q2
Academic Performance	0.470	0.451
Foreign Students' Communication Abilities	0.645	0.625
Satisfaction with Education Experience	0.780	0.767

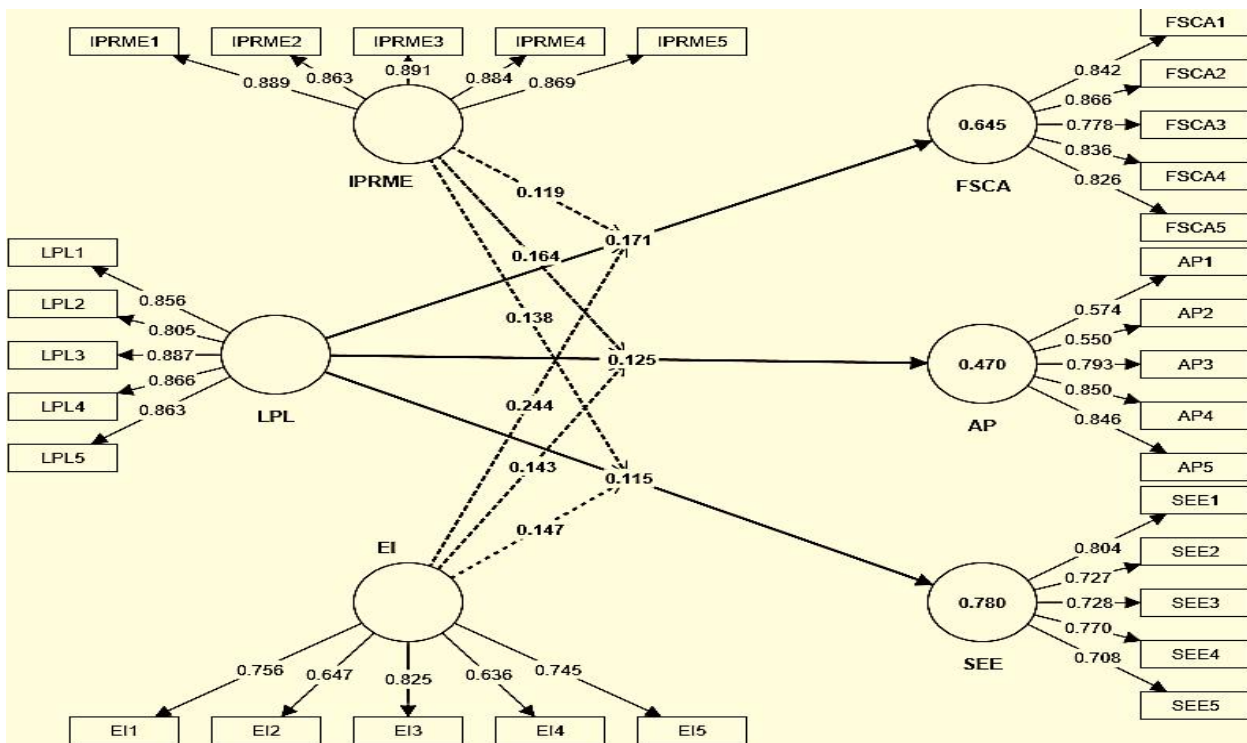


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Structural Equation Model

The initial PLS assessment of the measurement model (Figure 2) evaluated the strength of correlations among the research constructs (Zaman et al., 2020). Furthermore, in the current study, PLS analysis was employed to initially scrutinize the beta coefficients for the direct pathways (Zaman et al., 2020), followed by exploring the moderating hypothesis (Henseler, 2017). This investigation involved the utilization of 5000 subsamples with bootstrapping based on t-statistics and R2 (Hair Jr et al., 2019).

The t-value between language proficiency level and international students' communication abilities was 4.736, while the path coefficients between language proficiency level and academic performance were 3.293. Additionally, the path coefficient between language proficiency level and satisfaction with the education experience was 4.030

(Figure 2). As indicated in Table 5, all the direct pathways were deemed statistically significant, as their values exceeded 1.96. Consequently, the study hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) were upheld.

Table 5. Direct Path Analysis

Hypotheses	Relation	Path coefficient	t Value	P value
H1	LPL -> FSCA	0.171	4.736	0.0001
H2	LPL -> AP	0.125	3.293	0.0001
H3	LPL -> SEE	0.115	4.030	0.0001

Moderation Assessment

The moderating assessment of institutional policies related to multicultural education and the expertise of instructors in influencing the relational impact of language proficiency levels on international students' communication abilities, academic performance, and satisfaction with their educational experience was conducted using the PLS-SEM bootstrapping approach. According to the study's findings, institutional policies regarding multicultural education have a significant positive moderating influence on the relationships between language proficiency levels and international students' communication abilities (t=2.342, p=0.010), academic performance (t=3.814, p=0.0001), and satisfaction with the education experience (t=3.427, p=0.0001), respectively. Similarly, the findings indicate that instructors' expertise also exerts a substantial positive moderating influence on the relationships between language proficiency levels and international students' communication abilities (t=6.344, p=0.0001), academic performance (t=2.998, p=0.001), and satisfaction with the education experience (t=4.258, p=0.0001), respectively. The PLS moderation evaluations are in Table 6, and Figure 3 provides a graphical representation of the data. Consequently, hypotheses H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, and H9 were all accepted.

Table 6. Moderation Analysis

Hypotheses	Relation	Path coefficient	t Value	P value
H4	IPRME x LPL -> FSCA	0.119	2.342	0.010
H5	IPRME x LPL -> AP	0.164	3.814	0.0001
H6	IPRME x LPL -> SEE	0.138	3.427	0.0001
H7	EI x LPL -> FSCA	0.244	6.344	0.0001
H8	EI x LPL -> AP	0.143	2.998	0.001
H9	EI x LPL -> SEE	0.147	4.258	0.0001

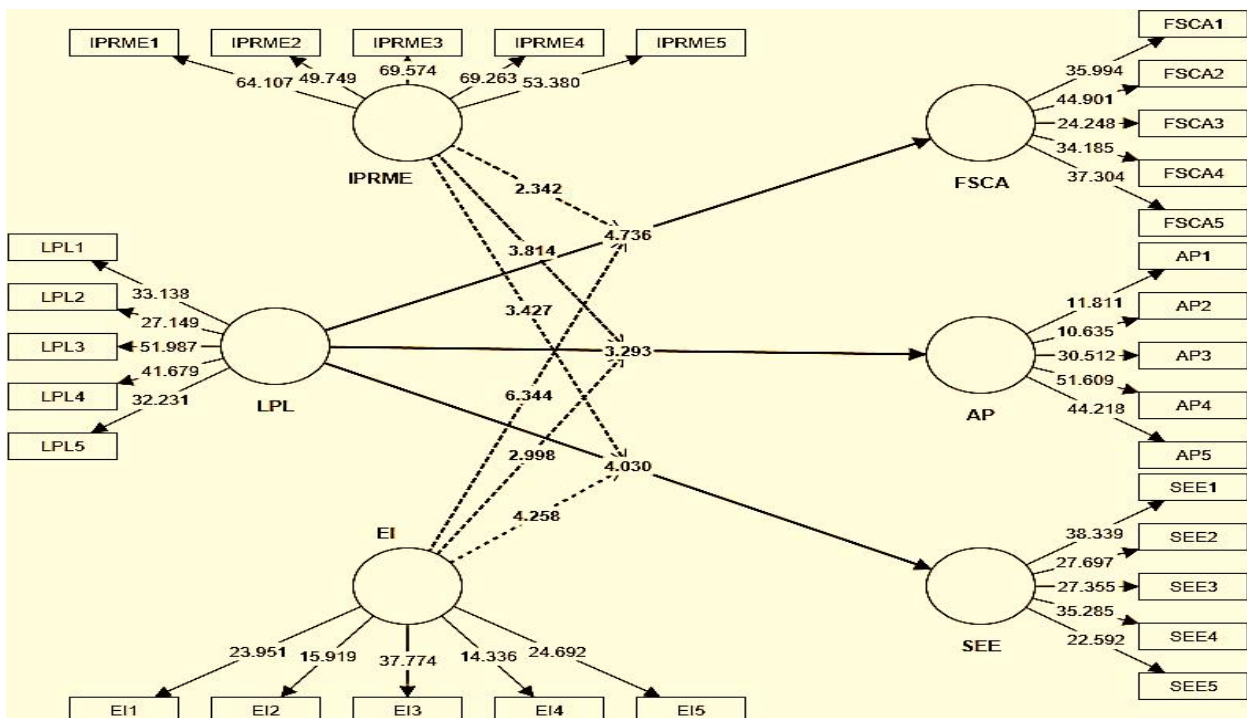


Figure 3. Structural Model

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the relationship between language proficiency and communication abilities among international students. The study's results indicate that all of its hypotheses were confirmed. Our findings suggest that the level of language proficiency has a significant and positive impact on the communication abilities of international students. These results are consistent with prior research identifying a robust connection between linguistic proficiency and communication skills (Gonzalez-Barrero et al., 2021). A higher level of language proficiency enables international students to grasp the intricacies of the language better and communicate more effectively. Moreover, an international student's level of language proficiency can impede their ability to comprehend and produce language accurately, thus impairing their communication skills (Spencer & Pierce, 2022). Additionally, our findings imply that an international student's level of language proficiency can influence their confidence in their communication abilities. As their language competence improves, international students may feel more comfortable and self-assured in their communication skills (Jungner, Tiselius, & Pergert, 2021).

According to recent research findings, language proficiency levels significantly and positively influence academic performance. For students who are simultaneously acquiring a second language, academic success is closely intertwined with their linguistic fluency. D'Alessio, Wilson, and Jaichenco (2019) examined the relationship between English language competency and academic achievement among university students. The study revealed that students who excelled in English language proficiency exams also demonstrated higher academic performance in their respective fields. Similarly, Fung and Lo (2023) investigated the correlation between English competence and academic success among university students. The results of this study also indicated a strong connection between language proficiency and academic achievement, as students who scored higher on English proficiency tests tended to perform better academically.

Furthermore, C. M. Chen and I. C. Chen (2021) researched to explore the impact of language proficiency on students' academic achievements. Their findings underscored the significant influence of language proficiency on academic success. It was observed that students with higher levels of English proficiency consistently outperformed their peers in various academic subjects.

The present study investigated the relationship between the language proficiency of international students and their overall satisfaction with their educational experiences. Our findings suggest that language competency significantly and positively impacts educational satisfaction. These results align with prior research highlighting a link between language proficiency and educational contentment (El-Dakhs, Masrai, & Yahya, 2022). Enhanced language skills empower international students to comprehend lectures, actively engage in classroom discussions, and foster meaningful interactions with peers and instructors, all contributing to heightened satisfaction with their educational journey (Persici, Vihman, Burro, & Majorano, 2019). Moreover, international students' ability to effectively navigate the academic landscape and access available resources is notably influenced by their level of language competence, further enhancing their overall happiness throughout their educational experience (Barrios et al., 2022). For instance, those international students possessing more substantial language proficiency are more likely to proactively seek and utilize academic support services such as tutoring and writing centers, thereby bolstering their academic achievements and overall contentment.

The study also revealed that institutional policies about multicultural education significantly influence the correlation between the language proficiency level and the communication abilities of international students. In recent years, there has been a gradual increase in overseas students enrolling in higher education institutions worldwide (S. Xu & Lu, 2022). However, these students often need help communicating effectively with their peers and professors, mainly if they need to be proficient in the language of instruction. Institutional policies related to multicultural education substantially impact modifying the relationship between language competence levels and the communication abilities of international students (Chan et al., 2019).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are the primary objectives of multicultural education policies within higher education institutions. These policies emphasize recognizing and respecting cultural differences, providing resources for language acquisition, and fostering intercultural communication skills (Elshami et al., 2022). Robust multicultural education policies offer support and resources aimed at helping international students enhance their language proficiency, ultimately improving their communication skills. However, the study indicated that institutions with robust multicultural education programs wielded a more significant influence in enhancing communication abilities than language proficiency alone (Chan et al., 2019). Consequently, institutional policies that promote multicultural education play a pivotal role in moderating the relationship between language competence levels and the communication abilities of international students.

Multicultural education ensures that students from diverse cultural backgrounds receive an equitable and

just education. Linguistic competence is a pivotal aspect that significantly influences academic success, especially for students who do not use English as their primary language at home. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that institutional measures promoting multicultural education can effectively mitigate the link between language proficiency and academic achievement, according to a study by Y. C. Chen in 2020, schools implementing multicultural education strategies positively impact the academic performance of English Language Learners (ELLs). These policies provide ELLs with the necessary resources and support to excel academically while fostering a healthy, inclusive school environment that embraces all children (Goodwin & Zaman, 2023).

Furthermore, Mlinar and Krammer (2021) found that students from diverse linguistic backgrounds tend to outperform their peers academically in schools committed to intercultural education. These schools create a more welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for students with varying linguistic backgrounds, ultimately enhancing their academic performance. This underscores the significance of institutional policies that support multicultural education, including providing resources, teacher training, and ongoing support, as highlighted in a study by Ma et al. (2022). Conversely, schools with limited institutional policies for multicultural education need help providing a conducive learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds.

The results suggest that institutional policies concerning multicultural education significantly mediate the relationship between language proficiency levels and satisfaction with the educational experience. In our increasingly diverse world, multicultural education is becoming ever more crucial. The impact of institutional policies on multicultural education is substantial when it comes to shaping the connection between language proficiency and overall satisfaction with the educational process (Vahle, de Araujo, Han, & Otten, 2023). Students with strong English language skills tend to have a more positive educational experience than those without. Interestingly, irrespective of their language proficiency level, institutions that actively promote multicultural education and support diverse language backgrounds can significantly enhance students' contentment with their educational journey (Luo, Wang, & Yu, 2022). Implementing institutional strategies that bolster multicultural education can contribute significantly to narrowing the achievement gap among students from various linguistic backgrounds. Schools with robust multicultural education policies demonstrate much smaller achievement gaps between English language learners and native English speakers, in contrast to institutions lacking such policies (Little & Gragson, 2023).

Instructors' expertise significantly moderates the relationship between international students' language proficiency levels and their communication abilities, as highlighted by Zhuang and Liu (2022). The language proficiency level of international students can indeed have a substantial impact on their communication abilities. However, it is equally important to recognize the pivotal role of instructors' skills in modulating this link. According to Canet-Juric et al. (2021), students' capacity to communicate effectively in the target language improves as their language skills advance. This improvement is closely intertwined with a student's ability to utilize the language effectively in various communication contexts.

Nevertheless, the precise nature of the relationship between language competence levels and communication talents needs to be more evident. Notably, teachers also wield significant influence in shaping students' communication skills. Duan et al. (2022) found that teachers' expertise predicted international students' communication abilities. Their research revealed that students who highly experienced professors instructed exhibited significantly enhanced communication skills, even if their language proficiency levels were comparatively lower (Maureen, van der Meij, & de Jong, 2022). This underscores the pivotal role of instructors' competence in bridging gaps in language proficiency and facilitating effective communication in the target language.

This study investigates the moderating impact of instructor expertise on the relationship between language competency and academic success. Previous research has established that teachers' abilities significantly influence students' academic achievements, especially when acquiring a second language (Brodin & Renblad, 2020). The competence of students' instructors has a noteworthy influence on their level of linguistic proficiency, which, in turn, can directly affect their academic performance (Stevenson et al., 2018). Furthermore, Spencer and Pierce (2022) conducted a study emphasizing the importance of instructors' expertise in discerning the connection between language competency and academic success. The results of this study revealed that highly experienced instructors could substantially enhance the academic performance of both groups of students. In contrast, less experienced teachers achieved different results.

According to recent research conducted by Belda-Medina (2022), the level of expertise instructors possess plays a significant role in moderating the relationship between language competency and satisfaction with the educational experience. Belda-Medina's study focused on adult English language learners and aimed to investigate the connection between language competency, instructor expertise, and overall satisfaction with their educational journey. The study's findings revealed a positive correlation between language competency and

satisfaction with the educational experience, as corroborated by Khamsuk and Whanchit's research in 2021. However, the strength of this relationship was notably more pronounced among students taught by highly skilled professors. This study's outcomes support earlier research findings that underscore the vital role of instructor expertise in language learning, as demonstrated in Fraschini and Park's study in 2022. Highly proficient instructors are better equipped to provide learners with the necessary guidance and support to enhance their language skills and achieve their learning objectives. Consequently, students are more likely to find fulfillment in their educational journey and remain motivated to continue their pursuit of language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of language proficiency levels on the communication skills, academic performance, and satisfaction of international students within a multicultural educational environment at a university. Additionally, the study aimed to explore the moderating impact of institutional policies related to multicultural education and instructor expertise on these factors. The study's findings revealed significant associations between international students' language proficiency, communication abilities, academic achievements, and overall contentment with their educational experiences. Those with higher language proficiency exhibited more vital communication skills, better academic performance, and higher satisfaction levels with their educational journey. The study also uncovered that institutional policies concerning multicultural education moderated the relationship between language proficiency and academic performance.

Similarly, instructor expertise moderated the relationship between language proficiency and satisfaction with the educational experience. These findings underscore the importance of language proficiency for international students, impacting their communication abilities, academic success, and overall satisfaction with their educational endeavors. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the significance of educational institutions implementing robust intercultural education policies and recruiting instructors with prior experience teaching students from diverse backgrounds across various settings. These measures are crucial for enhancing the educational experiences of international students and fostering their academic success. The implications of these findings hold substantial importance for educational institutions, particularly in optimizing international students' educational journeys and academic achievements.

IMPLICATIONS

This research holds considerable practical significance. Institutions should offer language assistance programs and resources to support international students with lower language proficiency levels to enhance their language skills. Moreover, schools should cultivate a multicultural educational environment that fosters acceptance and understanding of diverse cultures. These strategies can significantly contribute to international student's academic success and overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Additionally, instructor expertise is pivotal and can influence the correlation between language proficiency levels and academic achievement. Consequently, educational institutions should consider recruiting teachers with intercultural education skills to better cater to the needs of international students. These educators can create culturally sensitive teaching and learning environments tailored to the specific requirements of international students, all while promoting academic excellence.

The study's theoretical implications are equally significant. According to the findings of this study, language proficiency levels have a substantial impact on the academic success of international students. Individuals with a high level of proficiency in the language of instruction are more likely to achieve higher academic accomplishments. In contrast, those with lower proficiency may need help comprehend course materials and effectively convey their thoughts. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of institutional policies related to multicultural education in creating a welcoming learning environment for international students. These policies can provide critical support and resources to help students overcome language barriers and adapt to university academic and cultural standards. Additionally, having teachers experienced in instructing international students can enhance the educational experience by employing effective instructional methodologies that cater to the unique needs of international students.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has limitations in its focus on language ability as the primary predictor variable while overlooking

other potential characteristics that could impact international students' communication abilities, academic performance, and overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Factors such as cultural context, prior educational background, and personal traits like motivation and self-efficacy may also play a role in influencing these outcomes. Future research should encompass broader variables to explore their relative significance and interrelationships. Another drawback of the study is its failure to consider potential mediating variables that could help explain the link between language proficiency and these outcomes. For instance, language proficiency might affect social integration, influencing academic success and satisfaction. Subsequent research should investigate potential mediators and moderators to understand the underlying mechanisms at play better.

Furthermore, the data for this study were collected at a single point in time using a cross-sectional research approach. While cross-sectional studies are valuable for identifying associations between variables, they do not establish causality or allow for the temporal sequencing of events. Consequently, drawing conclusions about the direction of effects or assessing the validity of theoretical models can take time and effort. Additionally, cross-sectional studies may not account for changes or fluctuations in variables over time, potentially affecting the stability and generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider employing longitudinal designs to better capture the dynamic nature of international students' experiences in multicultural educational settings and to investigate how language competence levels evolve while interacting with other factors.

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