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Exploring the Lived Experiences of Teachers with International Macro Exposure: Impacts on Professional Identity, Pedagogy, and Global Educational Perspectives

Noelah Mae D. Borbon*^{ID}, Rowena C. Alcoba^{ID}, Avelino D. Palupit^{ID},
 Carol M. Alfaro^{ID}, Neres Ann M. Repollo^{ID}
 National University, Philippines

Angelie Marie L. Vizconde^{ID} and Armida Salvador Samaniego^{ID}
 Our Lady of Perpetual Succor College, Philippines

Abstract. With the increasing demand on internationalizing culture of education, teachers who have taught or studied overseas tend to become as significantly modified in their teaching philosophies and methods, and their professional identities. This study seeks to understand this phenomenon by investigating the lived experiences of teacher educators with international macro exposure and how such exposure might shape their professional identity, teaching methodologies, and commitment to global education. This qualitative study adopted a phenomenological approach to obtaining the different views and experiences of educators who taught abroad, participated in academic collaboration, or engaged in other cross-cultural professional experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted among ten educators coming from higher education institutions in the Philippines were chosen based on their significant exposure to the international arena to better understand their experiences and used thematic analysis to elucidate patterns in their responses. The study showed that exposure to international practices has translated into a transition into student-centered and active learning, an increase in technology-enhanced teaching methods, and cross-cultural competencies in teachers. Teachers also became more dedicated to global education and workforce preparation, adopting international case studies and real-world applications across the curriculum. The study has significant implications for teacher education, curriculum development, and institutional policy. Higher education institutions should prioritize international professional development opportunities, that includes faculty exchange programs, collaborative research, and **virtual** global classrooms.

*Corresponding author: *Noelah Mae D. Borbon*, ndborbon@nu-lipa.edu.ph

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1. Introduction

International macro exposure refers to the wide-ranging experiences and exposure that individuals, particularly educators or professionals, have to diverse global perspectives, systems, cultures, and practices (Zhou, 2021). It involves deeply interacting with or closely observing international trends, policies, educational frameworks, and cultural norms that significantly influence professional practices and standards on a global scale (Mantel, et al., 2023). This extensive exposure typically occurs through immersive teaching, working, or engaging with international networks, conferences, or collaborative initiatives that profoundly broaden an individual's understanding of complex global issues, profound cultural differences, and comprehensive worldwide professional standards (Fitzgerald & Bradbury, 2023; Suguku, 2023).

As education becomes increasingly globalized, teachers are engaged in diverse educational systems through international opportunities, such as teaching overseas, exchange experiences, or global educational partnerships. The experiences are invaluable to expanding perspectives, skill sets, and knowledge of education systems around the globe (Burke & Larmar, 2021; Caeiro-Rodríguez, et al. 2021; Kilag, et al. 2024). Globalization has reshaped education through an adaptive learning, targeted skills development, cultural understanding promotion, breaking down stereotypes, and preparing individuals to thrive in a diverse and interconnected world (Zalli, 2024)

Despite the growing body of research on international education and its impact on teaching, there remains a gap in understanding how these experiences specifically affect teachers' professional identity and pedagogy (Lojdová, et al. 2021; Steele & Leming, 2022). While studies have examined the general benefits of international exposure for educators, limited research has been conducted on the nuanced changes in teachers' self-perceptions, instructional practices, and the integration of global perspectives in their teaching (Ospina & Medina, 2020). This gap highlights the need for focused research that not only acknowledges the influence of international experiences but also explores how these experiences shape teachers' evolving roles in the classroom and the broader educational context.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers with international exposure to different educational systems, cultures, and teaching methodologies
2. How do international experiences influence teachers' professional identity and teaching practices?
3. How do teachers incorporate their global perspectives into their classroom practices after having international exposure?
4. What are the transformative effects of international exposure on teachers' global awareness and professional growth?

5. How do teachers adapt their teaching practices to diverse cultural contexts as a result of their international experiences?
6. What implications do these experiences have for teacher training programs, curriculum development, and international educational collaborations?

2. Literature Review

2.1 International Macro Exposure

International macro exposure refers to the wide-ranging experiences and exposure that individuals, particularly educators or professionals, have to diverse global perspectives, systems, cultures, and practices (Zhou, 2021). It involves deeply interacting with or closely observing international trends, policies, educational frameworks, and cultural norms that significantly influence professional practices and standards on a global scale (Mantel, et al., 2023). This extensive exposure typically occurs through immersive teaching, working, or engaging with international networks, conferences, or collaborative initiatives that profoundly broaden an individual's understanding of complex global issues, profound cultural differences, and comprehensive worldwide professional standards (Fitzgerald & Bradbury, 2023; Suguku, 2023). Teaching in the global setting has taught teachers to adapt new lifestyles, became more mature, obtained a deeper understanding of themselves, reaffirmed their own educational values and philosophies, raised cultural awareness, became more flexible, and developed attitudes that involved tolerance and respect (Ospina and Medina, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Cross - Cultural Adaptation Theory. Kim (2001) defined cross-cultural adaptation is the process through which individuals undergo internal changes to effectively function within an unfamiliar culture. In this theory, newcomers adjust their original cultural practices and achieve competence in the new environment. This adaptive change involves the deculturation of some of their original cultural habits and the acculturation of new ones. Both processes unfold through communication and interaction between the individual and the host culture. Extensive and prolonged experiences of cross-cultural adaptation can eventually lead to the individual's assimilation into the dominant culture of the host society.

Global Competence Framework. Deardorff (2006) emphasizes the importance of being able to interact respectfully and effectively with individuals from different cultures, which is a key outcome of international exposure. Teachers who develop global competence through international experiences can incorporate global issues and diverse perspectives into their classrooms, fostering a more inclusive, globally minded environment for students.

Transformative Learning Theory. Mezirow (1997) argues that critical reflection on new experiences can lead to profound changes in how individuals view the world. For teachers with international exposure, the reflective process of comparing educational systems and cultures often leads to a transformation in their professional identity, pedagogy, and understanding of global issues. These experiences challenge teachers to reconsider their assumptions and broaden their

perspectives, which can positively impact their teaching and professional development.

2.3 Impact on Professional Identity

A teacher's professional identity is shaped by their self-perception as an educator and their understanding of their role and impact on the community. This identity serves as the psychological foundation for effective teaching practice and alignment with institutional goals and objectives (Zhang & Wang, 2018). Developing an educator's professional identity involves internalizing information, competencies, perspectives, professional values, and ethical standards, which are then integrated into their personality and professional teaching practices (Qiu et al., 2019). Some of the influence of international exposure on professional identity is that the country prioritizes English language learning to enhance global competitiveness, particularly in higher education, where English is widely used as the medium of instruction, especially in private institutions (Alam et al., 2022). The real-life experiences of two Japanese ELT teachers, exploring LTI from a post-structural perspective were discussed. They noted that the idealization rhetoric prevalent in the Japanese ELT environment hindered instructors from realizing their full potential, leading to a perpetual quest to fit in (Rudolph et al., 2019). Moreover, the sociocultural context notably influences non-native teachers' identities (Gu and Benson, 2015; Widodo et al., 2020). The pivotal experiences in an Iranian EFL teacher's life history to understand the construction of EFL teachers identifies within a social ecology framework. They examined the role of sociocultural contexts in shaping and limiting an EFL teacher's identity (Mirzaee and Aliakbari 2018). Their study emphasized how both teaching and learning experiences contribute to the development of educators' professional identity and sense of agency. (Eslamdoost et al., 2020) highlighted that identity is formed by negotiations and interactions within contexts. Educators' identities shape their effectiveness in decision-making and influence the teaching techniques they implement in the classroom (Richards, 2021; Pennington & Richards, 2016; Anwaruddin, 2016).

2.4 Impact on Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching, shaped by teachers' views on learning, student needs, and classroom context. It goes beyond strategies to focus on designing learning experiences that build knowledge and thinking skills. By adapting teaching methods, educators ensure students engage with, apply, and reflect on their learning effectively (Main, 2021). In today's world, education needs continuous improvement to keep up with diverse student populations (Ragusa et al., 2022). To be effective, teachers must have a strong understanding of their subject matter and be able to meet the unique needs of their students (Gore et al., 2019). Modern educators are shifting towards more student-centered teaching methods to create engaging learning environments (Devier, 2019). Working with international colleagues and students helps expand literacy and cultural awareness in teaching, making classrooms more diverse and globally connected (Brandon et al., 2022).

2.5 Impact on Global Educational Perspectives

Global citizenship education is increasingly recognized as a crucial aspect of quality education, particularly as societies face growing global challenges (Yemini et al., 2019). Access to this education is a matter of equity, ensuring that all young people, regardless of their background, are prepared to participate in the global economy and address pressing international issues (Pashby et al., 2020). Education plays a vital role in helping students understand their place in the world through the lens of global citizenship. However, international perspectives are often integrated only within specific subjects, such as trade or foreign language courses, rather than being embedded across the curriculum. While Social Studies and related disciplines incorporate global elements, broader aspects of personal, social, and global education remain largely absent from primary and secondary school curricula (VanderDussen & Toukan, 2018).

2.6 The Transformative Effects of International Exposure on Teachers

Teaching in another country gives educators a chance to grow both personally and professionally. It helps them become more culturally aware, making it easier to connect with students from different backgrounds. It also allows them to improve their teaching methods for more effective instruction (Altun, 2015). Teachers who understand cultural diversity play a crucial role in turning differences in the classroom into learning opportunities while reducing educational inequalities. As role models, they help students develop open-mindedness and respect for diverse backgrounds (Van Driel, Darmody, & Kerzil, 2016). Multicultural education combines theory and practice to challenge discrimination in schools while also aiming to improve the overall learning experience. Offering courses and training on multicultural education helps teachers become more aware of diversity and equips them to support students from different cultural backgrounds. These learning opportunities should be available both during teacher preparation and throughout their careers. By gaining experience in multicultural education, teachers can better understand the challenges faced by students from diverse backgrounds and recognize how some may be marginalized (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017). They also become more aware of how prejudice, privilege, and discrimination affect students. Because of this, cultural diversity courses should highlight how these issues shape students' perspectives and experiences (Richardson et al., 2020).

3. Methodology

The author employed a qualitative research design, specifically using descriptive phenomenology, to explore the lived experiences of teachers with international macro exposure. Qualitative research starts with one or more relatively broad research questions, which can be updated iteratively as the research progresses to restrict the research aim or purpose (Denny, & Weckesser, 2022). As this design was particularly well-suited to understanding how teachers perceived and made sense of their professional and personal transformation following international exposure.

The primary data gathering instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide, designed to explore the lived experiences of teachers with

international macro exposure. This instrument was developed to ensure a balance between structured questioning- using consistent, predetermined questions – and open-ended exploration, allowing participants to provide detailed insights into their experience.

The study involved teachers with substantial international exposure, whether through teaching abroad, participating in exchange programs, or engaging in international collaborations. These participants came from diverse educational backgrounds, including primary, secondary, and higher education, ensuring a variety of perspectives were captured. A purposive sampling method was used to select teachers who had significant international exposure and were willing to share their experiences. The sample consisted of around 10 educators, allowing for data saturation.

Table 1: Participant Matrix

Participant	Nature of International Exposure	Duration of previous international exposure
AR	Teaching abroad.	Two (2) years.
DM	Teaching abroad.	Three (3) years.
HV	Training abroad (ECO VIP).	Two (2) years.
JC	Workshops, Training, Competition in Research and Collaboration.	Seven (7) years.
JoV	Training and Workshop (Research),	Two (2) years.
MB	Teaching abroad. (Transnational Educational Program)	Two (2) years
MD	Teaching abroad (online) and Benchmarking.	One (1) year and six (6) months.
VN	Study and Teaching abroad.	Two (2) years.
JaV	Training, SIP, Practicum visit abroad.	Two (2) years.
RCA	Teaching, training management, research	Twenty (20) years

As seen in table 1, the participants were ten educators who met the criteria of teaching in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and had a minimum of five years of teaching experience. All participants had also engaged in international exchange experiences, demonstrating diverse forms of global exposure that influenced their professional growth. Their international experiences ranged from teaching abroad, training programs, research collaborations, and benchmarking activities to participation in transnational educational programs.

The interview guide was structured into four key sections aligned with the study's objectives. Initially, it explored participants' background, including their teaching experience, international exposure, and types of global engagement such as overseas teaching, training, or research collaboration. The second section addressed professional identity transformation, focusing on how international experiences affected their career outlook, self-confidence, and adaptability within academia. The third section examined pedagogical shifts, asking participants about changes in teaching methods, instructional practices, and classroom interactions resulting from their global experiences. This included challenges and opportunities in incorporating international perspectives into teaching. The final section focused on global educational perspectives, prompting reflections on how international exposure influenced participants' views on curriculum design, student engagement, and cross-cultural understanding. Three experts validated the interview guide, ensuring its face and content validity.

The data gathering procedure for this study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with selected participants to explore their lived experiences regarding international macro exposure and its impact on their professional identity, pedagogy, and global educational perspectives. The process began with the identification and selection of qualified participants through purposive sampling, ensuring that they met the study criteria of having substantial international teaching or professional experience.

Before the interviews, informed consent was obtained from each participant. They were briefed on the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any time, and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect participants' identities, and all responses were securely stored. The semi-structured interview format was chosen to allow flexibility in responses while ensuring that key topics were addressed. A set of open-ended questions guided the discussions, focusing on how participants' international exposure influenced their teaching methods, professional identity, and ability to integrate global perspectives into their classrooms. Probing questions were also used to gain deeper insights and encourage participants to elaborate on their experiences. Interviews were conducted in a quiet and comfortable environment, either face-to-face or via online platforms, depending on the participants' availability and preferences. Each session lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was recorded with participants' permission to ensure accurate data capture. Following the interviews, the recorded data were transcribed verbatim to maintain accuracy. Transcripts were then reviewed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the study's objectives.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative approach that involved identifying and interpreting patterns within the data. Through this method, common themes were extracted and analyzed. This approach was ideal for uncovering how teachers' experiences shaped their teaching practices and views on education, providing a detailed understanding of the impact of international exposure. Thematic analysis (TA) is a qualitative research method used to

identify, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning, or themes, within textual data. This approach is widely applied across various disciplines to gain insights into people's experiences, perceptions, and behaviors (Braun, & Clarke, 2023). NVivo software was used to assist with the coding and organization of the data, ensuring a systematic and transparent analysis process. According to Kraivanit, Limna, and Siripipatthanakul (2023), NVivo offers substantial potential as a valuable tool for qualitative research in social sciences and management studies. They encourage researchers, practitioners, and educators to integrate NVivo into their methodologies to enhance the management and analysis of qualitative data.

Ethical considerations were paramount in this study to ensure the integrity of the research process and the protection of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully briefed on the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms and ensuring that all data were securely stored. Participants' identities and personal information were not disclosed in any reports. The research also followed the principle of non-maleficence, ensuring that no harm or distress was caused to participants during the interview process. In addition, the data were used exclusively for research purposes, with findings presented in an ethical manner that respected the privacy and dignity of participants. These ethical guidelines helped ensure the study was conducted responsibly and that participants felt safe and respected throughout their involvement.

3. Results

This study examined the impact of international macro exposure on teachers' professional identity, teaching methodologies, and commitment to global education. The findings revealed that educators who experienced international teaching, academic collaborations, or cross-cultural professional exchanges underwent significant transformations in their instructional strategies, classroom engagement, and overall educational outlook. The study identified key shifts, including a transition toward student-centered and active learning approaches, an increased use of technology-enhanced teaching methods, and the integration of multicultural pedagogical strategies. Furthermore, teachers developed a deeper awareness of global education trends, reinforcing their responsibility in preparing students for an interconnected world.

3.1 Changes in Self-Perception and Role as Educators

Four themes emerged from the interview of the research participants: transformation in self-perception as an educator, evolution of professional identity, changes in teaching roles and responsibilities, and expanded understanding of professional responsibility.

Theme 1: Transformation in Self-Perception as an Educator,

One of the most evident changes was the transformation in self-perception as an educator. Exposure to different educational systems helped teachers develop

increased confidence and creativity, allowing them to experiment with innovative teaching methodologies. Many educators shifted from a traditional, lecture-based approach to a more facilitative role, emphasizing active learning, multimedia resources, and student collaboration.

Additionally, teachers broadened their global awareness, becoming more culturally sensitive and inclusive in their pedagogical approaches. As a result, they started bridging global and local perspectives, integrating best practices from international benchmarks to enrich their students' learning experiences.

Theme 2: Evolution of Professional Identity

The evolution of professional identity was another critical outcome of international exposure. Educators learned to be more flexible and adaptable in their teaching styles to cater to students with diverse learning preferences (DM, HV, MD).

They also developed a global teaching perspective, recognizing that effective education transcends cultural and geographical boundaries (AR, MB, RCA). This shift led teachers to expand their roles beyond traditional instruction, seeing themselves as mentors and transformation agents who empower students to think critically and apply their knowledge effectively (MD, RCA). Exposure to progressive and experiential learning further reinforced this transformation, encouraging educators to implement interactive, skills-based, and research-oriented strategies in their classrooms (JC, MB).

Theme 3: Changes in Teaching Roles and Responsibilities

With this shift in professional identity came changes in teaching roles and responsibilities. Many educators moved toward student-centered and active learning approaches, incorporating discussion-based and experiential strategies to enhance engagement (DM, JC).

Additionally, teachers adapted their methodologies to be more culturally responsive, ensuring that students from different backgrounds felt included and supported in the learning process (HV, RCA, MD). Language and cultural barriers presented challenges in student engagement, requiring educators to refine their communication strategies and instructional methods (MB, MD).

Overall, international exposure motivated teachers to focus on holistic student development, emphasizing the importance of equipping with global competencies and real-world problem-solving skills (RCA, HV, JC).

Theme 4: Expanded Understanding of Professional Responsibility

Finally, international exposure expanded teachers' understanding of professional responsibility, reinforcing the broader impact of education on society. Many educators became committed to fostering inclusivity and diversity in their classrooms, recognizing the value of multicultural awareness and global competencies (AR, DM, HV).

Their experiences also deepened their understanding of education's role in bridging socio-cultural gaps, highlighting the transformative power of teaching in promoting cross-cultural understanding and social change (MD, RCA).

This shift influenced their perspectives on student engagement, leading them to prioritize student output and flexibility over rigid attendance policies, aligning their teaching philosophies with international best practices (MD, JC). International exposure helped educators see their impact beyond the classroom, reinforcing their responsibility in shaping students who can contribute meaningfully to society and the global workforce (RCA).

3.2. Changes in Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Approaches Following International Exposure

Four major themes emerged including transition to student-centered and active learning approaches, increased use of technology-enhanced teaching methods, adoption of global teaching techniques and multicultural pedagogy, and continuous evaluation and adaptation of teaching practices.

Theme 1. Transition to Student-Centered and Active Learning Approaches

One of the most profound changes was the transition to student-centered and active learning approaches. Teachers moved away from teacher-dominated instruction and instead fostered environments where students actively engaged in discussions, problem-solving exercises, and peer collaboration (AR, DM, HV, MB). This shift was reinforced by the adoption of active learning strategies such as collaborative projects, role-playing, and problem-based learning, which encouraged deeper student participation and critical thinking (DM, MB, RCA).

Additionally, educators integrated experiential and hands-on learning, particularly in fields like tourism and hospitality, where industry simulations and real-world applications provided students with practical learning experiences (HV, MD). Recognizing the diverse backgrounds and learning preferences of their students, teachers also placed a greater focus on inclusivity and adaptability, adjusting their methodologies to ensure culturally responsive instruction (AR, DM, RCA).

Theme 2. Increased Use of Technology-Enhanced Teaching Methods

The increased use of technology-enhanced teaching methods was another key transformation influenced by international exposure. Many educators integrated Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Blackboard, Moodle, and Big Blue Button to facilitate online learning and improve accessibility (JC, MD). Observing how international institutions leveraged smart technology and digital collaboration tools, teachers were inspired to incorporate these innovations into their own classrooms, enhancing interactive learning experiences (JC, AR).

Additionally, blended and hybrid learning models became more prevalent, allowing educators to combine online and in-person instruction to maximize learning efficiency while considering local constraints (MD, JC). However, educators also faced challenges in implementing these technologies due to gaps in infrastructure between international and local institutions, requiring them to

adapt and find alternative solutions to ensure effective technology integration (JC, MB).

Theme 3. Adoption of Global Teaching Techniques & Multicultural Pedagogy

Exposure to international education systems also encouraged the adoption of global teaching techniques and multicultural pedagogy. Teachers incorporated active learning techniques from various countries, such as South Korea's student-driven learning model and experiential learning practices from European institutions (DM, HV, AR). Multilingual and culturally responsive teaching also became a priority, as educators recognized the importance of language inclusivity in diverse classrooms (MB, MD).

Furthermore, teachers emphasized responsibility and autonomy in learning, encouraging students to take ownership of their education and develop self-directed learning habits in alignment with international pedagogical frameworks (MD, RCA). The introduction of online and asynchronous learning practices further reinforced this shift, providing students with flexible learning options while requiring teachers to adapt instructional materials to accommodate different levels of engagement and understanding (MD, JC).

Theme 4. Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation of Teaching Practices

Continuous evaluation and adaptation of teaching practices became an integral part of professional development. Teachers actively collected feedback from students through surveys, reflections, and performance assessments to refine their instructional methods and ensure effectiveness (AR, DM, MB). They also recognized that not all international teaching practices could be directly applied in their local contexts, requiring careful contextual adjustments to maintain alignment with institutional frameworks and student needs (RCA, MD).

Additionally, many educators emphasized the importance of fostering global citizenship among students, encouraging them to develop critical thinking skills, cultural awareness, and a deeper understanding of global issues (RCA, HV, DM). In navigating cross-cultural classroom management, teachers developed strategies to accommodate varying student expectations, engagement styles, and communication norms (JC, MD, RCA).

3.3. Incorporating Global Educational Perspectives into Classroom Instruction

Four major themes emerged highlighting how teachers integrate international educational perspectives into their classroom instruction.

Theme 1: Integration of International Educational Concepts and Teaching Practices

The integration of international educational concepts and teaching practices has significantly enhanced student learning and engagement. Educators who have been exposed to global education systems incorporated active learning strategies, including group projects, case studies, and role-playing, to foster critical thinking and student participation (DM, HV, MB).

Additionally, culturally responsive teaching became a key focus, as teachers integrated diverse cultural perspectives into their curriculum to ensure inclusivity

and global awareness (JC, AR). Technology also played a crucial role in this transformation, with educators utilizing online collaboration tools, translation apps, and language learning platforms to enhance cross-cultural learning and accessibility (MB, MD). In specialized fields such as tourism and business education, teachers aligned their lessons with global industry trends and sustainability practices, ensuring students were equipped with knowledge applicable to international markets (HV, RCA).

Theme 2: Alignment and Challenges with Local Educational Standards

While international exposure enriched teaching methodologies, educators faced both alignment and challenges with local educational standards. Many found that global practices complemented student-centered and outcome-based education (OBE) frameworks, reinforcing measurable learning outcomes and real-world applications (DM, VN, MB).

However, transitioning from teacher-led instruction to active learning approaches required adjustments in assessment methods and student expectations, as some learners were initially resistant to these unfamiliar methods (DM, HV, AR). Moreover, international methodologies encouraged interdisciplinary integration and technological advancements, requiring educators to modify their approaches to fit within existing institutional structures and technological capacities (AR, JC).

Theme 3: Implementation of International Perspectives in Lessons and Projects

Educators implemented international perspectives in their lessons and projects in various ways. Many incorporated global case studies and economic comparisons, allowing students to analyze different development strategies across countries (DM, RCA, JC). Virtual exchange programs and cross-cultural collaborations were also introduced, enabling students to interact with peers from other countries, fostering global exposure and intercultural understanding (MD, VN). Project-based learning further reinforced this international outlook, as students engaged in research involving global datasets, cultural studies, and international business strategies (AR, HV, MB). Specifically, in business courses, global trade and management principles were integrated, exposing students to both best practices and challenges in international markets (RCA).

Theme 4: Adapting Global Practices to Suit Local Educational Needs

To ensure that global practices remained relevant and accessible, educators adapted international methodologies to suit local educational needs. A major strategy was contextualizing global case studies, using local examples and industry scenarios to make learning more relatable for students (AR, JC). Additionally, teachers adjusted teaching materials for student comprehension, simplifying content or adding contextual explanations to accommodate different learning levels (DM, MD).

Comparative analysis was also encouraged, allowing students to critically evaluate the differences between local and international practices, fostering analytical thinking and cross-cultural appreciation (RCA, HV). Recognizing language and cultural barriers, educators promoted communication skills

through multilingual teaching approaches and collaborative learning activities, ensuring students could effectively engage with global content (MB, MD).

3.4. Challenges and Opportunities in Adapting Professional Identity and Pedagogy After International Exposure

Four major themes emerged highlighting the challenges faced and opportunities gained by teachers as they integrated international experiences into their teaching.

Theme 1. Challenges in Integrating International Teaching Methods

Integrating international teaching methods into the classroom presented several challenges for educators. One of the most significant barriers was language proficiency, as students with varying levels of English comprehension required additional explanations to fully grasp global educational perspectives (AR, JC, MB). Students accustomed to traditional teacher-led instruction often struggled to adapt to student-centered and active learning approaches, creating resistance to change (DM, MD, RCA). Teachers also faced institutional and technological limitations, where international methodologies required access to digital tools and resources that were not always available (JC, HV). Furthermore, aligning international practices with existing curriculum standards proved difficult, as teachers had to ensure that global teaching methods conformed to institutional guidelines and assessment frameworks (MD, DM).

Theme 2. Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

To overcome these barriers, educators employed various strategies that facilitated the gradual integration of international perspectives. Many sought collaborations with colleagues and institutional support, exchanging insights with fellow educators who had successfully implemented similar teaching strategies (AR, HV). To minimize resistance from students, teachers opted for gradual implementation and open discussions, explaining the benefits of active learning while gathering feedback to refine their approach (DM, MD, RCA).

Additionally, digital tools such as translation apps, multimedia resources, and interactive platforms were utilized to bridge communication gaps and enhance student comprehension (JC, MB). Educators also refined their communication strategies, simplifying language and avoiding jargon to ensure clarity and inclusivity in diverse classrooms (MB, JC).

Theme 3. Unexpected Opportunities for Growth and Innovation

Despite these challenges, international exposure also created unexpected opportunities for growth and innovation. Teachers observed that introducing global perspectives led to higher student engagement, with learners demonstrating greater enthusiasm and participation in discussions (DM, RCA). Moreover, international exposure opened doors for collaborative research and institutional partnerships, enabling educators to engage in joint research projects, publications, and curriculum development with global institutions (HV, JC, MD). These experiences also contributed to the development of cross-cultural competencies, fostering cultural awareness and sensitivity among both teachers and students (AR, MB). Additionally, educators expanded their professional

networks, gaining opportunities to participate in international conferences, academic workshops, and exchange programs that enhanced their career trajectories (JC, RCA, MB).

Theme 4. Advantages of Blending International and Local Teaching Practices

The blending of international and local teaching practices yielded significant advantages for both educators and students. Exposure to global perspectives enhanced cultural awareness and global mindsets, promoting empathy, respect, and appreciation for different cultural backgrounds (AR, MB, HV). Teachers also observed improvements in classroom dynamics, as students became more vocal, confident, and engaged in critical thinking exercises (DM, RCA). By incorporating real-world applications and industry-relevant content, lessons became more practical and aligned with global trends, particularly in fields such as business and tourism (HV, JC). Furthermore, educators who integrated international methodologies contributed to the strengthening of institutional and academic linkages, providing students with valuable opportunities to participate in exchange programs, international research projects, and global collaborations (MD, JC).

3.5. Long-Term Impact of International Exposure on Teachers' Approach to Education

Our major themes emerged highlighting how international exposure has influenced teachers' teaching philosophy, student engagement, and global education perspectives over time.

Theme 1. Transformation in Teaching Approach and Classroom Strategies

International exposure led to a transformation in teaching approach and classroom strategies, with educators shifting towards inclusivity, adaptability, and student-centered learning. Exposure to diverse cultures allowed teachers to enhance cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, creating learning environments that catered to different backgrounds and learning styles (AR, DM, MB). This shift encouraged the adoption of collaborative and student-centered learning, where teachers incorporated group activities, peer discussions, and experiential methods to foster teamwork and problem-solving skills (HV, DM, JC).

Additionally, educators refined their communication techniques, ensuring they could effectively engage with students from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds (MB, JC). Recognizing the need for international alignment, teachers also prioritized curriculum development in accordance with global standards, ensuring that their students remained competitive in the global workforce (MD).

Theme 2. Evolving Perspectives on Learning and Student Development

With this transformation came evolving perspectives on learning and student development, as educators began to see student engagement and learning processes in a new light. They developed a deeper recognition of individualized learning needs, tailoring their approaches to accommodate different student strengths and preferences (DM, HV, AR). Encouraging cross-cultural competencies, teachers emphasized the importance of developing global mindsets, cultural empathy, and adaptability in their students (JC, MB, MD).

Furthermore, educators moved away from traditional rote learning methods, instead prioritizing critical thinking and independent learning, enabling students to analyze real-world problems and apply their knowledge effectively (HV, DM, MB). To further broaden students' perspectives, teachers actively facilitated global collaboration and knowledge exchange, engaging students in international projects and discussions with peers from diverse backgrounds (AR, MD).

Theme 3. Lasting Change in Teaching Philosophy and Professional Identity

As teachers adapted to global teaching environments, they experienced a lasting change in their teaching philosophy and professional identity. Many embraced lifelong learning and continuous improvement, becoming more proactive in seeking professional development opportunities and refining their teaching methodologies (DM, MB, HV). Exposure to international best practices encouraged educators to infuse their classrooms with global teaching strategies, making lessons more engaging and culturally relevant (AR, HV, MD). Their experiences also reinforced the need for open-mindedness and flexibility, pushing them to be more innovative and responsive to their students' evolving needs (JC, DM, MB). Additionally, teachers recognized the importance of preparing students for a globalized society, shifting their focus towards equipping learners with critical thinking, problem-solving, and global competencies (HV, MD).

Theme 4. Strengthened Commitment to Global Education and Workforce Preparation

International exposure strengthened teachers' commitment to global education and workforce preparation, as they understood the growing demand for globally competent graduates. Educators placed greater emphasis on language and communication skills, encouraging multilingualism and cross-cultural interactions to enhance collaboration on an international scale (AR, MD). They also incorporated global perspectives into their curriculum, integrating international case studies, best practices, and real-world applications to ensure students were exposed to a broader context of learning (DM, MB, HV). This transformation led teachers to advocate for global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness, instilling in students the importance of understanding international issues and becoming responsible global citizens (DM, JC, HV). Furthermore, educators motivated students to engage critically with global trends, urging them to stay informed about technological advancements, policy changes, and international collaborations that could impact their careers and academic growth (MB, MD).

4. Discussion

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers with international macro exposure and how such exposure influenced their professional identity, pedagogy, and global educational perspectives. Findings revealed five major areas of transformation: (1) Teachers' self-perception evolved toward a more inclusive, empathetic, and globally aware professional identity; (2) Teaching strategies shifted toward student-centered and active learning approaches, incorporating advanced technological tools and global teaching methods; (3) Educators began integrating multicultural and international perspectives into their lessons; (4) Participants faced various challenges in adapting these global

approaches locally, particularly due to students' resistance and institutional limitations; and (5) Over time, teachers developed a more globalized teaching philosophy, committed to preparing students for a borderless, multicultural world.

4.1 Influence of International Macro Exposure on Teachers' Professional Identity

The findings highlight that international macro exposure profoundly impacted teachers' professional identity by reshaping their self-perception, evolving their roles, and expanding their teaching philosophies. The experiences encouraged adaptability, inclusivity, and a greater commitment to fostering global competence in students. These transformations reinforced the importance of integrating international best practices into local educational settings, ultimately enhancing the quality of education in a globalized world aligning to the previous study of Roiha, and Sommier (2021).

4.2. Changes in Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Approaches Following International Exposure

The findings indicate that international macro exposure significantly reshaped teachers' pedagogical approaches, leading to a greater focus on student-centered learning, technology integration, and culturally responsive teaching. While educators adopted innovative global teaching techniques, they also recognized the importance of contextualizing these strategies to fit local educational settings. Continuous feedback and adaptation played a crucial role in ensuring that international best practices were effectively implemented in their classrooms, as supported by the previous study of Kim (2024).

4.3 Incorporating Global Educational Perspectives into Classroom Instruction

Integrating global educational perspectives into classroom instruction is essential in preparing students for an increasingly interconnected world. Teachers with international exposure bring diverse teaching methodologies, cross-cultural insights, and global best practices into their lessons, fostering a more inclusive and enriched learning environment. Thus, the findings suggest that teachers actively incorporated global educational perspectives through interactive teaching strategies, case studies, and virtual collaborations, aligning to the previous study of Chatziralli, et al. (2021). While international practices aligned with student-centered learning, challenges arose in adapting to traditional educational structures.

4.4 Challenges and Opportunities in Adapting Professional Identity and Pedagogy After International Exposure

The findings highlight that while educators encountered significant challenges in integrating international teaching methodologies, they were able to overcome these barriers through collaboration, technology utilization, and gradual adaptation strategies. Their experiences also led to unexpected opportunities for professional growth, international collaboration, and the expansion of academic networks. The successful blending of international and local teaching practices resulted in more globally competent students, enriched classroom experiences, and stronger institutional ties. Teachers encountered challenges such as language

barriers, student resistance to new teaching approaches, and limitations in institutional support. However, they addressed these barriers through collaboration, technology integration, and gradual adaptation of international practices. Their experiences opened new opportunities for professional growth, student engagement, and global collaborations. Incorporating international perspectives enhanced cultural awareness, improved classroom engagement, and strengthened global academic linkages aligning to the previous study of Romero-Rodríguez, et al. (2023).

4.5 Long-Term Impact of International Exposure on Teachers' Approach to Education

International exposure has a lasting impact on educators, shaping their teaching philosophy, student engagement strategies, and perspectives on global education. The findings highlight that international exposure has had a lasting impact on teachers' educational philosophies, pedagogical approaches, and commitment to global education. Teachers became more inclusive, student-centered, and culturally aware in their teaching. They also prioritized preparing students for an interconnected world by emphasizing language skills, global competencies, and workforce readiness. Their experiences reinforced lifelong learning, adaptability, and the integration of international best practices into their teaching, aligning to the previous study of Tien, et al. (2021).

The use of student-centered learning and technology-based teaching aligns with global educational trends advocating for active and participatory learning (Devier, 2019). Moreover, the adoption of multicultural content supports culturally responsive pedagogy, as emphasized by Akcaoglu (2021), suggesting that teachers who embrace global perspectives foster better student engagement and learning outcomes.

4.6. Implication of the Study

The study has significant implications for teacher education, curriculum development, and institutional policy. Higher education institutions should prioritize international professional development opportunities, that includes faculty exchange programs, collaborative research, and **virtual** global classrooms. These initiatives not only benefit faculty members but also enrich student learning through exposure to diverse perspectives. Additionally, there is a need to update curricula by embedding global competencies, such as cross-cultural communication, digital literacy, and ethical reasoning. Educational leaders must recognize that a globally competent teacher is more capable of nurturing globally competent students.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of international macro exposure on teachers' professional identity, teaching methodologies, and commitment to global education. The findings revealed that educators who experienced international teaching, academic collaborations, or cross-cultural professional exchanges underwent significant transformations in their instructional strategies, classroom engagement, and overall educational outlook. The study identified key shifts,

including a transition toward student-centered and active learning approaches, an increased use of technology-enhanced teaching methods, and the integration of multicultural pedagogical strategies. Furthermore, teachers developed a deeper awareness of global education trends, reinforcing their responsibility in preparing students for an interconnected world.

Patronizing international methodologies with local educational contexts, teachers fostered inclusivity, adaptability, and cross-cultural competencies in their classrooms. However, challenges such as language barriers, resistance to new teaching approaches, and limited institutional support required educators to employ strategic solutions, including gradual implementation, collaboration with colleagues, and technology utilization. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing discourse on globalized education by highlighting how international exposure enriches teaching practices and broadens educators' perspectives on student development.

6. Recommendation

Based on the result of the study, the following were recommended: Institutional Support for Professional Development, institutions may implement structured professional development programs that help educators integrate international methodologies into their teaching. Universities and colleges may encourage educators to incorporate international case studies, cross-cultural collaborations, and industry best practices to foster global competencies among students. Institutions may invest in digital tools and online platforms that enable virtual exchange programs, international collaborations, and access to global teaching resources. Teachers should receive training on culturally responsive teaching strategies to accommodate diverse student populations and create inclusive learning environments. Schools and universities may align their assessment frameworks, learning outcomes, and instructional methodologies with international best practices to ensure that students are well-prepared for the global workforce.

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