



# Multi-Cultural Literacy among Preschool Teachers in Shanghai, China

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**Abstract:** With Shanghai's rapid development and growing cultural diversity, understanding and enhancing preschool educators' multicultural literacy is essential for fostering inclusive environments for children from diverse backgrounds. This study investigates the current state, influencing factors, challenges, and enhancement strategies related to multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, China. Using a qualitative research approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Specifically, the dataset includes interviews with 20 preschool teachers and 8 university educators, observations of 12 preschool teachers, and 20 documents related to multicultural education in early childhood settings. The study was conducted in preschool classrooms within Qingxiucheng Kindergarten, Songqingling Kindergarten, Daningguoji Kindergarten, and Zhendan Kindergarten. Data were analyzed using NVivo12 software through three levels of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The findings addressed four Research Questions. For RQ1, the status quo of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers revealed issues such as communication barriers, cultural sensitivity in teaching, professional difficulties due to cultural misunderstandings, and strategies for cultural inclusion. For RQ2, factors influencing the development of multicultural literacy included individual traits and educational experiences, professional development and training, environmental and institutional factors, policy directives, and community and parental involvement. For RQ3, challenges in developing multicultural literacy included inconsistencies in training, a gap between theory and practice, difficulty implementing culturally sensitive practices, ineffective communication strategies, and insufficient ongoing professional development. For RQ4, strategies to enhance multicultural literacy were proposed, including comprehensive curriculum integration, practical engagement, ongoing resource access, reflective practice, immersive cultural experiences, technology integration, and supportive

institutional policies. The study implies that enhancing preschool teachers' multicultural literacy requires targeted professional development, supportive institutional policies, and active collaboration with communities. In conclusion, this study highlights key areas for improving multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, offering practical strategies to address challenges and promote more inclusive early childhood education in diverse contexts.

**Key words:** Multi-cultural literacy , preschool teachers

## I. Introduction

The cultivation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers has become increasingly significant, especially in culturally diverse urban settings like Shanghai. As educators play a crucial role in shaping young minds, understanding and integrating multicultural perspectives within early childhood education is essential. This study aims to explore the various dimensions of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, starting with an examination of the broader educational landscape and the specific context of Shanghai's multicultural environment. Following this, the study will focus on clearly defined research objectives that guide the investigation, including the current status, influencing factors, challenges, and strategies for enhancing multicultural literacy among these educators.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The research is conducted based on four research backgrounds: the global educational landscape, comprehensive multicultural literacy, Shanghai's multicultural mosaic, and preschool educators' role in cultural amalgamation.

Cultivating multicultural literacy among preschool educators has assumed unprecedented significance in the contemporary global education panorama. The increasing interconnectivity of



societies and the celebration of diversity underscore the pivotal role of early childhood education in establishing a foundation of cultural understanding and appreciation (Kale et al., 2023). As the world becomes more interconnected, children are exposed to various cultural influences from a very young age. This exposure makes it essential for educators to foster an environment where cultural diversity is acknowledged and celebrated. This study delves into the intricate dynamics of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, China, recognizing and addressing the unique challenges and opportunities embedded in the city's diverse cultural milieu. In a global context, understanding and integrating multicultural education within early childhood settings have become a cornerstone of educational practices that aim to prepare children for a diverse world (Surahman et al., 2022).

Within this study's scope, multicultural literacy signifies the comprehensive proficiency of preschool teachers in comprehending, embracing, and seamlessly integrating diverse cultural elements into their pedagogical practices. It goes beyond the mere acknowledgment of cultural differences, encapsulating the application of culturally responsive teaching strategies designed to facilitate positive intercultural interactions and enrich the overall learning experiences of young children. This involves a deep understanding of different cultural traditions, languages, and values and the ability to incorporate these elements into everyday classroom activities (Gunn & Susan, 2023). Preschool teachers with high multicultural literacy can create lessons that reflect the diverse backgrounds of their students, thereby making the learning experience more relevant and engaging. Furthermore, this competency helps mitigate biases and stereotypes and promotes a more inclusive and empathetic classroom environment. It equips teachers with the skills to address and celebrate cultural differences, thus preparing children to become global citizens who appreciate and respect diversity (Wu et al., 2023).

As a bustling international hub, Shanghai has witnessed a continual influx of diverse cultures, resulting in a vibrant mosaic of linguistic, ethnic, and socio-cultural backgrounds within its communities. The implications of this multicultural landscape on preschool education are profound as educators navigate the complexities inherent in addressing the diverse needs, perspectives, and experiences of both local and international students. The city's rich cultural tapestry provides both

challenges and opportunities for educators (S. Li & Yang., 2023). Teachers must handle language barriers, varying cultural expectations, and differing educational backgrounds. The diverse student population requires a flexible and adaptive approach to teaching, where one-size-fits-all methods are ineffective. By understanding the cultural contexts of their students, teachers can tailor their instructional strategies to meet the needs of each child better. This multicultural setting also offers a unique opportunity for cross-cultural exchanges within the classroom, enriching the educational experience for all students and fostering a global perspective from an early age (Jin & Chen, 2023).

Preschool teachers in Shanghai, being at the forefront of this cultural amalgamation, are responsible for creating inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. Effectively understanding the cultural nuances of their students and collaboratively engaging with colleagues from various cultural backgrounds have become essential facets of their teaching practices in this dynamic context. Teachers play a critical role in modeling inclusive behavior and attitudes, setting the tone for a respectful and open-minded classroom culture. Their ability to incorporate multicultural elements into the curriculum enhances the educational experience and helps children develop a sense of identity and belonging. Furthermore, preschool teachers can bring additional cultural resources and perspectives into the classroom by engaging with the broader community, including parents and local cultural organizations. This engagement helps bridge the gap between home and school, creating a cohesive learning environment that supports the child's overall development. Teachers must also be equipped to handle conflicts and misunderstandings arising from cultural differences, using these moments as learning opportunities to teach empathy and conflict resolution (Pan, 2024).

The rationale behind this study is grounded in the need for a nuanced understanding of the current state of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai. By meticulously examining their knowledge bases, attitudes, and instructional approaches, the research aims to uncover not only areas of strength but also areas that may require further development. The study seeks to identify gaps in teachers' cultural competence and provide insights into how these can be addressed through targeted professional development. Through an in-depth exploration, the study aspires to contribute valuable insights to inform targeted and



context-specific professional development initiatives, curricular enhancements, and policy recommendations. This research aims to provide practical strategies for educators to improve their multicultural literacy, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom.

Additionally, the findings are expected to support the development of policies that promote inclusive education practices at a systemic level. Ultimately, these findings aim to catalyze the creation of a more culturally inclusive preschool education environment in Shanghai, fostering positive educational outcomes for teachers and young learners under their guidance. By building a foundation of multicultural literacy in early childhood education, the study hopes to contribute to the broader social cohesion and equity goal in a rapidly globalizing world (Kurian, 2024).

In conclusion, it lays the groundwork for understanding the importance of multicultural literacy in early childhood education, particularly within the unique context of Shanghai. It highlights the significance of this study in addressing the gaps in current educational practices and providing a roadmap for creating more inclusive and culturally responsive preschool environments.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

There are four main research objectives related to this study, including the following aspects:

RO1: To investigate the status quo of preschool teachers' multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China.

RO2: To explore the influencing factors of the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, China.

RO3: To investigate the challenges faced by preschool teachers' multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China.

RO4: To explore the strategies to improve the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers in Shanghai, China.

## II. Research Methodology

Based on the research objectives,

qualitative research method was selected as the most suitable approach for this study. This methodology allows for a deep exploration of the complexities surrounding multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai. The study is structured into two key methodological components: Data Collection Methods, which detail how interviews, observations, and document analysis were employed to gather comprehensive data; and Data Analysis Methods, where three-stage coding was used to systematically analyze the data and develop a theoretical framework based on the findings.

### 2.1 Data collection methods

Through the adoption of various data collection methods such as interviews, document analysis, and observations, the researcher aimed to collect comprehensive information on the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers. Interviews enabled an in-depth understanding of preschool teachers' cultural awareness, teaching practices, and multicultural experiences. Simultaneously, document analysis unveiled the theoretical foundations and developmental trajectories of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers. By employing observations, the researcher sought to gain a holistic insight into training environments, interactions, and teaching methodologies.

For these four research questions, different instruments were used, including interview, observation and document analysis. Specifically, RQ1 utilized interview with preschool teachers to understand the current status of their multicultural literacy, RQ2 relied on document analysis to identify the factors influencing the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers, RQ3 employed both interview and observation with preschool teachers to explore the challenges they face in developing multicultural literacy, and RQ4 used interview with both preschool teachers and university teachers, as well as document analysis, to determine effective strategies for improving the multicultural educational literacy of preschool teachers.

Table 2.1: Instruments table

RO	RQ	Instruments
RO1: To investigate the status quo of preschool teachers' multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China.	RQ1: What is the status quo of preschool teachers' multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China?	Interview (Preschool teachers)
RO2: To explore the influencing factors	RQ2: What are the factors	



of the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, China.	influencing the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, China?	Document analysis
RO3: To investigate the challenges faced by preschool teachers' multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China.	RQ3: How the challenges face by the preschool teachers in developing multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China?	Interview (Preschool teachers)
		Observation
RO4: To explore the strategies to improve the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers in Shanghai, China.	RQ4: What are the strategies to improve the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers in Shanghai, China?	Interview (Preschool teachers and teachers of university)
		Document analysis

## 2.2 Data Analysis method

The study "Multi-Cultural Literacy Among Preschool Teachers in Shanghai, China" employs three-stage coding as the primary method for data analysis. Three-stage coding, initially developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967, is a systematic methodology in the social sciences that involves constructing theories through systematically gathering and analyzing data. This approach is particularly suitable for research areas where existing theories are underdeveloped, or the researcher aims to generate a new theory directly from the data. Three-stage coding is widely used in qualitative research to explore complex social processes, especially in sociology, education, and health sciences.

Three-stage coding was chosen for this study due to its flexibility and depth, which allow for the discovery of patterns and themes directly from the data. Given the complexity of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers—a subject that has not been extensively theorized in existing literature—three-stage coding provides the tools to build a nuanced understanding based on empirical data (Birks & Mills, 2022).

This study collected data through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Specifically, the data set includes interview records with 20 preschool teachers and 8 university educators, observation records of 12 preschool

teachers, and 20 documents related to multicultural education in early childhood settings. The data were analyzed through a three-stage coding process: open, axial, and selective coding.

**Open Coding:** The first stage, open coding, involves breaking down the data into discrete parts, closely examining them, and comparing them for similarities and differences. During this phase, the researcher identifies, names, categorizes, and describes phenomena in the text. Each interview, observation, and document was meticulously reviewed in this study, and relevant data was coded line by line. This stage is critical for identifying key concepts and their properties. Turner & Astin emphasized that open coding should be conducted without preconceived categories, allowing the categories to emerge from the data (Turner & Astin, 2021).

**Axial Coding:** In the second stage, axial coding, the researcher begins to identify relationships among the open codes. This process involves reassembling the data in new ways by drawing connections between categories identified during open coding. Axial coding is essential for refining and differentiating the categories, allowing the researcher to develop more precise and robust connections among the data. In this study, axial coding facilitated the identification and exploration of relationships between various aspects of multicultural literacy across the diverse data sets, including the experiences and perceptions of



preschool teachers and university educators and the insights derived from observation records and document analysis. Kraiwanit and other scholars later expanded on this stage, emphasizing the importance of relating subcategories to a central phenomenon (Kraiwanit et al., 2023).

**Selective Coding:** The final stage, selective coding, involves the integration of categories to form a coherent theory. During this phase, the researcher identifies a core category that represents the central theme of the study and systematically relates other categories to this core category. This process involves refining and trimming the theory, ensuring all categories are well-developed and grounded in the data. For this study, selective coding culminated in a comprehensive understanding of how multicultural literacy manifests in the professional practices of preschool teachers in Shanghai. Limna's original formulation of selective coding stresses the importance of developing a central storyline that integrates all major categories (Limna, 2023).

To facilitate this intricate process, NVivo12 software was utilized, a sophisticated tool designed for qualitative data analysis. NVivo12 allows researchers to manage, shape, and make sense of unstructured information, streamlining the coding process. The software was precious for managing the large volume of data in this study, enabling the researcher to efficiently organize, code, and analyze the data across the three stages of coding (Limna, 2023).

In summary, three-stage coding was employed in this study to develop a well-grounded theoretical framework regarding multicultural literacy among preschool teachers. The three-stage coding process—open, axial, and selective coding—allowed for a systematic and rigorous data analysis, ensuring that the resulting theory is deeply rooted in the empirical evidence collected. The three-stage coding, as established by Glaser and Strauss, was particularly fitting for exploring this study's emergent themes and complex dynamics.

### III. Research Findings

This section delves into the discussion of findings corresponding to the four primary research objectives of this study. By systematically analyzing the data through open, axial, and selective coding, the research findings are matched one by one with the research objectives. The research findings are concisely presented in figures, with detailed

explanations provided for each, clearly reflecting the consistency between the research objectives and the findings.

#### 3.1 Research Objective 1

**RO1:** To investigate the status quo of preschool teachers' multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China.

**Theme 1:** The research reveals significant variability in multicultural competency levels among preschool teachers in Shanghai, a theme that emerged clearly from the analysis. Teachers' competencies varied widely, influenced by Communication Barriers, Cultural Sensitivity in Teaching, Professional Challenges Due to Cultural Misunderstandings and Strategies for Cultural Inclusion.

The first research objective aimed to investigate the current state of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai. The findings reveal that preschool teachers in Shanghai are actively engaged in enhancing their multicultural literacy. They face several vital aspects, including communication barriers due to linguistic and cultural differences, efforts to integrate cultural sensitivity into teaching methods, professional challenges arising from cultural misunderstandings, and various strategies for cultural inclusion. One of the primary challenges identified is communication barriers stemming from linguistic and cultural differences. Many preschool teachers encounter difficulties communicating effectively with children and parents who speak different languages or come from diverse cultural backgrounds. This issue is particularly pronounced in classrooms with many international students. Teachers must often use creative and resourceful methods, such as visual aids, body language, and bilingual assistants, to bridge these communication gaps. Despite their best efforts, misunderstandings can still occur, impacting teaching effectiveness and the classroom environment's inclusivity. Teachers are making significant efforts to integrate cultural sensitivity into their teaching methods. This involves being aware of and respectful of their students' cultural backgrounds and adapting their teaching styles to be more inclusive. For instance, teachers may incorporate culturally relevant examples and references in their lessons, ensuring students see their cultures reflected in the curriculum. This practice helps to validate students' cultural identities, making them feel valued and understood (Brown, 2024).

Additionally, teachers are incorporating diverse cultural materials, such as books, music, and art from various cultures, into their daily activities to expose children to a wide range of cultural



perspectives (Flinnery & Vanterpool, 2024). The professional challenges arising from cultural misunderstandings are another significant aspect highlighted by the findings. Teachers often face difficulties in navigating cultural nuances and avoiding cultural insensitivity. This is particularly challenging in a multicultural city like Shanghai, where diverse cultural expectations and practices can lead to misunderstandings. For example, specific acceptable disciplinary methods or teaching styles in one culture may be inappropriate or misunderstood in another. Teachers need ongoing training and support to develop cultural competence and handle these situations effectively and sensitively.

Teachers are employing various strategies for cultural inclusion to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. These strategies include incorporating diverse cultural elements into their teaching practices, using various teaching resources, integrating multicultural elements into their lessons, and planning activities celebrating different cultural traditions. Teachers organize cultural festivals, international days, and other events where children can share and celebrate their cultural heritage. Such activities enrich the educational experience and foster a sense of community and mutual respect among students. Teachers help children develop a broader understanding and appreciation of different cultures by highlighting and celebrating diversity. These efforts contribute positively to students' cultural identity and acceptance. When children see their cultures represented and respected in the classroom, it enhances their self-esteem and sense of belonging. It also encourages them to be more open and accepting

of cultural differences in their peers. This inclusive approach helps to create a classroom environment where all students feel safe, supported, and valued. Teachers' proactive measures in integrating multicultural literacy into their teaching practices are crucial in promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity among young learners. Despite these proactive measures, communication barriers and cultural misunderstandings persist. Teachers face challenges in effectively communicating with students and parents from diverse backgrounds (Lundqvist, 2023).

Additionally, cultural misunderstandings can still occur, even with the best intentions and efforts to promote cultural sensitivity. These issues highlight the need for continuous professional development and support for teachers. Ongoing training programs, workshops, and resources focused on multicultural education are essential to help teachers overcome these challenges and enhance their multicultural literacy further. In conclusion, while preschool teachers in Shanghai are making commendable efforts to enhance their multicultural literacy and create an inclusive learning environment, there is still room for improvement. Addressing communication barriers and cultural misunderstandings remains a priority (D'Agostino & Horton, 2023). By providing ongoing support and professional development opportunities for teachers, schools can ensure that educators are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students. This will ultimately contribute to a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment, benefiting teachers and young learners in Shanghai. The Illustration of Theme 1 is shown in Figure 3.1.

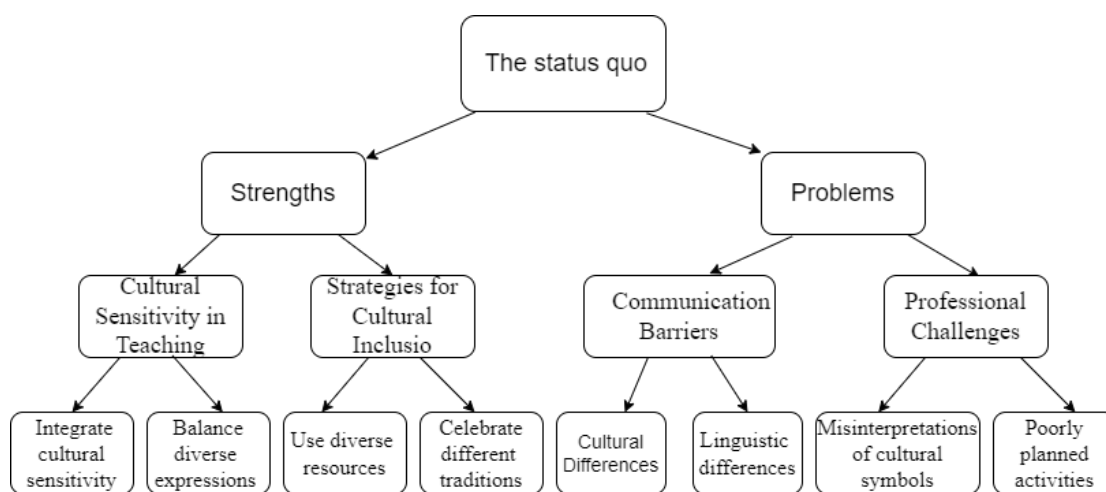


Figure 3.1: The Illustration of Theme 1 (the status quo)



Figure 3.1 illustrates the current state of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, divided into strengths and problems. On the strengths side, the diagram highlights "Cultural Sensitivity in Teaching" and "Strategies for Cultural Inclusion," which are closely interconnected and collectively enhance teachers' performance in multicultural education. Firstly, "Cultural Sensitivity in Teaching" includes integrating cultural sensitivity and balancing diverse expressions. Teachers are actively incorporating cultural sensitivity into their daily teaching practices by understanding the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students and ensuring their teaching methods respect and reflect this diversity. They strive to balance and represent various cultural expressions in the classroom, incorporating different cultural perspectives into the curriculum and ensuring all students feel seen and respected. For instance, by using examples and references related to students' cultural backgrounds, teachers can enhance students' cultural identity and sense of belonging. Secondly, "Strategies for Cultural Inclusion" involves using diverse resources and celebrating different traditions. Teachers employ a variety of teaching resources that reflect the cultural diversity of their students, including books, music, art, and other materials representing different cultures. This enriches the classroom content and exposes students to various cultural perspectives, fostering their global awareness. Educators also organize activities and events to celebrate different cultural traditions, helping students appreciate and understand the richness of cultural diversity. These activities enhance students' cultural understanding and promote interaction and cooperation among students, creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. On the side of the problem, the diagram identifies "Communication Barriers" and "Professional Challenges," which are interrelated and impact teachers' performance in multicultural education. "Communication Barriers" include cultural and linguistic differences. Many preschool teachers encounter difficulties effectively communicating with children and parents who speak different languages or come from diverse cultural backgrounds. These barriers can affect teaching effectiveness and the classroom environment's inclusivity. For example, teachers may need to use visual aids, body language, or bilingual assistants to help with communication, but misunderstandings can still occur, impacting teaching effectiveness.

Additionally, "Professional Challenges" such as misinterpretations of cultural symbols and poorly planned activities pose significant issues.

Teachers often face difficulties navigating cultural nuances and avoiding cultural insensitivity, which can lead to misunderstandings and negatively affect the learning experience (Z. Li, 2023). For instance, certain cultural symbols or behaviors may be considered normal in one culture but misunderstood or seen as impolite in another. These misunderstandings can create tension and disharmony in the classroom, affecting students' learning experiences. The diagram effectively depicts the dual aspects of the current state of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai. It showcases the positive efforts in integrating cultural sensitivity and using diverse resources while highlighting ongoing issues such as communication barriers and professional misunderstandings. Understanding these relationships helps identify areas where support and development are needed to enhance multicultural literacy and create a more inclusive educational environment.

### 3.2 Research Objective 2

RO 2: To explore the influencing factors of the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, China.

Theme2: The second research objective explored the factors influencing the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers. The formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai is influenced by several key factors. The importance of these influencing factors is determined based on the frequency of citations in the literature, ranked from highest to lowest as follows: Professional Development, Environmental Factors, Policy Directives, Individual Traits, and Community Involvement.

Professional development and training are identified as the most critical factors influencing the formation of multicultural literacy. These programs are essential in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage diverse classrooms effectively. Training workshops, seminars, and continuous professional development courses focus on multicultural education principles, culturally responsive teaching methods, and strategies for integrating diverse cultural content into the curriculum. Effective professional development programs also provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their cultural biases and develop more inclusive teaching practices. By participating in these programs, teachers become more adept at recognizing and addressing the unique cultural needs of their students, thereby fostering an



inclusive learning environment (Nguyen et al., 2023).

The cultural environment of the school and the support provided by the administration significantly impact teachers' multicultural literacy. Schools that promote a culturally rich and inclusive environment encourage teachers to adopt multicultural education practices. Institutional support, such as resources for multicultural activities, access to diverse teaching materials, and a strong emphasis on cultural competence in school policies, enhances teachers' ability to implement multicultural strategies effectively. Additionally, a diverse student body and faculty can provide a more authentic context for practicing and developing multicultural literacy. Schools that actively foster an environment of cultural exchange and learning not only support teachers in their efforts but also enrich the educational experiences of all students (Kalee et al., 2023).

Policy directives play a crucial role in guiding the implementation of multicultural education. Educational policies that emphasize the importance of multicultural literacy and set clear standards and practices ensure that teachers adhere to consistent and practical approaches (J. Xia et al., 2023). Government and educational authorities can influence the development of multicultural literacy by mandating specific training requirements, curriculum standards, and assessment criteria related to cultural competence. These policies help create a framework within which schools operate, ensuring that multicultural education is a priority and that teachers receive the necessary support and guidance to develop their multicultural literacy (Zhou, 2022).

Individual traits and educational experiences shape teachers' understanding and approach to multicultural education. Teachers' backgrounds, including their cultural heritage, experiences with diversity, and prior education, influence their perceptions and attitudes toward multiculturalism (Ye et al., 2024). Educators with

positive and extensive experiences with diverse cultures are more likely to incorporate inclusive practices into their teaching. Additionally, teachers who have undergone formal education or training in multicultural education are better prepared to handle the complexities of a diverse classroom. Personal commitment to continuous learning and openness to different cultural perspectives also play a vital role in developing strong multicultural literacy (Hua & Yang, 2024).

Community and parental involvement are vital to fostering multicultural literacy among preschool teachers. Engagement with diverse communities and parents provides teachers with a deeper understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds and needs. Collaborative efforts between schools and communities can lead to the development of culturally relevant programs and activities that reflect the diversity of the student population. Parental involvement in school activities and decision-making processes helps bridge cultural gaps and promotes a more inclusive school environment. Teachers can gain valuable insights and support in implementing effective multicultural education practices by working closely with parents and community members (Farndale & Reichelt, 2023).

In conclusion, the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai is influenced by a complex interplay of factors. Professional development and training, environmental and institutional support, policy directives, individual traits, and community and parental involvement play critical roles. Understanding these factors and their impact can help design targeted interventions and support systems to enhance multicultural literacy among educators. This, in turn, will contribute to creating a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment for young learners in Shanghai. The Illustration of Theme 2 is shown in Figure 3.2.



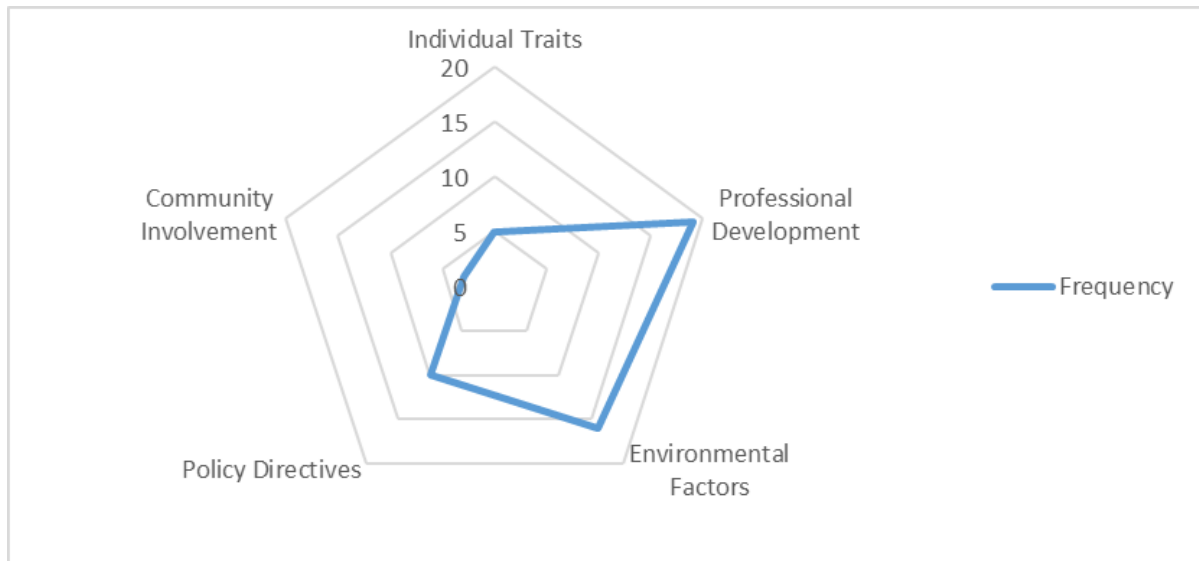


Figure 3.2: The Illustration of Theme 2(the influencing factors)

Figure 3.2 provides a visual representation of the frequency with which various factors influencing the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai were cited in the analyzed documents. It includes five primary factors, each represented by an axis extending from the center of the Figure. The frequency of citations for each factor is plotted along these axes, forming a polygonal shape that highlights the relative importance of each factor based on citation frequency.

**Professional Development:** With a citation frequency of 19, the literature highly emphasizes this factor. It underscores the importance of structured training programs and continuous professional learning opportunities in providing teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage diverse classrooms effectively.

**Environmental Factors:** This factor has a citation frequency of 16. It reflects the school's cultural environment's significant role and the support the administration provides in shaping teachers' approaches to multicultural education.

**Policy Directives:** Cited 10 times, policy directives are recognized for shaping educational frameworks and standards. These policies dictate the design and implementation of multicultural education programs, ensuring that schools adhere to inclusive practices and provide necessary resources for teacher training.

**Individual Traits:** This factor has a citation frequency of 5. It indicates the number of times

personal characteristics such as openness, empathy, and adaptability were mentioned as critical elements in shaping teachers' ability to engage with culturally diverse students and adopt inclusive teaching practices.

**Community Involvement:** This factor has the lowest citation frequency of 3. It highlights the role of engaging parents and community members in the educational process, which helps create a comprehensive and supportive environment for students and enhances the effectiveness of multicultural teaching practices.

Figure 5.2 visually illustrates that Professional Development (19 times) and Environmental Factors (16 times) are the most frequently cited factors, reflecting their perceived importance in forming multicultural literacy among preschool teachers. Policy Directives (10 times) and Individual Traits (5 times) also play significant roles, while Community Involvement (3 times) is cited the least frequently, indicating a relatively lower emphasis in the analyzed literature.

The relationship between these factors is interconnected and hierarchical. Professional development and training are emphasized the most because they provide the essential skills and knowledge that underpin all other aspects. Teachers may lack the confidence and competence to engage effectively with multicultural education without proper training. This is why professional development stands as the cornerstone of multicultural literacy formation.



Environmental factors and policy directives serve as the support system that enables and reinforces the application of skills gained through professional development. A supportive school environment and clear policy guidelines create a conducive atmosphere for implementing multicultural strategies. These factors ensure that the theoretical knowledge acquired during professional development is translated into practical, everyday teaching practices.

While cited less frequently, individual traits are fundamental because they influence how teachers internalize and apply their training. Teachers' characteristics, such as openness and empathy, are crucial for effectively implementing multicultural practices. These traits can enhance or hinder the impact of professional development and the supportive environment provided by schools and policies.

Community involvement, although cited the least, provides a practical link between the classroom and the broader cultural context of the students. Engaging with the community enriches the educational experience and helps teachers better understand their students' cultural backgrounds, thus making multicultural education more relevant and effective.

Figure 3.2 and the subsequent analysis highlight the multifaceted and interconnected nature of the factors influencing the formation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai. Professional development and environmental factors are crucial, as well as providing teachers with the necessary skills and supportive context. Policy directives offer a structured framework that guides these efforts, while individual traits and community involvement enhance and contextualize the application of multicultural strategies. Understanding these relationships helps design comprehensive approaches to improve multicultural literacy among educators, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment.

### 3.3 Research Objective 3

RO 3: To investigate the challenges faced by preschool teachers' multicultural literacy in Shanghai, China.

Theme 3: This theme identified systemic challenges in Multicultural Education including inconsistencies in multicultural training, a gap between theory and practice, difficulty in implementing culturally

sensitive practices, ineffective communication strategies, and insufficient ongoing professional development.

The third objective examined the challenges preschool teachers face in developing multicultural literacy. Preschool teachers in Shanghai face several challenges in developing multicultural literacy. Inconsistencies in multicultural training lead to varied levels of preparedness among teachers. The training programs often lack standardization and coherence, resulting in some teachers receiving comprehensive multicultural education while others do not. This inconsistency creates a fragmented understanding of multicultural principles and practices, making ensuring uniform implementation across different schools and classrooms challenging (X. Lu, 2023).

There is often a significant gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making it difficult for teachers to implement what they have learned. Teachers may understand multicultural concepts theoretically but struggle to translate this knowledge into actionable teaching strategies. This gap is partly due to a lack of practical training opportunities within the professional development programs. For instance, while teachers might be familiar with the importance of inclusive practices, they may not have the hands-on experience to integrate them into their daily teaching routines. Additionally, teachers struggle with integrating culturally sensitive practices into their daily routines (D. Zhou & Hedges, 2023). This difficulty is compounded by the limited resources available to support culturally responsive teaching. Teachers often lack access to culturally diverse materials and teaching aids, essential for creating an inclusive classroom environment (Zhang & Jiang, 2023).

Moreover, there is a need for ongoing support and guidance on how to navigate cultural nuances and sensitivities, particularly in a diverse city like Shanghai, where students come from various cultural backgrounds. Ineffective communication strategies further complicate interactions with students and parents from diverse backgrounds. Communication barriers, such as language differences and cultural misunderstandings, can hinder effective engagement with students and their families. Teachers may find it challenging to build strong relationships with parents who do not share the same cultural or linguistic background, which is crucial for fostering a supportive educational environment. Effective communication strategies



are essential for understanding the needs and expectations of students and their families and for conveying the goals and values of multicultural education. Finally, insufficient ongoing professional development means teachers lack continuous support and opportunities to update their skills and knowledge in multicultural education. The dynamic nature of multicultural education requires teachers to continuously learn and adapt to new cultural contexts and educational practices (Duan et al., 2023). However, many teachers do not have access to regular professional development opportunities that focus specifically on multicultural education. This lack of continuous learning opportunities prevents teachers from staying current with the latest research and best practices in the field, limiting their ability to effectively address their students' diverse needs (Luo et al., 2023). These

challenges collectively hinder the effective development of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai. Addressing these systemic issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes standardizing multicultural training programs, bridging the gap between theory and practice through practical training opportunities, providing culturally diverse resources, enhancing communication strategies, and ensuring ongoing professional development. By tackling these challenges, educational leaders and policymakers can create a more supportive and practical framework for developing multicultural literacy among preschool teachers, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment. The Illustration of Theme 3 is shown in Figure 3.3.

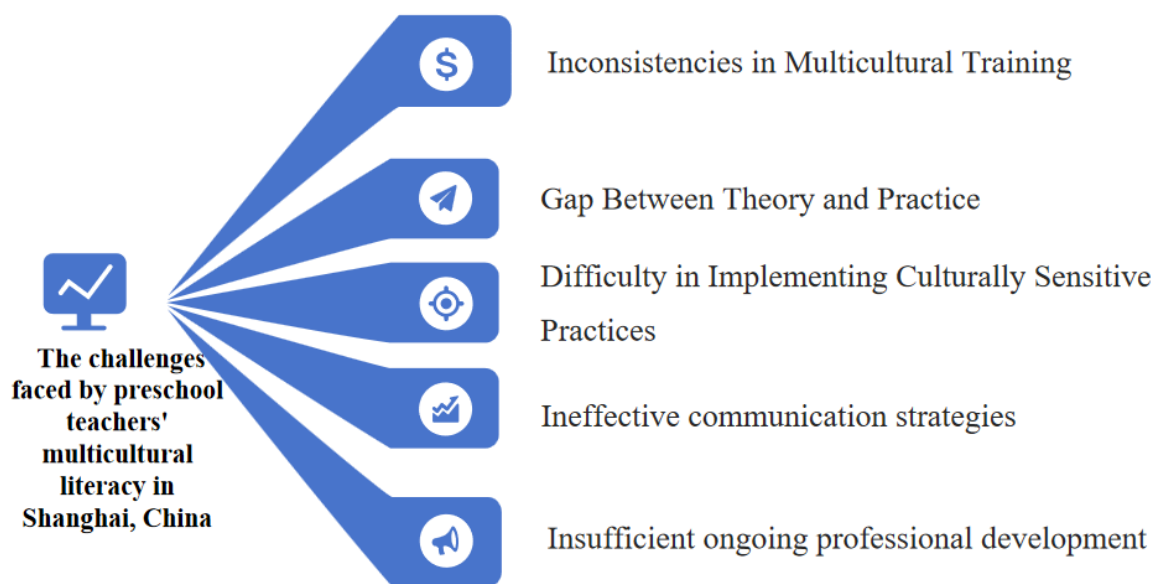


Figure 3.3: The Illustration of Theme 3 (The Challenges)

Figure 3.3 illustrates the theme of "The Challenges Faced by Preschool Teachers' Multicultural Literacy in Shanghai, China," highlighting five primary challenges that impact the development and implementation of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers. These challenges are inconsistencies in multicultural training, the gap between theory and practice, difficulty in implementing culturally sensitive practices, ineffective communication strategies, and insufficient ongoing professional development. The diagram demonstrates how these factors are interconnected and contribute to the difficulty of achieving effective multicultural education.

Inconsistencies in multicultural training lead to disparities in teachers' knowledge and skills, making it challenging to maintain a uniform approach to multicultural education across different schools and classrooms. This foundational issue exacerbates the gap between what teachers learn in their training programs and what they can realistically implement in their classrooms, as the lack of practical training opportunities and support hinders the translation of theory into practice.

Consequently, teachers struggle to implement culturally sensitive practices due to insufficient resources, training, or personal biases. This is



further complicated by the inconsistency in multicultural training and the gap between theory and practice. Effective communication is crucial for fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive classroom environment, but teachers often face challenges communicating with students and parents from diverse cultural backgrounds. This issue is exacerbated by insufficient training in communication strategies and a lack of ongoing professional development, leading to misunderstandings and a failure to engage students and their families entirely. Finally, inadequate ongoing professional development prevents teachers from refining their skills, learning new strategies, and addressing challenges in their multicultural classrooms. These interconnected challenges reinforce each other, creating a cycle that hinders the effective implementation of multicultural education. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that ensures consistent training, practical application of theories, effective communication strategies, and continuous professional development.

### **3.4 Research Objective 4**

RO 4: To explore the strategies to improve the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers in Shanghai, China.

Theme 4: The study proposed strategies to improve multicultural literacy, emphasizing the need for comprehensive curriculum integration, practical engagement and application, ongoing access to resources, feedback and reflective practice, immersive cultural experiences, integration of technology, and supportive institutional policies.

The final objective focused on identifying strategies to enhance multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai. Several effective strategies can be employed to achieve this, each addressing specific aspects of multicultural education and aligning closely with the research objective.

Comprehensive curriculum integration ensures that multicultural elements are embedded throughout the educational program. This involves systematically incorporating multicultural perspectives into various subjects and activities, making cultural diversity a core component of the academic experience. By doing so, teachers can provide students with consistent exposure to diverse cultural viewpoints, fostering an inclusive learning environment from an early age (Tan & Perren, 2023).

Practical engagement and application allow teachers

to implement multicultural concepts in real-world settings. This strategy emphasizes the importance of hands-on experiences and active learning opportunities where teachers can apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. For example, teachers might engage students in multicultural projects, role-playing scenarios, or community-based activities that highlight cultural diversity. These valuable applications help bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring teachers are better prepared to manage culturally diverse classrooms (Rao et al., 2023).

Providing ongoing access to resources helps teachers stay informed and equipped with the latest tools and materials. Schools and educational institutions should ensure teachers access up-to-date multicultural resources, such as books, multimedia materials, and teaching aids. Regular updates and continuous professional development opportunities enable teachers to stay current with emerging trends and best practices in multicultural education (Ai et al., 2024).

Feedback and reflective practice encourage continuous improvement by allowing teachers to evaluate and refine their approaches. Structured feedback mechanisms, such as peer reviews, mentoring, and self-assessment tools, provide valuable insights into teaching practices. Reflective practice encourages teachers to critically analyze their experiences, identify areas for improvement, and implement changes that enhance their effectiveness in delivering multicultural education (Gong & Rao, 2023).

Immersive cultural experiences deepen teachers' understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. By participating in cultural exchange programs, attending cultural festivals, or engaging in community events, teachers can gain firsthand experience of different cultural traditions and practices. These immersive experiences foster empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a deeper appreciation for diversity, essential qualities for culturally competent educators (Sun et al., 2023).

The integration of technology offers innovative ways to teach and learn about multiculturalism. Digital tools, such as virtual reality experiences, online cultural exchange platforms, and interactive learning apps, can enhance multicultural education by providing dynamic and engaging learning opportunities. Technology can also facilitate global connections, allowing students and teachers to



interact with peers from different cultural backgrounds, broadening their artistic horizons (Zhufeng & Sitthiworachart, 2024).

Supportive institutional policies create an environment that prioritizes and facilitates multicultural education. Educational leaders and policymakers should develop and implement policies that promote inclusivity, provide resources for multicultural programs, and support ongoing professional development. For instance, policies that encourage the inclusion of multicultural education in the curriculum, allocate funding for multicultural initiatives, and establish diversity committees can significantly enhance the effectiveness of

multicultural education efforts (Yi & Gaikwad, 2024).

Together, these strategies contribute to developing well-rounded, culturally competent educators. By aligning with the research objective, these strategies provide a comprehensive framework for improving the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers in Shanghai. Implementing these recommendations can help create an educational environment that values diversity, promotes inclusivity, and prepares teachers to address the needs of culturally diverse students effectively. The Illustration of Theme 4 is shown in Figure 3.4.

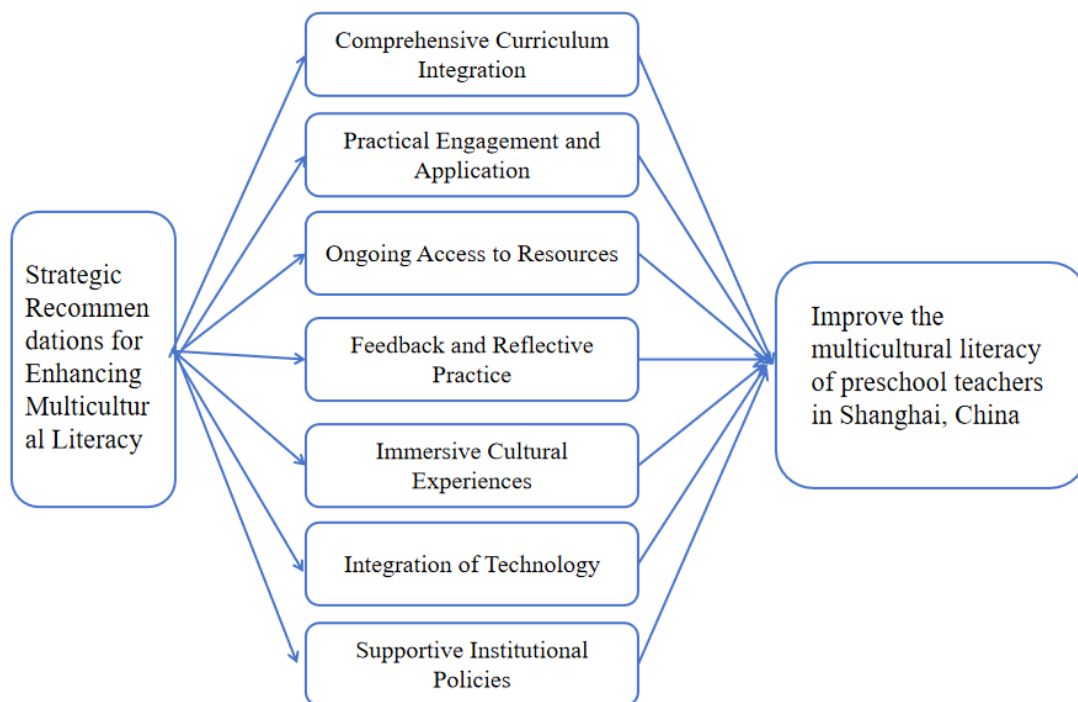


Figure 3.4: The Illustration of Theme 4 (Strategic Recommendations)

Figure 3.4 illustrates "Strategic Recommendations for Enhancing Multicultural Literacy," aiming to improve the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers in Shanghai, China. The diagram presents seven key recommendations: comprehensive curriculum integration, practical engagement and application, ongoing access to resources, feedback and reflective practice, immersive cultural experiences, integration of technology, and supportive institutional policies. These recommendations are interconnected and collectively contribute to enhancing multicultural literacy. Comprehensive curriculum integration

ensures that multicultural content is systematically embedded throughout the educational program, providing a solid foundation for teachers. This integration means that cultural diversity is not an isolated topic but a consistent theme woven into various subjects and activities, enabling teachers to incorporate multicultural perspectives naturally and regularly in their teaching. Practical engagement and application allow teachers to implement these concepts in real-world settings, bridging the gap between theory and practice. By actively applying multicultural principles in their classrooms, teachers can better understand the nuances and challenges of



multicultural education, gaining practical experience that reinforces their theoretical knowledge. Ongoing access to resources ensures teachers have continuous access to the materials, tools, and support they need to continue learning and adapting their practices. This access includes diverse educational resources, such as culturally relevant books, teaching aids, and professional development materials that support teachers in keeping their multicultural teaching strategies current and effective. Feedback and reflective practice enable teachers to evaluate their methods and continuously improve. Regular feedback from peers supervisors, and self-reflection sessions help teachers critically assess their teaching practices, identify areas for improvement, and implement changes that enhance their effectiveness in delivering multicultural education. Immersive cultural experiences deepen teachers' understanding of diverse cultures, fostering empathy and cultural sensitivity. By engaging in cultural immersion activities, such as cultural exchange programs, visits to cultural centers, and participation in cultural festivals, teachers can gain firsthand experience and a deeper appreciation of their students' cultural backgrounds. Technology integration provides innovative tools and platforms for multicultural education, enhancing accessibility and engagement. Technology can offer virtual cultural experiences, access to global educational resources, and interactive learning platforms that make multicultural education more engaging and accessible for teachers and students. Supportive institutional policies create an environment that encourages and sustains these efforts, ensuring that multicultural literacy remains a priority. Policies that promote cultural competence training allocate resources for multicultural programs, and support an inclusive school culture are essential for maintaining a consistent focus on multicultural education. Together, these strategic recommendations form a comprehensive approach to improving the multicultural literacy of preschool teachers in Shanghai. By addressing both the theoretical and practical aspects of multicultural education, this integrated strategy ensures that teachers are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students. Comprehensive curriculum integration provides the foundation. Practical engagement reinforces theoretical knowledge, ongoing access to resources supports continuous learning feedback, reflective practice drives improvement, immersive cultural experiences foster empathy, technology enhances engagement, and supportive institutional policies sustain these efforts. This holistic approach aims to create a more inclusive and culturally

responsive educational environment, benefiting teachers and young learners in Shanghai.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The findings of this study demonstrate a clear alignment between the research objectives and the conclusions drawn. The study aimed to investigate the current state of multicultural literacy among preschool teachers in Shanghai, identify influencing factors, examine challenges, and propose improvement strategies.

The study found substantial variability in multicultural literacy levels among teachers, consistent with the first objective. This variability was linked to differences in Communication Barriers, Cultural Sensitivity in Teaching, Professional Challenges Due to Cultural Misunderstandings and Strategies for Cultural Inclusion.

In line with the second objective, key factors influencing the development of multicultural literacy were identified, including Individual traits and educational experiences, Professional Development and Training, Environmental and Institutional Factors, Policy Directives and Community and Parental Involvement.

The third objective highlighted several challenges faced by teachers, including inconsistencies in Multicultural Training, Gap Between Theory and Practice, Difficulty in Implementing Culturally Sensitive Practices, Ineffective communication strategies and Insufficient ongoing professional development. These challenges were found to significantly hinder the development of effective multicultural education practices.

Addressing the fourth objective, the study proposed several strategies to improve multicultural literacy, such as the need for Comprehensive Curriculum Integration, Practical Engagement and Application, Ongoing Access to Resources, Feedback and Reflective Practice, Immersive Cultural Experiences, Integration of Technology and Supportive Institutional Policies. These strategies collectively form a holistic approach aimed at significantly enhancing the multicultural competencies of preschool teachers in Shanghai.

In summary, the research objectives were systematically addressed, and the findings consistently aligned with the goals set out at the



beginning of the study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting multicultural literacy and offering practical strategies for improvement.

Future study should explore the applicability of the "Comprehensive Multicultural Integration Framework" in different educational settings and cultural contexts. Expanding the research to include a diverse range of regions and educational levels could provide a more comprehensive understanding of multicultural literacy. By examining various geographical areas and incorporating a broader spectrum of educational stages, from preschool to higher education, researchers can gain deeper insights into how multicultural literacy develops and is sustained across different contexts.

Additionally, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the long-term effectiveness of multicultural training programs and the sustainability of their impact on teachers' competencies. These studies would provide valuable data on how teachers' skills and attitudes evolve over time and how sustained training efforts influence their ability to manage culturally diverse classrooms.

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