



College of Education and Language Studies

School of Psychology

**The Role of Cultural Diversity at Bingham Academy:
Opportunities for Positive Cross-Cultural Learning and its
Challenges on Social Identity formation**

By

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Psychology, College of Education and Language
Studies, Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Social Psychology

MAY 2026

ADDIS ABABA

Adviser's Approval

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Abbreviations

TIE: The International Educator

DMIS: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

KII: Key Informant Interview

Abstract

The research investigated the issue of cultural diversity in Bingham Academy, highlighting the prospects for positive cross-cultural learning and the problems associated with the process of social identity formation among the students. The research was based on three main goals, which were as follows: (1) the analysis of cultural diversity and the contribution of cultural diversity in the process of cross-cultural learning of students; (2) the identification of problems in the process of social identity formation among students; and (3) the determination of approaches for the creation of an inclusive educational environment. The research was conducted using mixed method research design and collected from 150 respondents as well as analyzed the collected data using SPSS software version 26. The findings on cross-cultural learning showed that students normally gain from the multicultural setting especially in relation to gaining new perspectives, cooperative learning, and cultural interaction. Nonetheless, based on descriptive statistics, there were differences in confidence levels and benefits gained from diversity, showing that students may differ in their experience of diversity. The KII findings also revealed that cultural interactions through classroom activities, friendships, and events at the school promote intercultural empathy and openness. On social identity development, it was found that the majority of the students have experienced a sense of belonging and inclusivity in the school community. Some students, however, had challenges including identity confusion, peer pressure, language barriers, and sometimes stereotyping and discrimination. The research highlighted important measures that can be used in improving inclusion, such as conducting group activities, culturally responsive teaching, and teacher training on cultural sensitivity. The students stressed the need for respectful communication and increased presence of different cultures within school activities. In summary, the research suggests that there are good chances for cross-cultural education and development of identity due to the presence of cultural diversity at Bingham Academy.

Keywords: Bingham Academy, cross-cultural learning, cultural diversity; inclusive education; sense of belonging; social identity formation

Chapter one

1. Introduction

The first chapter contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, research questions, organization of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Today, in almost any country, region or community, there has been a significant increase in the presence of students from diverse backgrounds in international schools which has transformed the composition of the student population from homogeneous to multicultural (Palaiologou et al., 2020).

International schools are communities with students from many different cultural, national, and social backgrounds learning together. This kind of education centers are increasing these days and very common in our world which is acting like small diverse community. In such environments, cultural diversity promotes education by bringing different viewpoints, values, and ways of communicating into everyday classroom communication. Students are exposed to academic learning and also to cross-cultural experiences that influence their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Mix of cultures in international schools creates both opportunities and challenges for students' personal and social growth (Hayden & Thompson, 2013; Deardorff, 2009; Schwarzenhal et al., 2020).

Bingham Academy, established in 1946, is one of Ethiopia's oldest and most respected international schools. It was originally established to serve missionary families but it expanded to include students from over 30 nationalities. The school offers a Christian-based curriculum with international standards, aiming to prepare students for international commitment while nurturing their spiritual development.

When we see from social psychology viewpoint, intercultural communication can be a powerful tool for reducing prejudgment and promoting social harmony. According to Allport's Contact Hypothesis (1954), meaningful interaction between people from different groups when there is equal status, shared goals, and support from the institution can improve understanding and

empathy. In international schools, students have great opportunities for such interaction, which can improve intercultural skills, open-mindedness, and a sense of global citizenship. These types of experiences support positive cross-cultural learning, helping students appreciate diversity, think critically, and prepare to take part in a gradual connected world (Schwarzenthal et al., 2020).

In spite of these benefits, cultural diversity can also create psychological and social challenges for students. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains that people form part of their self-identity through the groups they belong to and by comparing themselves with others. In multicultural schools, students may feel confused about their identity as they move between their home culture and the international school culture. Differences in language, ethnicity, or social norms can lead to the creation of in-groups and out-groups, which may cause exclusion, stereotyping, or cultural isolation. These challenges can influence students' sense of belonging, self-esteem, and participation in learning.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Even though international schools give diverse and multicultural learning environment which add cross-cultural understanding, they can create complex challenges connected to students' social identity formation. Students from different cultural traditions may experience different levels of belonging, adjustment, and social inclusion. While positive intercultural contact can increase empathy and global awareness, as explained by Allport's Contact Hypothesis (1954), not all interactions lead to positive results. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the human need for group belonging can cause students to form exclusive peer groups based on nationality, language, or ethnicity, which may result in social divisions and identity struggles.

In many international schools, these social and psychological processes are not fully understood or systematically addressed. Therefore, educators may find it difficult to balance promoting intercultural learning with supporting students' identity development. This study, therefore, aims to explore how cultural diversity at Bingham Academy School offers opportunities for positive

cross-cultural learning but creates challenges for students' social identity development (Social Identity Theory -Tajfel & Turner, 1979 and Intercultural Competence Theory -Deardorff, 2006)

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

To explore how cultural diversity creates both opportunities and challenges for students' cross-cultural learning and social identity development at Bingham Academy School.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1. To explore how cultural diversity contributes to students' cross-cultural learning.
2. To identify challenges students reportedly face in forming their social identities.
3. To suggest strategies for creating inclusive and supportive environments that encourages positive cross-cultural relationships and identity development.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How does cultural diversity influence students' cross-cultural learning?
2. What challenges do students face in forming their social identities in a school context?
3. What strategies can educators use to support students in classrooms with class-mates from diverse backgrounds?

1.5. Significance of the Study

It is very important to understand about the opportunities and challenges of cultural diversity at international schools, specially by teachers, counselor and school leaders. Encouraging positive cross-cultural learning needs courage that helps expansion, equality and common respect. At the same time, helping students develop a strong and confident sense of identity is essential in a diverse environment. When we see these ideas through social psychology, this study fills a gap in Ethiopian research on the goals to expand how international schools can help understanding intercultural learning and healthy identity formation among students. These ideas must be discussed raising both positive and negative aspects to give a balanced view, opportunities vs. challenges. Existing studies have not sufficiently examined the intersection between cross-

cultural learning opportunities and the identity struggles that accompany cultural diversity in international schools.

1.6. Definition of terms

Cultural Diversity:	The presence of multiple cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups within a school community.
Cross-Cultural: Learning	The process of understanding, interacting, and learning with people from different cultural backgrounds.
Social Identity: Formation	How students develop a sense of who they are based on cultural and social group memberships.
International School:	An institution serving students from diverse national and cultural backgrounds, often with an international curriculum.

Positive cross-cultural learning: Cultural diversity allows students to learn from each other's experiences, develop respect, and grow socially and intellectually.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter one described the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, research questions, and definition of key terms. Chapter two presents review of the literature which includes theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. The third chapter presents the research methodology which covers the research approach, design, population and sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and tools, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations and budget. The fourth chapter presents the Findings, and chapter five presents summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature related to cultural diversity, cross-cultural learning, and social identity formation in international school settings. The purpose of this review is to provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for the study by examining key concepts, theories, and previous research findings. The chapter discusses the concept of culture, the theoretical frameworks that guide the study, including Social Identity Theory and Contact Hypothesis, and the conceptual framework. It also reviews empirical studies on cultural diversity in international schools, cross-cultural learning, intercultural competence, social identity formation, and multicultural education. Finally, the chapter identifies gaps in the existing literature that justify the need for the present study on cultural diversity at Bingham Academy and its implications for students' cross-cultural learning and social identity development.

2.1 Concepts and definition of culture

This section defines the main terms for this study. The first of these words is culture. Culture can be defined as ‘an integrated constellation of practices, symbols, values, and ideals that are constructed and shared by a community or ethnic group, transmitted from one generation to the next, constantly renegotiated and subject to change, and operating at the individual and societal level’(Civitillo, 2019). It is the “norms or specific guides that shape conduct, the agreed upon values espoused through an organization, the philosophy that guides the campus’ attitudes, understandings, priorities, and actions regarding students, staff, faculty, and teaching, research and service” (Moss (2018).

Culture is a learned and shared system of values, beliefs, customs, behaviors, symbols, and practices that guide how individuals understand and interact with the world around them. Contemporary scholars view culture as the collective way of life of a social group, encompassing language, traditions, social norms, knowledge, artistic expressions, and everyday practices that are transmitted across generations. Culture is reflected in people's patterns of communication, thinking, behavior, dress, food preferences, family relationships, and social institutions. It is not static; rather, it evolves over time through social interaction, historical experiences, and changing societal contexts. As a dynamic and symbolic system, culture shapes individuals’ identities,

influences their worldview, and provides a framework through which members of a society create meaning and maintain social cohesion, Guest, K. M. (2023) and Lumen Learning. (2024).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in **social psychology theories** that explain how cultural diversity influences both cross-cultural learning and social identity formation among students at Bingham Academy, an international school. I tried to apply two key theories.

2.2.1. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals derive a part of their self-concept from their membership in social groups. In multicultural school environments, students may identify with multiple groups such as their nationality, language group, or peer circle-which can affect their self-esteem, sense of belonging, and social interactions. While strong group identification can provide psychological security, it may also lead to **in group favoritism** and **out-group exclusion**, creating challenges in forming inclusive and cohesive social networks. In this study, Social Identity Theory helps explain the **challenges of social identity formation** faced by students in culturally diverse settings.

2.2.2. Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954)

Allport's Contact *Hypothesis* suggests that under appropriate conditions-such as equal status, common goals, cooperation, and institutional support-interaction between members of different groups reduces prejudice and fosters positive attitudes. In international schools, daily interactions among students from diverse backgrounds create opportunities for **cross-cultural learning**, including the development of empathy, intercultural competence, and respect for diversity. This theory provides a framework to examine how structured or meaningful intercultural contact can promote positive learning outcomes.

By combining the above two perspectives, this study investigates both the **opportunities** (positive cross-cultural learning via meaningful contact) and the **challenges** (identity-related tensions and social comparison) of cultural diversity. The theories together provide a lens for

understanding how students navigate complex social dynamics while learning and developing their identities in multicultural school environments.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework visually and theoretically represents the relationships between **cultural diversity**, **cross-cultural learning**, and **social identity formation** in international schools. Cultural diversity provides both opportunities and challenges.

Opportunities occur when meaningful intercultural contact fosters positive cross-cultural learning (guided by Contact Hypothesis).

Globalization is growing very fast and international schools are bringing together students, teachers and families from different cultural, linguistic and national backgrounds. This kind of diverse educational setting brings special opportunities for cross cultural learning, personal growth and global citizenship.

Challenges arise when students experience identity conflicts, in-group/out-group tensions, or cultural adjustment pressures (explained by Social Identity Theory).

In Cultural diversity international schools embraces important capacity but presents complex challenges specially on students' social identity formation, grouping, belongings, mix culturally and psychological amendment of students closely multicultural setting (Shamoa-Nir & Milford 2025) examines how students in international schools direct identity, belonging and social belonging in culturally diverse settings, the pressures and tensions, and possible strategies for support.

Variables

Cultural Diversity

- Diverse nationalities
- Diverse cultural backgrounds
- Diverse languages
- Diverse grades

Positive Cross-Cultural Learning

- Learning from different background
- Perspective from peers of other culture
- Teachers encouragement (culture experience)
- Improve learning
- Cross-cultural communication skills

Challenges of Social Identity Formation

- Identity confusion
- Comparing with peers from different culture background
- Sense of belonging issues
- In-group and out-group, culture background

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1. Cultural Diversity in International Schools

Cultural diversity refers to the existence of multiple cultural groups within a shared environment. In international schools, diversity is seen as strength because it gives students a chance to learn from different perspective, traditions and a way of thinking. According to Lyons (2018), international schools serve as “bridges of understanding,” helping students respect and understanding people from other cultures.

Though, diversity also introduces complexity, cultural norms, communication styles, and values may differ significantly among students, leading to misunderstandings or social fragmentation. Lyons emphasizes that while diversity can foster creativity and innovation, it can also create “walls of separation” if not managed intentionally. This duality underscores the importance of deliberate strategies to promote inclusion and intercultural understanding.

2.4.2. Cross-Cultural Learning and Intercultural Competence

Cross-cultural learning involves getting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. Deardorff (2006) defines

intercultural competence as the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively across cultures, a skill increasingly vital in globalized societies.

Bennett, M. J. (2025) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) outlines six stages of intercultural development: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. This model helps educators understand how students' progress from ethnocentric to ethnorelative worldviews. In international schools, students often move along this continuum through daily interactions with culturally diverse peers.

Savva and Stanfield (2018) found that students in international schools be likely to develop higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than their peers in monoculture settings. However, they caution that exposure alone is insufficient. Schools must provide structured opportunities for reflection, dialogue, and critical engagement with cultural differences to foster meaningful intercultural growth.

In Ethiopia, where international education is still emerging, there is limited research on how cross-cultural learning is facilitated. Most schools rely on informal interactions rather than formal intercultural curricula, which may limit students' development of deeper intercultural competence.

2.4.3. Social Identity Formation in Multicultural Contexts

Social identity refers to an individual's sense of self based on group membership, such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, or language. Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory posits that individuals label themselves and others into in-groups and out-groups, which can influence behavior, self-esteem, and social dynamics.

In multicultural schools, students often face the challenge of balancing multiple identities. They may feel torn between their home culture and the dominant school culture, leading to identity confusion or marginalization. This is especially true for Third Culture Kids (TCKs) students who spend a significant part of their developmental years outside their parents' culture. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) describe Third Culture Kids (TCKs) as individuals who "build relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any."

Useem and Downie (1976) found that Third Culture (Kids TCKs) often experience delayed identity formation and face difficulties when transitioning to higher education or returning to their passport countries. These findings highlight the need for schools to provide targeted support for identity development, especially in culturally diverse environments.

In Ethiopia, where cultural identity is often closely tied to ethnicity and language, students in international schools may experience isolated between their school environment and the broader society. This can further complicate their identity formation and sense of belonging.

2.4.4. Multicultural Education and Inclusion

Multicultural education aims to create equitable learning environments by recognizing and valuing cultural differences. Banks (2008) argues that effective multicultural education goes beyond celebrating cultural festivals; it involves integrating diverse perspectives into the curriculum, pedagogy, and school policies.

Nganga (2011) emphasizes that teachers play a critical role in fostering inclusive classrooms. On the other hand, many educators in Ethiopia lack training in culturally responsive pedagogy. This gap can lead to unintentional favoritisms, exclusionary practices, or a failure to address the needs of minority students.

Recent studies suggest that inclusive practices such as differentiated instruction, culturally relevant materials, and student-led cultural activities can enhance student engagement and academic success. In international schools, these practices are essential for creating a sense of belonging among students from diverse backgrounds.

2.5 Research Gap

It is true that we are seeing growing multicultural education in international schools, but there are gaps. The first one is limited focus on student viewpoints: Much of the literature emphasizes institutional policies or teacher practices, with less attention to how students personally experience cultural diversity. The second one is under representation of African contexts: Most studies are based in Western or Asian international schools. There is a lack of research on

international schools in Africa; particularly in Ethiopia (Bourgeois et al., 2025 and Deniz, 2025). The third one is lack of theoretical application: Many studies describe experiences without grounding them in established theories like Social Identity Theory or the DMIS

This study addresses these gaps by focusing on student voices at Bingham Academy, applying theoretical frameworks, and contributing to the limited literature on multicultural education in Ethiopian international schools.

Chapter Three

3. Research Design and Methods

Chapter three presents research design, research method, data source, population and sampling method, data collection method, data analysis method and ethical consideration of the study.

3.1. The Research Design

As Creswell (2014) mentioned research designs are plans and procedures for research that width the decisions from broad assumption to detailed method of data collection and analysis. In this study descriptive design was employed. They are commonly used in educational researches. In such cases the researcher asks questions concerning the attitudes, belief, opinions, practice, characteristics, and behavior of people so as to collect factual information (Mengesha, 2022).

3.2. Research Method

This study used mixed methods design approach through collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. In this study initially quantitative method was used through survey questionnaires, the questionnaire was adapted from previous studies on intercultural learning and identity development, particularly the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), with modifications to fit the context of Bingham Academy, while the researcher also used qualitative approach to supplement the quantitative data. First using such method is advantageous to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives and to build up on the strength that exist between quantitative and qualitative method in order to understand a given phenomenon than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative method alone (Mengesha, 2022).

3.3. Sources of Data

The data were collected from primary sources. The data were collected from the students. The survey was carried out by questionnaire. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the data were collected, triangulation of different method was employed during the collection of primary data. These methods include questionnaire and interview.

3.4 Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Population

Before collecting any data, it is important that researchers clearly define the population, including a description of the members (Ahmed, 2016). The school has 378 students, KG1 -12 grades. The research was conducted on 162 students from grade 7-12, each grade has one section with 22 -27 students per class. Finally, 150 were filled and 12 responses were missed. This population is selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic across all grade level 7-12, and employed a census sampling techniques, 7-12 grades. Because, this school is diversified by different, ethnic groups relatively compared with other schools. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews, which were aligned with the census sampling approach grade 7-12 students.

3.5 Sampling and Instrument

The students were selected using census sampling techniques. Because, sampling method gives equal opportunities for all members of the population to be involved in the study (Kotheri, 2004 and Tezera, 2020). The study employed a census sampling technique, including all students from Grades 7 to 12 as participants. Since the population size is manageable, the researcher included the entire target population rather than selecting a sample. This approach ensures complete data coverage and minimized sampling bias.

Data were collected using **questionnaires and interviews**, which were aligned with the census sampling approach: Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire was administered to all students in Grades 7–12. It was designed to collect quantitative data on students' attitudes, experiences, and perceptions. The questionnaire includes open-ended questions and Likert-scale items, enabling systematic analysis. Interview: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to gather qualitative data. The interviews supplemented the questionnaire findings and provided deeper insights into students' experiences and perspectives. Six students, who have better awareness about multicultural and be able to provide in-depth data about the practices of multicultural students, 2 from grade 10 (keniyan and sewish), 3 from grade 12 (American

Ethiopian and Indian and 1 from grade 11 (mixed, Armenian, Italian and Ethiopian) were selected for interviews using a purposive sampling technique.

3.6 Data Collection procedure

The study used primary records by using of a structured questionnaire which was distributed to the respondents. An introductory letter explaining the reason of the study was used as a proof that the study was done for academic purpose only. Proper records of all questionnaires distributed kept for ease of follow up and also to ensure the response rate.

By combining the census sampling technique with instruments, the study ensures that every student has the opportunity to provide input, while interviews all owes the researcher to explore key responses in depth. This integration of sampling and instruments helped enhance the reliability and validity of the findings through data triangulation.

In this study the researcher used Cognitive Interviewing (Clear & Thesis-Ready Explanation). Cognitive interviewing is a pre-testing technique used to check whether questionnaire items are understood by respondents as the researcher intended. It is especially appropriate when the population is small and a pilot test cannot be conducted, which my study at Bingham Academy. Four students from the target grades (7–12) participated. Participants who shared similar characteristics with the actual study respondents were included, and these students were still able to participate in the main study.

3.7 Validity

Validity is the degree by which the sample of test items represents the content the test is intended to measure. Content validity that was developed by this study as a measure of the degree to which information was collected using a specific tool represents a particular area or content of a specific idea (Parvin, 2011). Four students (1 from grade 12, 2 from grade 10 and 1 from grade 7) from the target grades (7–12) participated. The students were given the questionnaire before all grade 7-12 participated and the questions were clear and understandable. Participants who shared similar characteristics with the actual study respondents were included, and these students were still able to participate in the main study.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. A structured questionnaire was administered to all students in grade 7-12. It was designed to collect quantitative data regarding student's attitudes, experiences, and perceptions. The questionnaire included open-ended questions and Likert-scale items to facilitate analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to gather qualitative data. The interviews supplement the questionnaire finding and provide in-depth insight into students' experiences and perspectives. The use of both instruments allow for data triangulation, enhancing the reliability and validity of study findings.

3.9 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the quantitative data collected using survey questionnaires, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26) was used to present and analyze the collected data from respondents using related tables and graphs. Qualitative data from the interview was analyzed thematically.

Descriptive statistic

According to Salleh et al., (2013), descriptive analysis is used to organize and describe the characteristics of the data collected. In this study, descriptive analysis in the form of percentage and frequency was used to analyze demographics of the respondents.

3.10 Ethical consideration

From the School of Psychology, AAU letter was obtained to get support to do the research. Clearance was recognized from Bingham Academy. The purpose of the study was communicated to the respondents to gain an informed consent. Before approval was obtained, the researcher and the research assistants have explained the purpose of the study and respondents were assured of privacy of the information they give. To ensure privacy, names and other means of identity have not been used during the data collection.

Chapter Four

4.Results and Discussion

This chapter shows the findings and discussion of the study on cultural diversity at Bingham Academy. The findings are organized into major themes, including opportunities for cross-cultural learning, challenges of social identity formation, and strategies for promoting inclusive and supportive school environments. Quantitative findings are presented using frequencies, percentages, and descriptive statistics, while qualitative findings are used to triangulate and enrich the interpretation of the results.

4.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1. Gender of Respondents

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Female	83	55.3	55.3	55.3
	Male	67	44.7	44.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

The gender distribution result shows that the survey comprised 150 respondents, out of which 83 (55.3%) were females while 67 (44.7%) were males (Table 1). It can be noted from the results that the number of female respondents was relatively higher than the number of male respondents.

Table 2. Grade Distribution of Respondents

		Grade Level			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	7	24	16.0	16.0	16.0
	8	24	16.0	16.0	32.0
	9	26	17.3	17.3	49.3
	10	27	18.0	18.0	67.3
	11	23	15.3	15.3	82.7
	12	26	17.3	17.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 2, the respondents were evenly distributed among grades seven to twelve. Grade ten was the one that had the largest number of participants, with 27 students (18.0%) participating in the study. Second was grade nine and grade twelve, each having 26 students (17.3%) involved in the study. Seventh and eighth also had 24 students (16.0%) each, whereas grade eleven had the smallest number of participants, with 23 students (15.3%).

Table 3. Nationality Distribution of Respondents

Nationality / cultural background	Frequency	Percent (%)
Ethiopian	51	34.0
American	15	10.0
American–Ethiopian	9	6.0
Dutch	8	5.3
Canadian	7	4.7
Indian	7	4.7
Italian–Ethiopian	6	4.0
South African	6	4.0
British / English / Welsh	5	3.3
Kenyan	5	3.3
Not identified	5	3.3
American–Korean	4	2.7
Finnish American	3	2.0
Armenian	2	1.3
Cameroon	2	1.3
Canadian–Ethiopian	2	1.3
French	2	1.3
German	2	1.3
Nigerian	2	1.3
Sweden–Ethiopia	2	1.3
African American	1	0.7
Australian	1	0.7
Malawian	1	0.7
South Korean	1	0.7
Tanzanian	1	0.7

As shown in Table 3, the sample comprised individuals of various nationalities and cultures, as evident in the multicultural setting of Bingham Academy. The highest number of respondents

was from Ethiopia (34.0%), while Americans are 10% of the sample. Students who identified themselves with mixed nationalities, such as American-Ethiopian (6.0%) and Italian-Ethiopian (4.0%), were also part of the sample. Some other nationalities involved in this study include students from the Netherlands (5.3%), Canada (4.7%), India (4.7%), South Africa (4.0%), Britain/England/Wales (3.3%), and Kenya (3.3%).

Figure 1. First Language Distribution

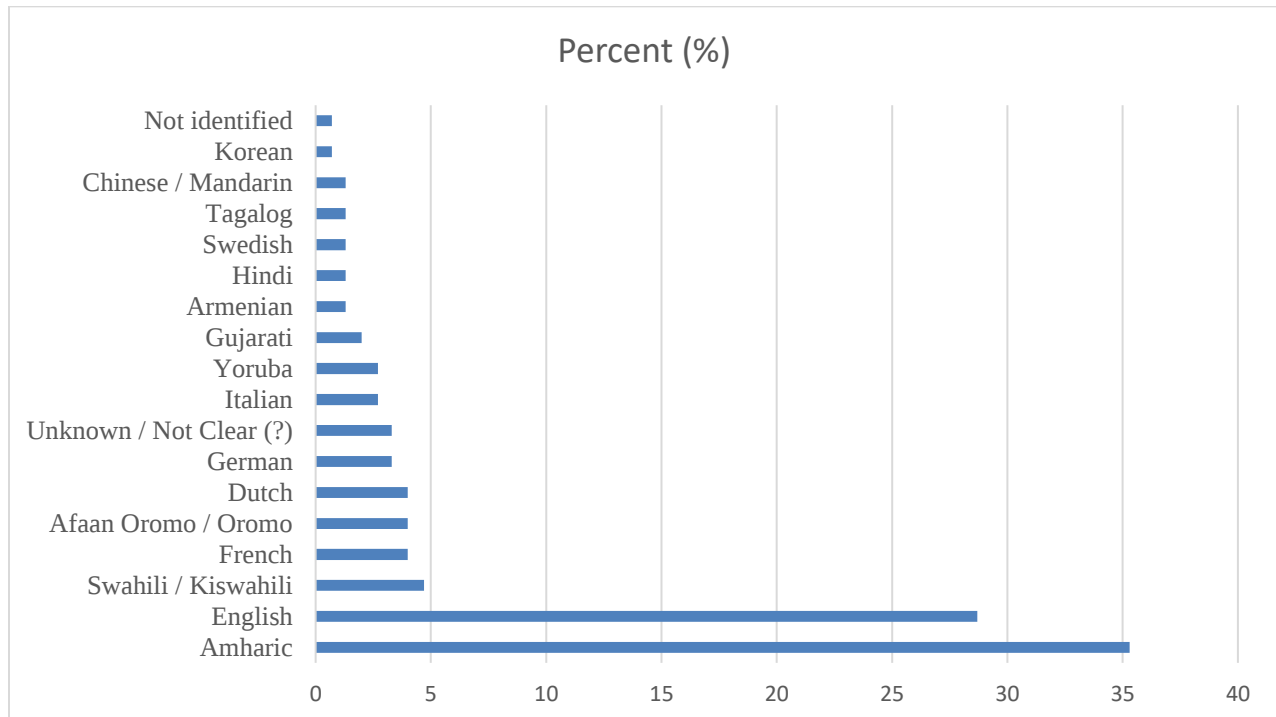


Figure 1 shows that, there is a great linguistic diversity among the respondents, as they speak various first languages. Among the different first languages spoken, Amharic comes top (35.3%), followed by English (28.7%). Some of the other first languages spoken by the respondents include Swahili/Kiswahili (4.7%), French (4.0%), Afaan Oromo/Oromo (4.0%), and Dutch (4.0%). Apart from these, the respondents also speak German (3.3%), Italian (2.7%), Yoruba (2.7%), Gujarati (2.0%), Armenian (1.3%), Hindi (1.3%), Swedish (1.3%), Tagalog (1.3%), and Chinese/Mandarin (1.3%). There are also a few people who speak Korean (0.7%) and other languages (0.7%).

4.2. Cultural Diversity Contributes to Students' Cross-Cultural Learning

This section examines the survey results and key informant interviews regarding cross-cultural learning among Bingham Academy students. First, the quantitative results displayed using percentages and frequency tables generated from the Likert scale responses. Subsequently, the qualitative insights from the KIIs supplemented the analysis of the statistical data.

4.2.1. The Pleasure Students Derive from Learning alongside Peers from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

Table 4. Students' Enjoyment of Learning with Classmates from Different Cultural Backgrounds

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Disagree	9	6.0	6.0	97.3
	Neutral	19	12.7	12.7	91.3
	Agree	38	25.3	25.3	78.7
	Strongly Agree	80	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Quantitative results clearly indicate that the majority of students prefer learning in multicultural environments. As shown in Table 4, 80 students (53. 3%) selected response option 1, while 38 students (25. 3%) chose response option 2. This indicates that 118 students, representing 78. 6% of the group, hold positive attitudes toward a multicultural learning environment. However, 19 students (12. 7%) chose the neutral option, whereas only 9 (6. 0%) and 4 (2. 7%) selected the lower options. These results indicate that the majority of students find the experience of engaging with and learning from peers from varied cultural backgrounds enjoyable.

The findings also indicate that most students hold a positive attitude due to the multicultural environment available at Bingham Academy. Interacting with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds has enabled students to build positive relationships and participate in collaborative activities.

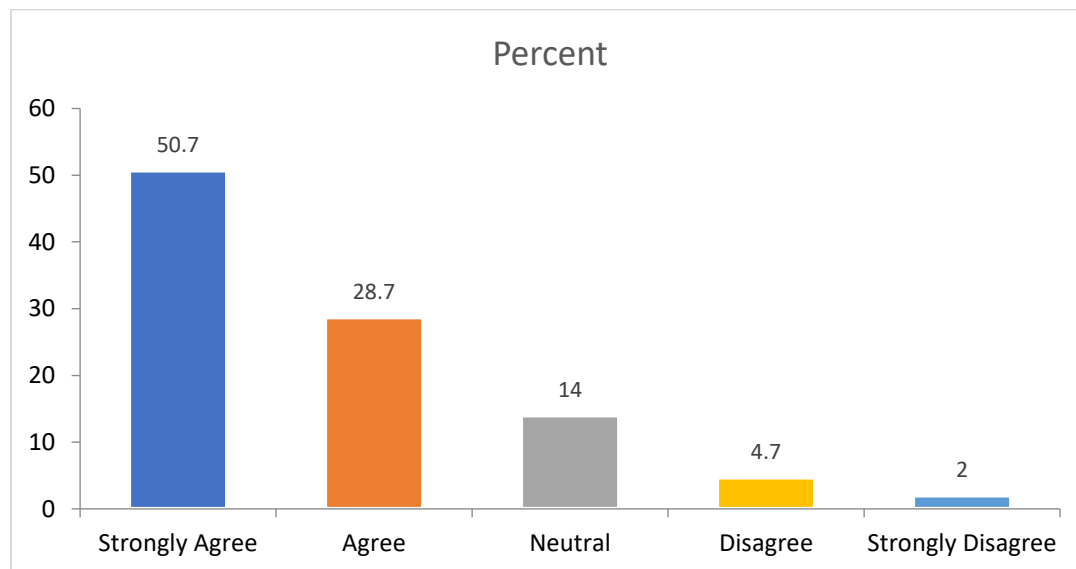
The findings from the key informant interviews (KIIs) appear to corroborate the quantitative results presented earlier. Most participants reported that their experiences in a diverse school environment were beneficial, as they provided opportunities to gain new perspectives on people

from different cultural backgrounds. For example, one participant stated that attending a multicultural school enabled her to “draw nearer to people” and learn from their experiences. Another participant explained that living in a multicultural environment had broadened her perspective and strengthened her appreciation for others. These findings suggest that students not only enjoy interactions with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds but also recognize the educational and personal value of such experiences.

The results of this study align with prior research on the same subject. Specifically, Schwarzenthal et al. (2019) found that multicultural classrooms offer numerous chances for students to build intercultural competence by interacting and collaborating with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. A positive diversity climate is particularly vital as it enables students to develop greater openness and tolerance toward others. According to a 2019 study, positive attitudes toward other cultures can be cultivated within multicultural settings. According to Banks (2015), multicultural education facilitates the creation of such learning environments.

4.2.2. Learning new Ideas and Perspectives from Peers of other Cultures

Figure 2. Students Learning New Ideas or Perspectives from Peers of other Cultures



Survey findings indicate that cultural diversity is vital for acquiring new ideas and perspectives (Figure 2). As shown in Figure 2, 50.7% selected "strongly agree," while 28.7% chose "agree."

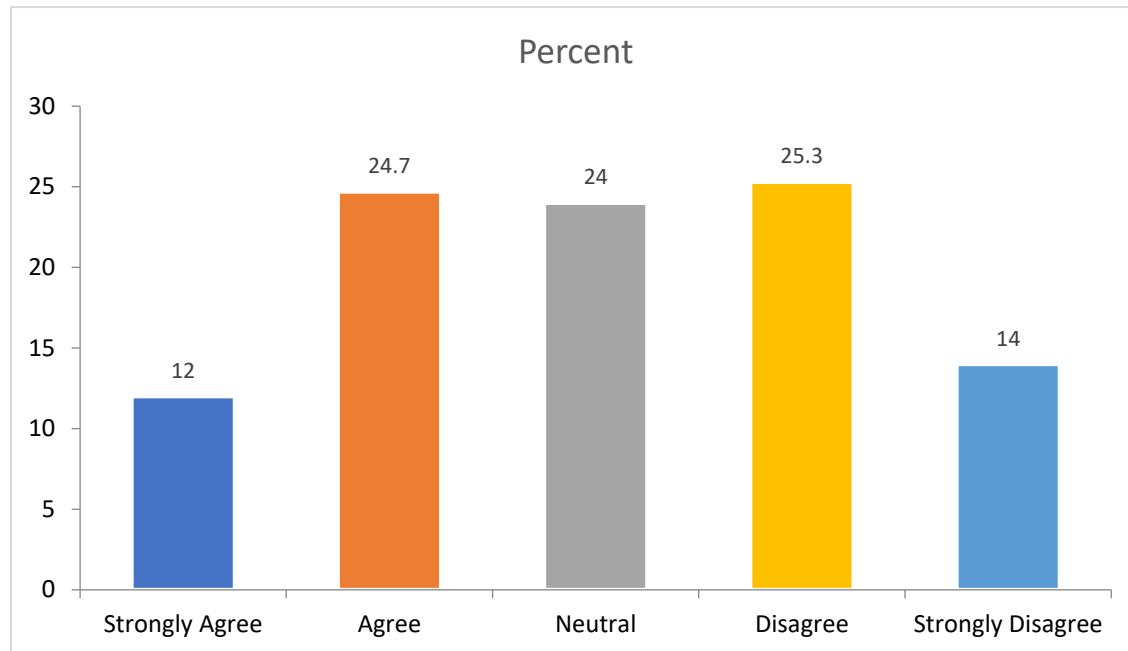
A combined 79.4% responded with "strongly agree" or "agree," indicating that the majority of students have acquired new ideas or perspectives from peers of different cultural backgrounds. Conversely, 14.0% selected the neutral option, whereas 4.7% and 2.0% opted for disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This result highlights that intercultural engagement is essential for acquiring new concepts and developing awareness and understanding of diverse cultures. Intercultural interactions seem to enable the comparison of diverse viewpoints, the scrutiny of one's own cultural assumptions, and a greater receptiveness to novel concepts. Additionally, the limited negative feedback indicates that the majority of students perceive intercultural interactions as advantageous for their education instead of socially burdensome.

The findings from the KII interview process offer robust triangulation for this results. Specifically, participants noted that engaging with students from diverse cultural backgrounds enabled them to gain insights into other traditions, beliefs, cuisines, communication styles, and cultures. Other students reported that cultural diversity helped them avoid stereotypes and fostered empathy and compassion toward others. Consequently, the results derived from the KII process corroborate the survey data.

The results obtained in this study align with those reported by Skrefsrud (2018). The author suggests that intercultural learning encourages students to critically examine themselves and remain receptive to alternative perspectives. The scholar emphasized that intercultural learning entails engaging with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, thereby cultivating students' abilities to empathize, think critically, and develop intercultural awareness. According to Deardorff (2006), intercultural competence entails engaging in interaction and being exposed to a variety of viewpoints.

4.2.3. Teachers' Encouragement of Cultural Sharing in the Classroom

Figure 3. Teachers' Encouragement of Students to Share Cultural Experiences in Class



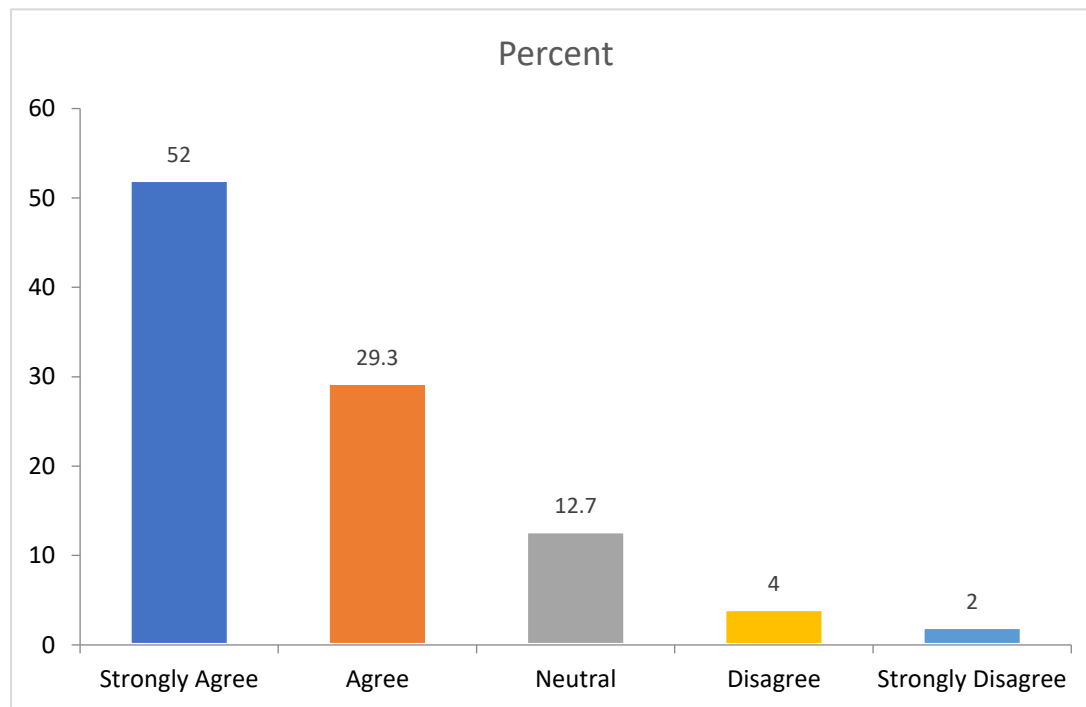
As for the quantitative results on teacher encouragement of cultural sharing, they were somewhat mixed in comparison with the other questions in the survey. As seen from Figure 3, 25.3% of students chose disagree response, while 14.0% chose strongly disagree response, meaning that 39.3% of students disagreed on teachers' encouragement of cultural sharing in class. At the same time, 24.0% chose the neutral option, and 24.7% and 12.0% students chose the agree and strongly agree response on teachers' encouragements of cultural sharing in class. Generally, 36.7% gave positive feedback on teachers' encouragement of cultural sharing. The KII findings add further clarity and confirmation to the above results. Most of the participants agreed that teachers have a key role in fostering cross-cultural interactions through group discussion and collaboration as well as use of culturally appropriate educational materials. The KII participants welcomed teachers who made efforts to encourage interactions between students of different cultures. Furthermore, some participants suggested that teachers should continue pairing up students who typically do not communicate to build intercultural relationships and communication skills.

These results are in line with past studies showing the significant contribution of teachers in facilitating multicultural education. According to Gay (2018), culturally responsive teaching

creates an inclusive environment where learners feel respected and appreciated and are motivated to contribute their cultural knowledge. Likewise, Al-Afifi et al. (2025) suggested that the strategies of learning culture, reflecting on culture, and experiencing culture were among the key activities for developing intercultural competence in learners.

4.2.4. Students' Confidence in Communicating with Peers from Different Cultures

Figure 4. Students' Confidence in Communicating with Peers from Different Cultures



According to Figure 4, the results of the survey indicated that students are generally confident about their ability to communicate with other students belonging to different cultures. The result shows that 78 students (52.0%) chose response of strongly agree, while 44 students (29.3%) chose agree response. Thus, a total of 122 students (81.3%) felt confident about interacting with other students from different cultures, which means that a vast majority of students have a positive attitude towards intercultural communication. On the other hand, only 19 students (12.7%) chose the neutral category, while 6 students (4.0%) and 3 students (2.0%) chose the disagree and strongly disagree responses. This demonstrates that constant interaction in the multicultural environment of the school plays an important role in the development of

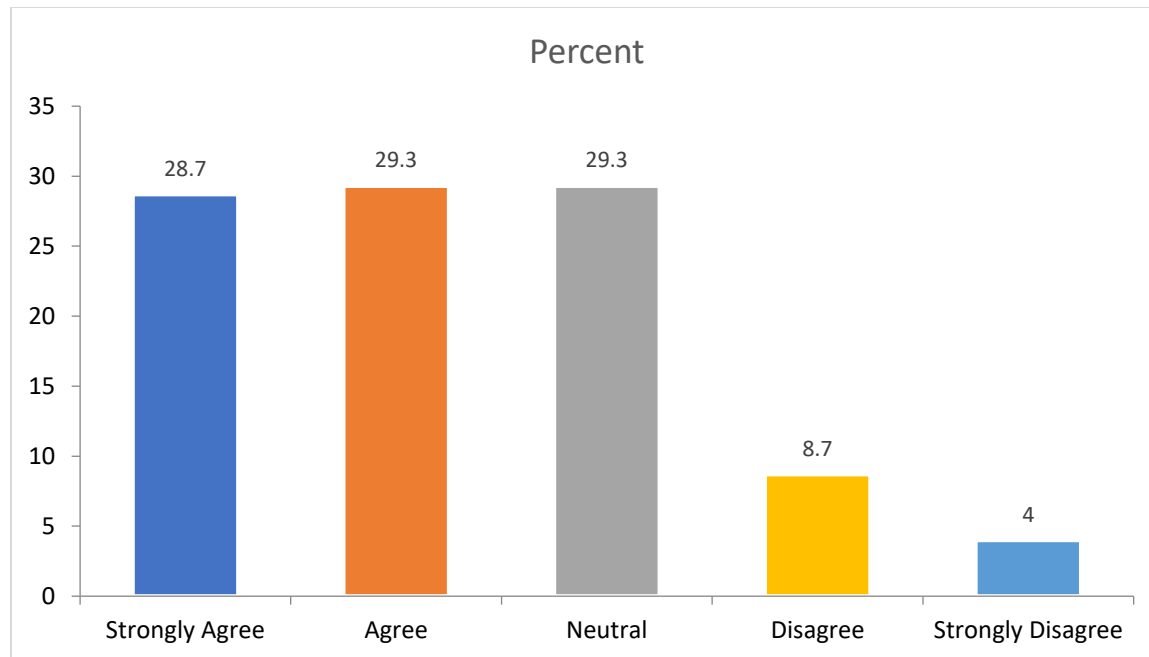
communication skills and social adaptability of students when interacting with others belonging to different cultures.

The survey results, supported by the findings from the key informant interviews (KIIs), further validate these findings. Participants reported that exposure to cultural diversity contributed to greater openness and flexibility in communicating with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Several students indicated that they had become more intentional in their interactions with culturally diverse peers by listening attentively, asking questions respectfully, and seeking to understand different perspectives. Other participants emphasized the role of diversity in fostering empathy, collaboration, and teamwork skills. These findings provide additional support for the survey results by demonstrating how intercultural interactions contribute to the development of students' communication and interpersonal competencies.

In total, most of the students reported having high confidence in communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds. More than 81% of participants had positive perceptions concerning their intercultural communication competence. According to the findings of the KII, students were able to develop communication skills such as respectful listening, empathy, flexibility, and openness through interactions with diverse peers. The findings show that students became more careful and respectful while communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds. In this regard, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Wang et al. (2019) on intercultural learning.

4.2.5. Students' Perceptions of the Contribution of Cultural Diversity to Learning

Figure 5. Students' Perceptions That Cultural Diversity Improves Learning



In addition, the results have shown that most students view cultural diversity as having a positive influence on their learning process. Figure 5 shows that 43 students (28.7%) chose strongly agree response, whereas 44 students (29.3%) chose agree response. Overall, there were 87 students (58.0%) who held a positive attitude toward the benefits of cultural diversity in education. Moreover, 44 students (29.3%) chose the neutral, while 13 students (8.7%) and 6 students (4.0%) chose disagree and strongly disagree responses. The finding revealed that most students are aware of the importance of cultural diversity in enhancing learning processes within classrooms. Nevertheless, the considerable number of students who gave neutral responses can indicate that some students have not yet realized the academic benefits of multicultural learning environments.

These findings were reinforced and explained in more detail in the KII findings. The participants mentioned that school-related activities like international days, sports competitions, field days, fashion shows, spirit week activities, and Eid celebrations were some of the ways in which cultural diversity provided students with an opportunity to learn about other cultures. The participants said that these activities gave them the chance to learn about other cultures through their food, clothing, music, dances, games, and traditions. One participant mentioned that lunch times became an informal opportunity for intercultural learning as students would bring food items from their cultures and share them with each other. Thus, it can be seen that these

qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative findings that cultural diversity promotes learning outside the classroom as well.

This finding is supported by Walton, Priest, and Paradies (2013), who mentioned that intercultural understanding can be fostered when students have the opportunity for regular intercultural contact and participate in culturally inclusive activities. This view was echoed by Nieto (2017), who emphasized the value of multicultural education.

4.3. Descriptive statistics findings on cross-cultural learning

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics results of Cross-cultural Learning

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I enjoy learning with classmates from different cultural backgrounds.	150	1	5	1.79	1.051
2. I have learned new ideas or perspectives from peers of other cultures.	150	1	5	1.79	.987
3. My teachers encourage us to share our cultural experiences in class.	150	1	5	3.05	1.244
4. I am confident in communicating with peers from different cultures.	150	1	5	1.75	.964
5. I feel that cultural diversity in my school improves my learning	150	1	5	2.30	1.098
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Descriptive statistics provided in Table 5 reflect the students' views on their cross-cultural learning experiences at Bingham Academy. The analysis is based on the minimum score, maximum score, mean score, and standard deviation of each question pertaining to the students' attitudes towards cultural diversity and intercultural learning. Descriptive statistics provided

information about students' attitudes towards multicultural interaction, communication, teacher involvement, and the role of cultural diversity in learning experiences.

According to the results obtained, students seem to enjoy studying together with peers who belong to different cultures. The statement "I enjoy learning with classmates from different cultural backgrounds" received the highest score with a mean value of 1.79 and a standard deviation of 1.051. As can be seen, the relatively low mean score means that respondents preferred choosing the lowest numbers, meaning positive attitudes towards multicultural interaction. Since the standard deviation is 1.051, there is moderate variability in the responses of the students, indicating that while most of the respondents showed positive perception, there were fewer who had neutral or negative perceptions. The minimum and maximum scores of 1 and 5 also show that the responses were spread over the entire spectrum of the scale, which shows that there was some variability in the experience of the students. The study indicates that the multicultural setting at Bingham Academy provides the opportunity for positive interactions among the students.

Further analysis through descriptive statistics has indicated that students are positively influenced by being around culturally diverse peers. In regard to the item "I have learned new ideas or perspectives from peers of other cultures," the mean was 1.79 while the standard deviation was 0.987. With regard to the low mean value, it shows that students were generally positive about the benefits of interacting with peers from other cultures in terms of gaining new ideas and perspectives. From the relatively small standard deviation, it can be deduced that the opinions held by respondents were generally consistent. Therefore, students generally recognize that multiculturalism positively influences their educational experience both socially and intellectually. This implies that being exposed to peers from other cultures is likely to enhance students' appreciation of other cultures, beliefs, traditions, and perspectives. Thus, it is clear that multicultural interaction at Bingham Academy is a platform for intercultural learning.

The results relating to teacher encouragement for cultural sharing showed relatively higher mean scores compared to the other variables. The statement "My teachers encourage us to share our cultural experiences in class" showed a mean score of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 1.244. The relatively higher standard deviation score shows that students' perceptions towards teacher encouragement were more varied and inconsistent compared to other issues related to cross-

cultural learning. The relatively higher standard deviation implies that there is a large degree of variation in the answers of the students; therefore, some students might have been encouraged by their teachers to share their cultures in class while others did not. It can thus be concluded that while teachers at Bingham Academy are involved in encouraging intercultural learning, their involvement in implementing culturally inclusive teaching methods may vary.

The findings also indicated that students are generally confident in their ability to communicate with peers from different cultural backgrounds. In the statement “I am confident in communicating with peers from different cultures,” the mean was 1.75 and the standard deviation was 0.964. One of the lowest mean scores was obtained in this statement, which indicates a very positive perception of intercultural communication confidence. With regard to the standard deviation, it was quite low, indicating that the answers obtained by students were quite consistent in that they expressed confidence in their ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. It can thus be seen that being exposed to multicultural interactions in the school environment leads to the development of communication skills and social confidence.

From the descriptive statistics, it can also be observed that most of the respondents believe that cultural diversity helps improve their learning experience. This was indicated in the question “I feel that cultural diversity in my school improves my learning,” where the mean score was 2.30 and the standard deviation was 1.098. While the mean score shows positive perceptions towards the issue, the score is higher than those obtained from the questions relating to enjoyment of multicultural learning and confidence in intercultural communication. A standard deviation of 1.098 implies moderate variation in the perception of students on the matter, meaning that while some students appreciate the importance of cultural diversity in their learning experience, others may still have reservations regarding its contributions to their learning experience. Despite this, it can be seen that cultural diversity at Bingham Academy contributes positively to students’ learning experiences through exposure to diverse viewpoints and experiences.

4.4 Social Identity Formation

4.4.1. Students’ Sense of Belonging

Table 6. Students' Sense of Belonging at Bingham Academy

I feel a strong sense of belonging at Bingham Academy		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	47	31.3	31.3	31.3
	Agree	51	34.0	34.0	65.3
	Neutral	29	19.3	19.3	84.7
	Disagree	19	12.7	12.7	97.3
	Strongly Disagree	4	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

It was found out that the majority of the students have a sense of belonging at Bingham Academy. As shown in Table 6 below, there were 47 respondents (31.3%) who strongly agreed and 51 respondents (34.0%) who agreed that they have a sense of belonging at the institution. This means that a total of 98 respondents (65.3%) have a sense of belonging at the school. There were 29 respondents (19.3%) who chose the neutral option, while 19 respondents (12.7%) disagreed and 4 respondents (2.7%) strongly disagreed. The results above indicate that the multicultural nature of Bingham Academy helps in fostering a sense of belonging among students. It seems like many students feel accepted no matter what their culture is and can fully participate in the activities of the school.

This result is confirmed by the KII results. A number of participants reported that the school atmosphere contributed to making friends with people of different nationalities and cultures. Students indicated that the school was a supportive environment for developing a feeling of belonging through activities aimed at bringing culturally diverse students together. Some participants mentioned that friendships made during classroom activities, sports, and school events were helpful in building connections with other students.

Such results correspond with recent research highlighting the significance of the role of an inclusive school climate in fostering students' sense of belonging. For example, Bardach et al. (2024) concluded that inclusive school climate had a positive effect on students' emotional well-being, belonging, and social adaptation, especially in multicultural schools. In addition, Schachner, Schwarzenenthal, and van de Vijver (2021) noted that supportive diversity climate

promotes a sense of acceptance and belonging through fostering positive intercultural relations and equal participation of students of different cultures. Finally, the results correspond with Allen et al. (2021) in that they found students' sense of belonging to be associated with peer acceptance and supportive relations with teachers.

4.4.2. Students' Confusion Between Home Culture and School Culture

Sometimes Feel Confused About Whether I Belong more to my Home Culture or the School culture.

Table 7. Students' Confusion between Home Culture (background culture) and School Culture (western culture)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	21	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Agree	16	10.7	10.7	24.7
	Neutral	43	28.7	28.7	53.3
	Disagree	27	18.0	18.0	71.3
	Strongly Disagree	43	28.7	28.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

The results show that there are some students who get confused about whether they should belong more to their home culture or to the school culture. From Table 7 below, it can be seen that 21 students (14.0%) strongly agree and 16 students (10.7%) agree that they sometime get confused whether they belong more to their home culture (background culture) or to the school culture (western culture). These numbers sum up to 37 students (24.7%). On the other hand, 43 students (28.7%) are neutral, while 27 students (18.0%) disagree and 43 students (28.7%) strongly disagree. It appears that although there are a large number of students who do not get confused, some students have a problem trying to balance between their home culture and the multicultural school environment. In addition, the findings from the KII have confirmed the above results. Several participants noted that exposure to different cultures sometimes left them uncertain about their cultural identity and actions. A number of students said that they sometimes

had to change their behavior, language use, or mode of communication depending on the culture they were dealing with at a particular moment. Others reported that they sometimes found it hard to reconcile their family traditions with those of the school environment.

The results presented are in line with the conclusions drawn by Verkuyten (2018), who indicated that multicultural school settings could provide both opportunities and difficulties related to identity development. On the one hand, being in contact with people from different cultures might enhance the students' understanding of the world; on the other hand, it might cause the development of certain questions about one's own identity and belonging to a particular culture. Hence, based on the results obtained in this study, one can state that while the majority of students enrolled in Bingham Academy are successful in coping with their multicultural experiences, some students continue facing challenges related to reconciling home and school cultural norms. These findings are similar to recent studies on cultural identity negotiation among adolescents in multicultural settings. Thus, Umaña-Taylor et al. (2020) pointed out that adolescents experiencing the influence of several cultural settings frequently have difficulty negotiating their identities when trying to balance their social and cultural backgrounds and personal identity development. Syed and Juang (2021) also mentioned that multicultural school settings could provide adolescents with both opportunities and difficulties related to identity development and negotiating different cultural expectations at school and home. The findings also support Schwartz et al. (2023), who found that cultural identity confusion among adolescents is often associated with the process of adapting to multiple social environments and negotiating cultural belonging.

4.4.3. Students' Comparison of Themselves with Peers from Different Cultural Backgrounds

Table 8. Students Comparing Themselves with Peers from Different Cultural Backgrounds

I often compare myself with peers from different cultural backgrounds.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	13	8.7	8.7	8.7
	Agree	18	12.0	12.0	20.7
	Neutral	23	15.3	15.3	36.0
	Disagree	51	34.0	34.0	70.0
	Strongly Disagree	45	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

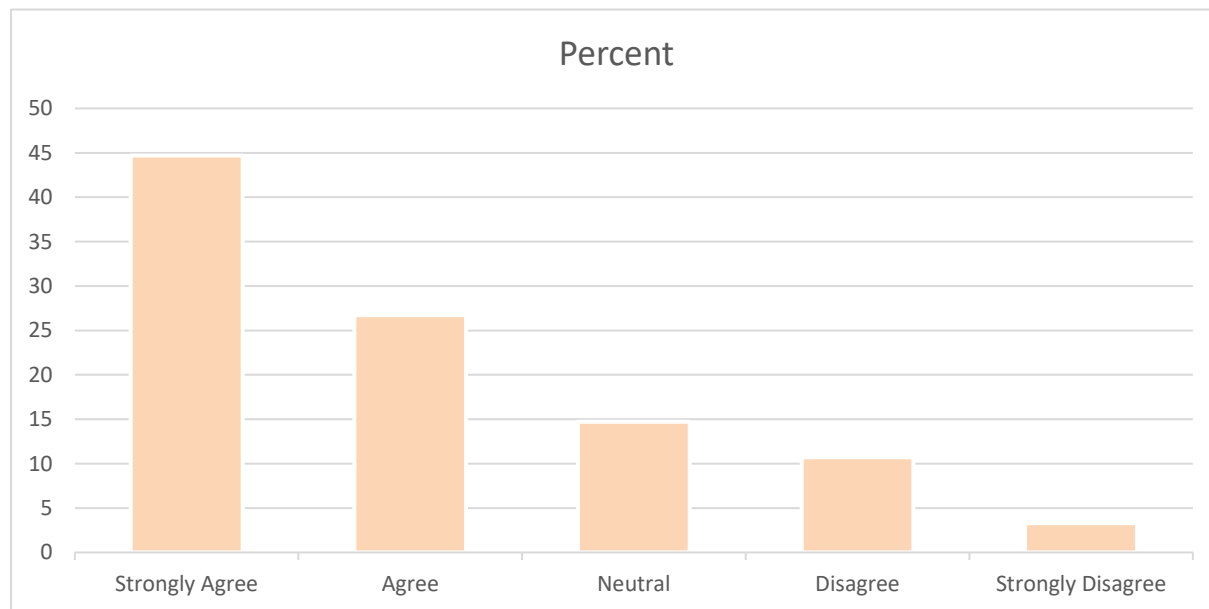
Findings also revealed that most students do not compare themselves with peers belonging to other cultures very often. As illustrated in Table 8, 13 respondents (8.7%) strongly agreed and 18 respondents (12.0%) agreed that they compared themselves with culturally diverse peers often. This adds up to a total of 31 respondents (20.7%). On the contrary, 51 respondents (34.0%) disagreed and 45 respondents (30.0%) strongly disagreed, thus totaling 96 respondents (64.0%). Another 23 respondents (15.3%) indicated that they were neutral about this issue. Therefore, it can be seen that most students seem to be comfortable with themselves and do not indulge in social comparisons on the basis of culture. Findings from the key informant interviews (KIIs) further confirmed this observation. Although most participants expressed positive attitudes toward cultural diversity and differences, some reported experiencing social pressure to conform to dominant peer groups. Several students also indicated that they became more conscious of their language use, accent, clothing, or behavior when interacting with peers from different cultural backgrounds. These findings suggest that, despite the generally positive perceptions of diversity, some students may experience challenges related to social adjustment and cultural self-awareness in multicultural school settings.

These results are supported by current research on adolescent identity formation and peer interactions. For instance, Rivas-Drake et al. (2021) reported that multicultural school settings have an impact on how adolescents perceive their social and cultural selves during the stages of identity exploration and peer group formation. Likewise, according to Kiang and Fuligni (2020),

the fact that adolescents interact with peers from diverse backgrounds may make them more aware of cultural differences and even encourage them to compare themselves with other people, thus thinking about their own identities. The findings are consistent with those of Meca et al. (2022), who suggested that adolescents in multicultural contexts might feel insecure regarding their identities once in a while when comparing themselves with peers, especially concerning language, physical appearance, or social status. Nevertheless, positive peer relationships and multicultural school environments could prevent adverse outcomes of such experiences. Consequently, one can conclude that the multicultural atmosphere at Bingham Academy facilitates healthy self-esteem and peer relationships for most students.

4.4.4. Students' Feelings of Inclusion in Social Activities

Figure 6. Students' Feelings of Inclusion in Social Activities Regardless of Nationality or Language



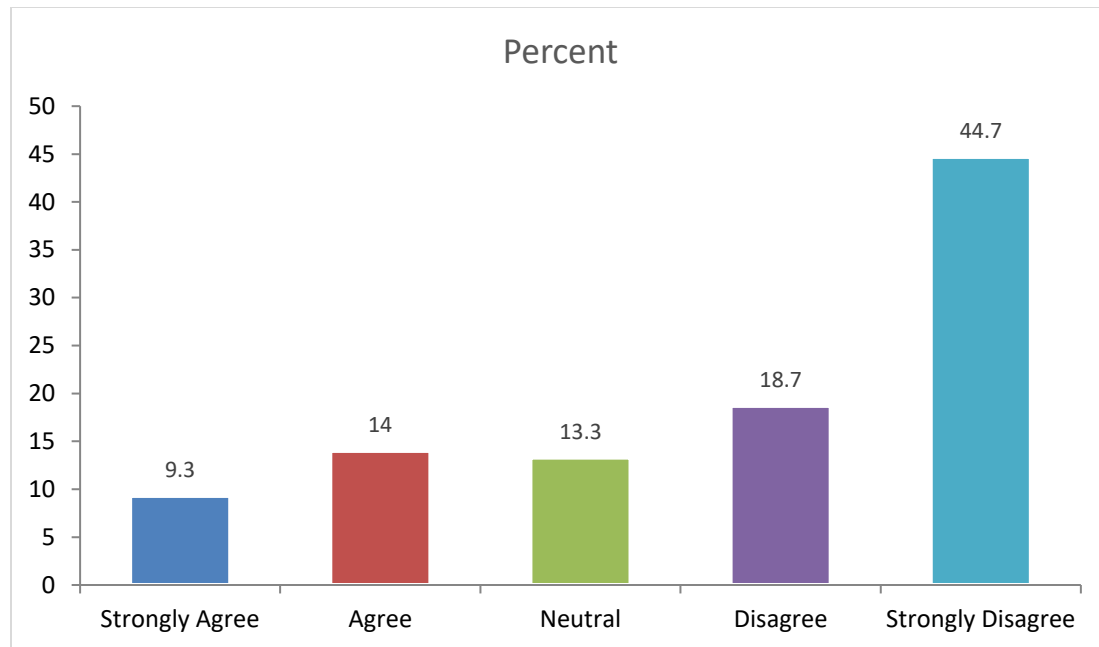
The results show that most of the students have felt included in social activities irrespective of their nationality or language. As illustrated in Figure 6, 67 respondents (44.7%) strongly agreed and 40 respondents (26.7%) agreed that they feel included in social activities regardless of nationality or language. In total, there were 107 respondents (71.4%) who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, suggesting that most of the respondents felt socially included in the school environment. On the other hand, 22 respondents (14.7%) responded neutrally,

while 16 respondents (10.7%) disagreed and 5 respondents (3.3%) strongly disagreed. The above results indicate that the multicultural nature of Bingham Academy is inclusive and ensures equal participation in all school activities. It appears that many of the students feel welcome in spite of their cultural or language background. The findings from the key informant interviews (KIIs) further reinforce these results. Participants reported that various school programs, including International Days, sports competitions, Spirit Week events, field days, and shared celebration activities, provided opportunities for students from diverse cultural backgrounds to interact with one another and develop a sense of inclusion within the school community. These findings support the survey results by highlighting the role of school-sponsored activities in fostering intercultural engagement and belonging among students.

Likewise, Walton, Priest, and Paradies (2013) have also contended that intercultural understanding can be achieved through providing frequent chances of intercultural interaction in an inclusive school setting for the students. Social and extracurricular activities ensure positive cultural experiences among the students, and at the same time, enhance inclusion and mutual respect. The results also validate the work of Banks (2015), who highlighted that a multicultural educational setting should ensure equal participation and inclusion of all students irrespective of their cultural backgrounds. This study is also congruent with recent studies showing the significance of inclusive school activities in fostering intercultural relations and inclusion of students. Walton et al. (2020) showed that extracurricular and collaborative activities in schools provide students with opportunities to interact with each other culturally, allowing them to make friends, reducing their prejudice and improving their social inclusion in multicultural schools. In addition, Baysu, Phalet, and Brown (2022) have maintained that engagement in culturally inclusive activities enhances students' sense of connection and social acceptance.

4.4.5. Students' Experiences of Exclusion or Stereotyping

Figure 7. Students' Experiences of Exclusion or Stereotyping Because of Cultural Background



The study's findings revealed that most students did not encounter exclusion or stereotyping due to their cultural background. According to Figure 7, there were 14 students (9.3%) who strongly agreed and 21 students (14.0%) who agreed that they experienced exclusion or stereotyping due to their cultural background. Thus, altogether 35 students (23.3%) responded positively on this aspect. On the other hand, there were 28 students (18.7%) who disagreed and 67 students (44.7%) who strongly disagreed, making a total of 95 students (63.4%). Furthermore, 20 students (13.3%) were neutral about the issue. This was supported by the KII findings where many respondents talked about good intercultural relationships among the students. However, a few respondents indicated some misunderstanding, stereotype, or exclusion based on language, cultural differences, and preference of social groups. The respondents explained that students of similar cultural background tended to form strong friendships, which sometimes led to exclusion of others.

This is evidenced by the findings from the latest research into diversity and peer relations in multicultural institutions. For instance, Benner and Wang (2021) have noted that although multicultural schools tend to foster positive intercultural relationships, there might be cases of subtle exclusion and stereotyping of members of the peer group. In addition, Jugert et al. (2023) stated that the children belonging to minorities sometimes face social exclusion in situations where the peer groups are formed based on common cultural or linguistic backgrounds. This

conclusion is consistent with the results obtained by Baysu et al. (2022), who suggested that culturally inclusive school environments help reduce stereotyping and discrimination, but this does not mean that these problems will be totally eradicated in diverse settings.

4.5. Descriptive Statistics Result on Social Identity Formation

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics on Social Identity Formation

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I feel a strong sense of belonging at Bingham Academy	150	1	5	2.21	1.103
2. I sometimes feel confused about whether I belong more to my home culture or the school culture.	150	1	5	3.37	1.368
3. I often compare myself with peers from different cultural backgrounds.	150	1	5	3.65	1.265
4. I feel included in social activities regardless of my nationality or language.	150	1	5	2.01	1.153
5. I sometimes experience exclusion or stereotyping because of my cultural background.	150	1	5	3.75	1.390
Valid N (listwise)	150				

The descriptive statistics findings in relation to the development of social identity among students in the multicultural environment of Bingham Academy are shown in Table 9. The results showed that students had positive experiences in terms of being part of the school community. The item “I feel included in social activities regardless of my nationality or language” had a mean value of 2.01 and a standard deviation of 1.153. Given that the mean value is almost equal to the word “Agree,” it can be deduced that the students feel socially included irrespective of their nationality and language.

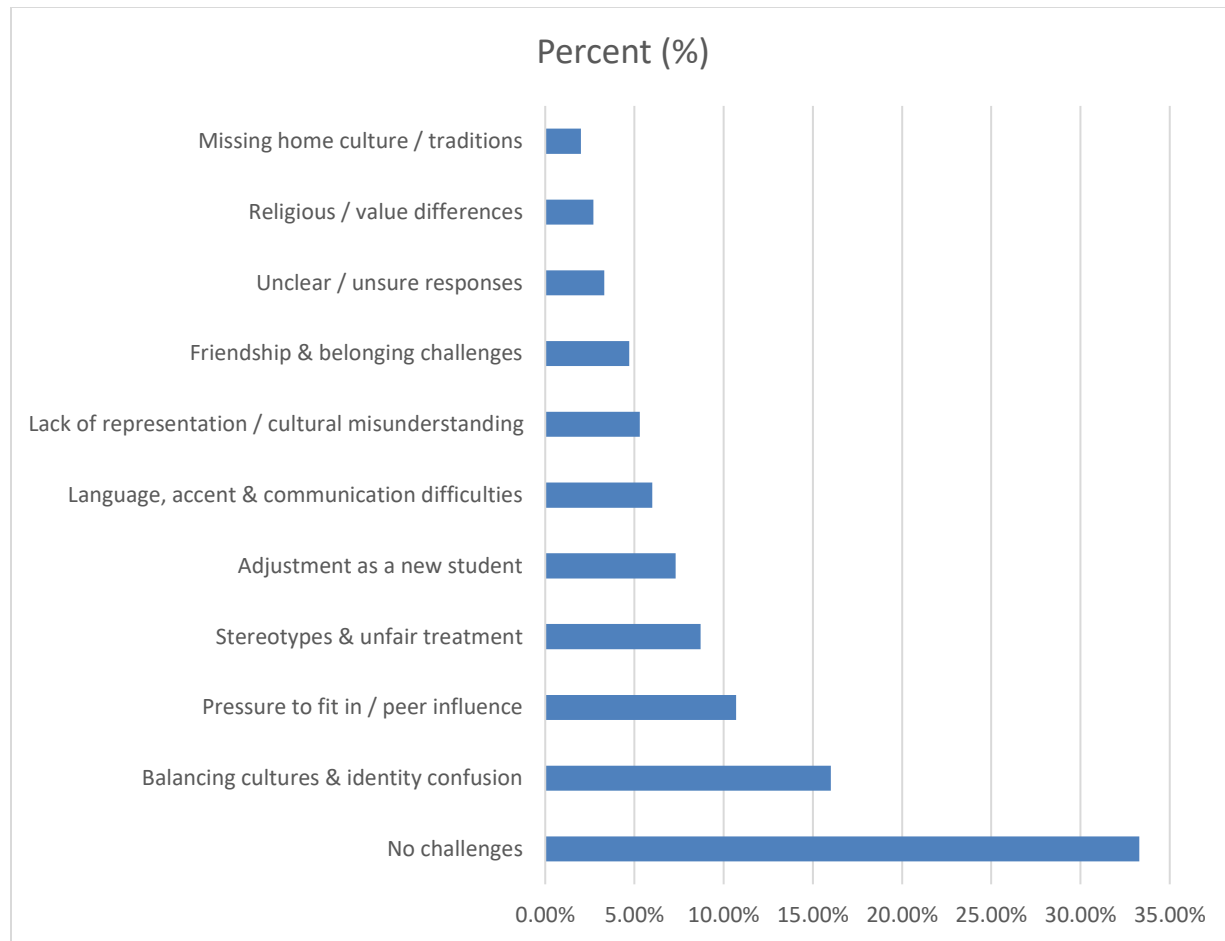
In the same way, the statement “I feel a sense of belonging to Bingham Academy” received a mean score of 2.21 and a standard deviation of 1.103. This implies that students generally concur that they feel a sense of belongingness to Bingham Academy. The results show that the multicultural nature of Bingham Academy helps in enhancing social integration among students as well as emotional connectedness to the institution. Further, the findings revealed that students generally did not agree with the statements depicting negative experiences of their identities. The statement “I sometimes experience exclusion or stereotyping based on my cultural background” was found to have the highest mean score of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 1.390. In view of the fact that the mean score is between “Neutral” and “Disagree,” this implies that most students generally do not experience exclusion or stereotyping due to their cultural background.

Similarly, the statement “I often compare myself with peers from different cultural backgrounds” obtained a mean score of 3.65 and standard deviation of 1.265. It can be noted that students do not agree with this statement since the mean score is high. It means that self-confidence and peer relations are rather good in such an environment for students. Furthermore, the statement “Sometimes I get confused whether I am more of my home culture or school culture” yielded a mean score of 3.37 with standard deviation of 1.368. It can be noted that students are more inclined to reject this statement, but mean score close to the middle point proves that students have doubts in this regard.

The findings of the KII triangulated very well with these descriptive findings. Most participants indicated that Bingham Academy was indeed a place of inclusion and where students from various cultural backgrounds interact well and form friendly relationships with each other. Students indicated that activities such as multicultural programs, group work, sport, and intercultural interaction played a major role in building up their sense of inclusion and belonging in the school community. On the other hand, the findings from the KII also indicated that sometimes, some students face certain challenges in relation to dealing with multiple cultural identities, cultural adaptation, or even cultural stereotypes and misunderstanding.

4.6. Challenges Students Face in Forming their Identity at School

Figure 8. Challenges Students Face in Forming Their Identity at School



The results indicated in Figure 8 suggest that there are differences among the students of Bingham Academy regarding the identity issues they face in the multicultural setting of the school. It was found out that the majority of the respondents, 50 students (33.3%), felt that they do not encounter any serious difficulties in forming their identities at school. This means that the majority of the students can easily adapt to the multicultural setting and form their identities without having to face any serious problems. But, there are students faced certain challenges such as balancing their cultures and identity problems. Out of all the respondents, 24 students (16.0%) mentioned that they face challenges due to the balancing of their home culture and school culture.

One more challenge mentioned was fitting in and peer pressure, faced by 16 students (10.7%). This indicates that there are students who have to act, speak, and represent themselves in accordance with peer expectations in order to be accepted. Moreover, 11 participants (8.7%) pointed out the problem of discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice, which proves that quite a

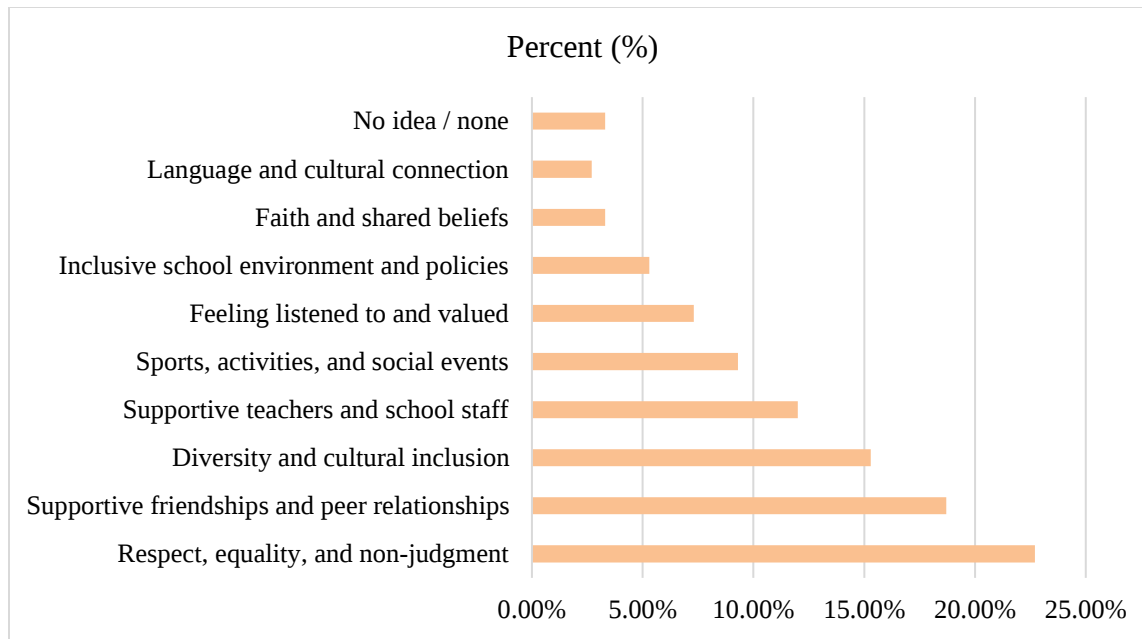
few students face social problems connected with culture and discrimination. It is worth noting that 11 students (7.3%) admitted problems with adjustment as new students, whereas 9 students (6.0%) experienced language, accent, and communication problems. Eight students (5.3%) noted lack of representation and cultural misunderstanding as one of the challenges affecting their sense of inclusion and identity. Besides, 7 students (4.7%) indicated friendship and belonging problems, 4 students (2.7%) religious and value differences, and 3 students (2.0%) missing home culture or traditions.

These were well supported by the findings from the KII. First, four interviewees indicated that there is often a conflict between home culture and school culture, which causes emotional and social conflicts. Secondly, two respondents indicated that at times they had to alter their language, behavior, and style of communication in relation to the peer group with whom they associated. In addition, some interviewees suggested that language, stereotyping, and cultural differences may have an impact on their confidence in the school setting. Finally, some of the respondents indicated that it was not easy to adapt to the multicultural environment as new students.

These results are supported by the literature review conducted by Syed and Juang (2021) and Bardach et al. (2024), who found that multicultural school settings offer important conditions for identity development due to contact with different cultures, support from peers, and inclusiveness in school environments. At the same time, studies have found that multiple cultural contexts can lead to problems with identity confusion, the need to combine home and school cultures, peer pressure, and the desire for social inclusion (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2020; Schwartz et al., 2023; Rivas-Drake et al., 2021). Additionally, research has shown that even in the context of a favorable environment, students in multicultural schools may face subtle stereotypes, social exclusion, language barriers, and marginalization (Benner & Wang, 2021; Jugert et al., 2023).

4.7. Factors that Help Students Feel Included and Respected in the School Community

Figure 9. Factors that help students feel included and respected in the school community



Based on the results shown in Figure 9, there are various key elements that assist students to feel like part of the community within the institution. The most common element was respect, equality, and non-judgment, mentioned by 34 participants (22.7%). This is because according to students, being treated equally and respectfully, without any form of discrimination regardless of their cultural backgrounds made them feel accepted within the school setting. Friendly relationships and peer associations were another element that assisted students to feel more included in the school community and was mentioned by 28 students (18.7%). This implies that having positive relationships with peers and friends is a very important element when it comes to enhancing students' social inclusion within the school community. Lastly, diversity and cultural inclusivity were elements cited by 23 respondents (15.3%).

Furthermore, 18 participants (12.0%) noted that supportive teachers and school staff played an essential role in promoting inclusion and respect. The explanation provided by the respondents is that when teachers listened to the students, encouraged their participation, and fostered respect in the interactions between students, then positive and inclusive classroom atmosphere was created. Interaction and development of friendships among students of different cultures were seen as important by 14 respondents (9.3%). Among other aspects noted by the students were being listened to and felt valued, mentioned by 11 participants (7.3%), inclusive policies and school environment, pointed out by 8 respondents (5.3%), faith and common beliefs, mentioned by 5 respondents (3.3%), and language/cultural affiliation, mentioned by 4 students (2.7%).

Findings from the key informant interviews (KIIs) further triangulated these results. Participants consistently reported that respectful treatment, friendships, culturally inclusive activities, and positive relationships with teachers played important roles in fostering their sense of inclusion and belonging within the school community. Students also noted that events such as International Days, sports events, Spirit Weeks, and collaborative classroom activities facilitated positive intercultural interactions and contributed to the development of meaningful relationships among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. These findings provide additional support for the survey results by illustrating the factors that promote inclusion and intercultural connectedness within the school environment.

The above findings are supported by several studies on inclusive school climate and multicultural education. According to Schachner et al. (2021), culturally inclusive schools help students feel more included, emotionally safe, and socially accepted. Likewise, according to Baysu, Phalet, and Brown (2022), schools that emphasize equality, mutual respect, and cross-cultural interactions develop better peer relationships and social cohesion among students from different cultural backgrounds. The findings related to supportive friendships and peer relationships are further supported by Allen et al. (2021). They emphasized that peer relationships play a crucial role in contributing to students' emotional well-being, social self-confidence, and feeling of belongingness within school environments. The importance of diversity and cultural inclusion noted in the findings is also confirmed by recent multicultural education literature. In their study, Bardach et al. (2024) discovered that exposure to diversity in culture at school leads to greater empathy, tolerance, and intercultural competence among learners. In a similar vein, Walton et al. (2020) claimed that multicultural programs and intercultural interaction at schools contribute to the reduction of prejudice and the enhancement of inclusion in diverse settings. Additionally, the findings concerning supportive teachers and staff confirm the view of Gay (2018), who stated that culturally responsive teaching leads to increased participation and inclusion in the learning process. Recent studies by Al-Afifi et al. (2025) have confirmed that supportive teachers significantly contribute to intercultural competence and inclusion in multicultural classrooms.

4.8. Suggested Strategies Teachers Could Use to Better Support Students from Diverse Backgrounds

Table 10. Suggested Strategies Teachers Could Use to Better Support Students from Diverse Backgrounds

Strategy theme	Frequency	Percent
Equal treatment, and fairness	25	16.7%
Encouraging cultural sharing and inclusion	22	14.7%
More interaction, group work, and mixed activities	17	11.3%
Open discussion, listening, and understanding students	15	10.0%
Teacher cultural awareness and sensitivity training	11	7.3%
Creating safe, respectful, and non-judgmental spaces	10	6.7%
Supportive mentorship and relationship building	5	3.3%
Identity and belonging programs in school	2	1.3%
Teachers already doing well / no changes needed	7	4.7%
None / Don't know / unsure responses	28	18.7%
Other miscellaneous responses	8	5.3%
Total	150	100.0%

Some of the key recommendations made by the participants regarding the measures that can be adopted by teachers and school authorities to assist culturally diverse students at Bingham Academy are provided in Table 10. One of the strategies recommended by the highest number of respondents ($n = 25$; 16.7%) was equality, fairness, and anti-discrimination. According to the participants, it is important for teachers to treat all students equally irrespective of their nationality, race, language, religion, or other characteristics related to their culture. It is noted that such measures as equality, fairness, and non-discrimination make students feel respected and accepted at school and ensure that they are emotionally safe in the educational environment. Another measure widely mentioned by the participants ($n = 22$; 14.7%) was to encourage cultural sharing and inclusion. It was suggested that teachers should facilitate the process of sharing the culture through the activities implemented in the classroom and other programs.

Moreover, it was found that 17 students (11.3%) suggested enhancing interaction, collaboration, and activities among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The participants argued that deliberate attempts to bring students together in discussions, classwork, and extracurricular activities will assist in fostering friendships between cultures and minimizing social barriers between various cultural groups. Open discussions, listening, and understanding students were

mentioned by 15 students (10.0%) as important methods to promote inclusion and identity formation. The participants noted that it is important to listen to the students' concerns, engage them in meaningful conversations regarding diversity, and allow them to freely express their views without being judged.

Cultural awareness and sensitivity training for teachers was another suggestion made by 11 respondents (7.3%). Students felt that teachers need to be further trained in terms of cultural diversity, intercultural communication, and cultural sensitivity so that they can better understand and serve their students who come from different cultures. Another suggestion which was made by 10 respondents (6.7%) was that there should be a safe environment where students feel comfortable, respected, and not judged despite their different cultural background. Other suggestions made by respondents were mentorship and relationship-building by 5 respondents (3.3%), school identity and belonging programs by 2 students (1.3%), and miscellaneous suggestions by 8 students (5.3%). Seven respondents (4.7%) thought that teachers were doing fine and no changes were required, and 28 respondents (18.7%) did not give any suggestions at all.

The KII results also triangulated with these findings. All the participants mentioned that both teachers and school management should purposely engage in intercultural interaction and inclusion by ensuring that there are mixed groups of students in the classroom, during project work, playing games, and attending school functions. In addition, the students suggested that there be more multicultural events, such as international days, cultural performances, and interactive events where the students could experience each other's culture through food, music, dressing, traditions, and even personal stories. The participants also stressed the need to deal with stereotypes and cultural bias, which should be done through discussions in the classroom and school programs. The students thought that teachers should educate the students on cultural sensitivity and encourage them to appreciate each other as individuals and not as people from certain cultures.

These results are in line with the existing literature on inclusive climates at schools and multicultural education. For instance, Schachner et al. (2021) note that schools providing their students with equality, justice, and respect for diversity foster higher levels of belonging and psychological safety. Likewise, Baysu, Phalet, and Brown (2022) suggest that anti-

discrimination school environments lead to greater intercultural trust, cohesion, and positive peer relations. At the same time, the results related to cultural sharing and inclusion correspond to contemporary studies in multicultural education. Bardach et al. (2024) state that when students are allowed to share their cultural experiences and traditions, it leads to better intercultural competence and empathic understanding of others. In turn, Gay (2018) notes that culturally responsive teaching practices foster students' participation, confidence, and significance in multicultural classrooms. Finally, the recommendation to boost interactions, mixed groups, and collaboration is consistent with the theory of intergroup contact formulated by Allport according to which the interaction between members of different groups helps to eliminate negative attitudes and biases. Recent studies by Walton et al. (2020) demonstrate the similar impact of collaborative activities on students' inclusion and stereotyping reduction in multicultural settings.

Chapter Five

4. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study on cultural diversity at Bingham Academy. The summary highlights the major findings of the study based on the research objectives and data analysis. The conclusion provides an overall interpretation of the findings regarding cross-cultural learning opportunities, social identity formation, and inclusive school practices within the multicultural school environment. Finally, the chapter offers recommendations aimed at strengthening intercultural relationships, supporting students' identity development, and promoting more inclusive and culturally responsive educational practices at Bingham Academy.

5.1. Summary

This study wanted to analyze cultural diversity at Bingham Academy through the lens of cross-cultural learning and social identity issues among students. The research was based on three objectives; to analyze how cultural diversity helps students engage in cross-cultural learning, to identify challenges facing students when developing social identities and to recommend ways through which schools can be made more inclusive for all students. Mixed methods were used in this study whereby quantitative data was gathered using a questionnaire administered to 150 students while qualitative data was obtained from KIIs.

The findings of the study show that cultural diversity helps improve the cross-cultural learning experience of the students. Quantitative findings indicated that 78.6% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they like learning with classmates from different cultural backgrounds. Likewise, 79.4% of respondents said that they have learned new things from peers of other cultures. This shows that the students academically and socially benefit from interacting with culturally diverse classmates. However, only 39.3% of the respondents agreed that they have learned from cultural diversity.

These findings were further confirmed by the KII data collected. Students stated that interaction with peers who came from different cultures had expanded their outlook, made them more empathic, and enhanced respect towards diversity. Activities conducted by the school, such as

international days, sports tournaments, cultural programs, and joint celebrations, were mentioned as essential means of intercultural communication.

The research also analyzed how the process of social identity formation took place in a multicultural school setting. The findings indicated that 65.3% of respondents either fully agreed or agreed that they have a strong feeling of belonging to Bingham Academy. Also, 71.4% of respondents felt included in social activities irrespective of nationality and language.

Although there were many strengths, this research found a number of issues related to identity. First, about 24.7% of the respondents indicated having difficulties in identifying whether they belong more to their native culture or school culture, which suggests that there are some issues with negotiating multiple cultural identities. Second, 23.3% of the participants noted that they sometimes experience exclusion and stereotyping as a result of belonging to certain cultures. Open-ended responses showed that 16.0% of the participants mentioned balancing cultures and identity confusion as an important issue, and 10.7% indicated peer pressure as a problem. Other issues mentioned included stereotyping (8.7%), language barriers (6.0%), and problems adapting for newcomers (7.3%).

The KII results supported the information provided by quantitative methods. Specifically, the participants stated that sometimes they had to change their behavior or mode of interaction based on the cultural group they belonged to. Also, the participants pointed out that sometimes they faced exclusion, stereotyping, or social grouping due to their cultural affiliation.

Additionally, there were certain other elements found to be crucial for the development of a sense of belonging among students. Respect, equality, and non-judgmental attitude emerged as the key ingredients of inclusion as reported by 22.7% of students. Friendship and positive peer relationship were mentioned by 18.7% of participants, while 15.3% of students viewed diversity and cultural inclusion as important elements. Finally, supportive teachers and school staff were mentioned by 12.0% of respondents as being instrumental in fostering a sense of belonging.

Concerning the measures to improve inclusion and intercultural relations in schools, students stressed the need for fair treatment and anti-discrimination policies (16.7%), promoting cultural exchange and inclusion (14.7%), as well as encouraging interaction among students from diverse

backgrounds (11.3%). In addition, students suggested teacher sensitivity training and open discussions about diversity.

Generally, it can be concluded that cultural diversity at Bingham Academy creates many learning opportunities for the students. The majority of them feel accepted and supported by others. However, there are some problems associated with cultural differences, such as identity conflict, peer pressure, stereotyping, and other issues related to adaptation to the new culture. Consequently, further actions should be taken to improve teaching and interaction among different groups of students.

5.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, cultural diversity at Bingham Academy proves to be an important factor in influencing cross-cultural learning environment and social identity development. This research shows that a multicultural atmosphere at the institution gives students ample opportunities to communicate with each other, learn from each other, and understand cultures. By engaging in lessons, participating in extracurricular activities, and communicating with peers, students gain insight into different cultures.

Another conclusion made based on the findings is that most students feel like they belong and are socially included in the school community. This means that Bingham Academy succeeded in creating an atmosphere of acceptance and valuing diversity.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that identity construction in the multicultural context is not without its difficulties. A small percentage of students encounter identity issues, peer pressure, and language difficulties. This demonstrates the constant negotiation process which occurs in the course of constructing their identity amidst different cultural affiliations at school. However, despite being a minor issue for the vast majority of students, this problem proves that inclusion strategies still require constant effort.

Also, it should be emphasized that supportive relations, equity treatment, and inclusion policies play a key role in fostering positive cross-cultural interaction and identity construction. Teachers

are the key factor in establishing an inclusive atmosphere in classrooms, whereas school activities and peers contribute to intercultural relations.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the results of this research, some recommendations have been made regarding how cross-cultural learning can be improved and positive social identity can be fostered at Bingham Academy.

- Firstly, the school needs to promote **more** intercultural interaction among students through use of different cultural groups in the classroom. Learning tasks must be designed in a way that promotes collaboration among students of different cultures. This will help reduce the tendency of social grouping based on cultural lines and help foster intercultural relationships.
- Secondly, the school needs to promote **more** cultural celebrations and cultural sharing programs where students can celebrate their cultures and learn from each other's cultures. This will help break down stereotypes and foster cultural appreciation among students.
- Third, the training of teachers in cultural sensitivity and inclusion should be enhanced. The school teachers must be trained in ways of handling diversity in the classroom, addressing cultural miscommunications, and fostering inclusive communication in order to enhance classroom climate.
- Fourth, the school should come up with supportive strategies for those students who are undergoing identity issues and being excluded from the social circles. These include mentoring programs, and other similar strategies.
- Finally, the voices of the students should be heard **more** often through feedback mechanisms and other forms of communication. This will allow school leaders to identify any challenges within the school environment.

This study **limited** on students at Bingham Academy School and examined how cultural diversity influences cross-cultural learning and social identity development. The study used questionnaires and KIIs to gather both quantitative and qualitative data within the available

research period. Due to time considerations, the study concentrated on selected participants and specific aspects of students' experiences in a multicultural school environment.

Future studies may build on this research by involving larger samples, multiple schools, and more wide and demanding research methods to provide broader insights into cultural diversity and identity development. Future scholars need to carry out more scientific investigations using longitudinal research designs, comparative research, focus group discussions, and participant observations so that they can understand better cross-cultural learning and social identity formation among multicultural students.

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Annexes

Annex I: Questionnaire (Tick-Box Style)

Research Title:

“Cultural Diversity at Bingham Academy: Opportunities for Positive Cross-Cultural Learning and Challenges of Social Identity Formation.”

A. Demographic Information

(Please tick or fill in the blank)

1. Grade Level:
2. ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12
3. Gender:
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
4. Nationality / Cultural Background: _____
5. Years at Bingham Academy:
 - ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–2 years ☐ 3–4 years ☐ 5 or more years
6. First Language: _____

B. Cross-Cultural Learning (Likert Scale)

(Please tick)

1. I enjoy learning with classmates from different cultural backgrounds.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
2. I have learned new ideas or perspectives from peers of other cultures.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
3. My teachers encourage us to share our cultural experiences in class.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
4. I feel that cultural diversity in my school improves my learning.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
5. I am confident communicating with peers from different cultures.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

C. Social Identity Formation (Likert Scale)

(Please tick)

1. I feel a strong sense of belonging at Bingham Academy.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. Sometimes I feel confused about whether I belong more to my home culture or the school culture.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree)

3. I often compare myself with peers from different cultural backgrounds.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. I feel included in social activities regardless of my nationality or language.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. I sometimes experience exclusion or stereotyping because of my cultural background.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

D. Open-Ended Questions

1. What challenges do you face in forming your identity at school?

2. What helps you feel included and respected in this school community?

3. What strategies do you think teachers could use to better support students from diverse backgrounds?

Annex II: Interview Questions

Opening Questions

1. Can you tell me about your experience studying in a culturally diverse school?
 - o *Follow-up:* How did you feel when you first joined this school?

Cultural Diversity and Interaction

2. How do students from different cultural backgrounds get along or interact in your school?
 - o *Follow-up:* Can you give an example of a positive interaction?
3. What school activities help students from different cultures work together?
 - o *Follow-up:* How do teachers support these interactions?

Cross-Cultural Learning

4. What have you learned from interacting with students from other cultures?
 - o *Follow-up:* Has this changed the way you think or behave?
5. Do you think group work helps students understand each other better? Why or why not?

Social Identity and Belonging

6. Do you feel a sense of belonging in this school? Why or why not?
 - o *Follow-up:* What makes you feel included or excluded?
7. How does your cultural background influence your identity at school?

Challenges and Identity Tensions

8. Have you ever faced challenges related to your cultural identity at school?
 - o *Follow-up:* Can you describe a specific situation?
9. Are there groups of students who tend to stick together based on culture or nationality?
 - o *Follow-up:* How does this affect relationships?

Closing Question

10. What suggestions do you have to improve cultural understanding and inclusion in your school?

